

NewsRelease

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(Philadelphia) – As the economy recovers, companies are likely to experience as much as a 50 percent increase in employee turnover as a result of their competitors' renewed recruiting efforts. While it may be possible to develop a blocking strategy to stem the tide, management needs to rethink how they handle exiting employees to protect their company image, according **MRINetwork®**, one of the world's largest search and recruitment organizations.

"Most companies routinely conduct exit interviews," says Tony McKinnon, president of **MRINetwork**, "but unfortunately few of them use the information they garner for the company's benefit. And yet, a poorly delivered exit interview can affect the morale of the existing employee population and undermine the company culture."

McKinnon believes that treating exiting employees with respect and conducting meaningful exit interviews with them can positively impact a company's employment brand. "Smart companies know that their employment brand is as important as their corporate brand," he says. "It reflects the organization's humanity and its culture, and it supports the people who are in front of customers every day."

The primary aim of the exit interview is twofold, according to McKinnon: To learn the reasons for the person's departure, on the basis that criticism is a helpful driver for organizational improvement; and to allow the organization to transfer knowledge and experience from the departing employee to a successor or replacement.

"The exit interview provides insight into management succession planning," says McKinnon. "Good people often leave because they are denied opportunity to grow and advance. If this is happening, organizations need to know about it and respond accordingly."

Most people who leave a job do actually possess useful – or even critical -- knowledge and experience. "Departing employees are usually willing to share this knowledge, to help a successor, or to brief a management team, if only the organization would simply ask them politely to do so," says McKinnon.

McKinnon offers examples of questions aimed at both ascertaining the reasons for the employee's departure and facilitating the transfer of knowledge:

Reasons for leaving:

- What could have been done early on to prevent your leaving?
- What can you say about the procedures or systems that have contributed to your decision to leave?
- What specific suggestions do you have for how the organization could manage these issues better in the future?
- How do you feel about the organization?
- What has been enjoyable or satisfying for you in your time with us?
- What has been frustrating or difficult to you in your time with us?
- How could the organization have enabled you to make better use of your capabilities and potential?

Transfer of knowledge:

- How might we benefit from your knowledge, experience, introductions to your contacts, etc., prior to your departure?
- What can we do to enable you to pass on your knowledge and experience to your replacement/successor prior to your departure?
- How and when would you prefer to pass on your knowledge to your successor?
- We'd be grateful for you to introduce (name of successor) to your key contacts before you go if you are willing to help with this.

“Management will derive the most benefit for the organization and be able to give the most help to the departing employee by being positive, constructive, understanding and helpful, both prior to and during the exit interview process,” says McKinnon. “Treat people with integrity and decency, and generally they will respond in kind.”

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