



April 10, 2025

DON'T WAIT UNTIL THEY LEAVE!

How to Use Stay Interviews to Improve Retention

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Audience Check-In

- ✓ Raise your hand **if you've heard of a stay interview.**
 - ✓ Raise your hand **if you've ever been part of a stay interview discussion** as the facilitator or employee.
-
- Stay interviews are a **great way to connect** with employees and understand what's keeping them engaged.
 - They help you **identify potential issues**—before employees start considering other opportunities.
 - We'll explore how stay interviews can boost retention, foster employee development, and create a more engaged, satisfied workforce.



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Meet Our Presenters



Michele Richman
Chief People Officer
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K&L Gates



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The Purpose of Stay Interviews

A stay interview is a **structured conversation** between an employer and an employee to understand their **motivations, job satisfaction, and potential areas for improvement**, with the goal of retaining top talent and increasing employee engagement.

Key Points:

- Retain employees by addressing issues early
- Improve satisfaction and engagement
- Empowers employees and makes them feel valued



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The Power of Stay Interviews



Why Stay Interviews Work

- **Proactive vs. Reactive:** Stay interviews help address issues before they become reasons to leave, allowing you to act early rather than reacting to an exit interview.
- **Boost Engagement:** By understanding what keeps employees happy, you can enhance their experience and ensure they feel valued and heard.
- **Customized Retention:** You get direct insights into what each individual employee needs to stay engaged, allowing for personalized retention strategies.
- **Builds Trust:** Creating a space for open dialogue fosters trust between employees and leadership, strengthening the relationship.



Only 28% of organizations conduct stay interviews.

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Stay Interview

VS

Employee Surveys

- Not anonymous
- Determines individual employee satisfaction + growth opportunities
- Occurs annually/regularly for 30- 60 minutes
- Individual action plans developed
- Measures effectiveness of PD programs on the individual

- Completely Anonymous
- Determines team satisfaction and growth opportunities (company-wide or department-wide)
- Occurs quarterly (ENPS, PD, DEI)
- Measures the effectiveness of PD programs on company as a whole

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Diving Into the Stay Interview Process

What We'll Cover:

- Key steps in conducting effective stay interviews.
- Best practices for **asking the right questions** and fostering open conversations.
- How to use stay interview feedback to make a real impact



Equip you with the tools on the stay interview process.

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Creating a Safe and Open Space for Feedback



- **Schedule** a 30 - 60 minute one-on-one conversation.
- **Ask open-ended questions** to encourage thoughtful feedback.
- **Don't promise anything**—your job is to listen.
- Confidentiality—**only the interviewer** sees raw feedback.
- If follow-up is needed, **ask for permission** first.
- Set a **tone of openness** to make employees feel comfortable.



Be mindful: employees may hesitate if they fear negative repercussions or that their feedback will be dismissed.

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Stay interview conversations should complement, **not replace**, ongoing support from your manager. They should be used as a **tool** to continue building trust and strengthening open communication.



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Questions to Ask During Stay Interviews

Lawline Examples

- What are three things we should continue doing?
- What are three things we can do to improve your experience?
- Do you feel a sense of inclusion & belonging at work?
- If a recruiter reached out about a new opportunity, what could they offer that you couldn't say no to?

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Questions to Ask During Stay Interviews

K&L Gates Examples

- Do you feel you have the tools and resources to be successful in your role? If not, what would you find valuable? (laterals - anything at previous firms that was helpful)
- **4TH YEARS ONLY** - Do you feel you are being supported and progressing towards your career aspirations? What can be done to increase support for you?
- **FOR 5TH and 6th YEARS ONLY** - Do you feel supported and progressing with a clear path to partnership or (if not interested in partnership, supported towards other career aspirations)? What can be done to increase support for you?
- Who do you consider senior leadership? What type of information or communications would be helpful to receive more from senior leadership?

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Questions to Ask During Stay Interviews

K&L Gates Examples Continued

- Do you feel integrated into your office and your practice group? What are some things that either do to help you feel connected/disconnected? Who leads those initiatives?
- Do you have enough work to be fully utilized? How effective is the work allocation system? What can be done to make improvements to the current process?
- Are there professional development/business development opportunities or trainings (i.e., a certification in data privacy or advanced training) that could increase your skills?
- Have you ever considered leaving the firm for another opportunity? What prompted it and why did you decide to stay?
- Is there anything you haven't shared thus far that would enhance the overall associate experience at the firm?

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Participant Activity



Craft Your Own Stay Interview Questions

Imagine you're facilitating a stay interview conversation.

Create 4 open-ended stay interview questions to use in the second part of our activity. Reference the handout for examples and inspiration.

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Participant Reflection



Share your experience crafting stay interview questions.

- What did you find **most challenging** about creating your stay interview questions?
- How do you think employees might **respond** to the questions you created? Do you anticipate any hesitations?

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How to Use

Stay Interview Feedback: *5 simple steps*

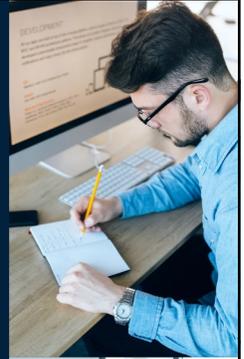
-  **Use answers to determine the effectiveness of your current programs**
Assess whether existing initiatives, benefits, and policies are meeting employee needs.
-  **Identify common themes for improvement**
Look for recurring patterns in feedback to address trended concerns or opportunities for change.
-  **Tailor retention strategies to specific employee needs**
Customize solutions based on the unique challenges and preferences shared by employees.
-  **Develop actionable plans based on feedback**
Turn insights into concrete prioritized action steps with clear timelines and accountability.
-  **Enhance communication and transparency**
Share stay interview results with leadership and employees to foster open dialogue and trust.

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Real Impacts of Stay Interview Feedback

Lawline

- Manager Coaching Support
- Peer learning groups for focused career growth and development
- Educational annual PD Budget
- Upward + Peer Evaluations
- Internal Lawline Academy platform
- Established a clear and transparent promotion process
- Strengthened support for diversity and inclusion initiatives



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Real Impacts of Stay Interview Feedback

K&L Gates

- More tailored training opportunities (depo skills/business development)
- "Pathways to a Thriving Career" sessions
- Practice Area Town Halls + Regional/Global Meetings
- Implemented FY Practice-Based Mentoring program + developing practice-based mentoring for all associates



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Participant Activity

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Stay Interview Role Play

Practice conducting a stay interview conversation with the person next to you. One of you will be the interviewer, and the other will act as the employee. Use the questions you created earlier or refer to the Lawline/K&L Gates examples in the handout. After 5 minutes, swap roles and repeat the process.

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Create An Action Plan

Take 5 minutes to develop a plan to address concerns from the stay interview discussion.



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Participant Reflection

Share your role play experience.

- What challenges did you have as the facilitator or participant?
- What are your planned strategies from the feedback?

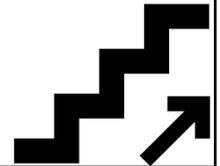


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The Reality

The process is a strategic approach.

- **Not a Quick Fix:** This is a thoughtful process that can take several months to complete, requiring time and careful planning.
- **Phase it Out:** Break the process into phases, focusing on specific departments or teams at a time for a targeted approach.
- **Prioritize High-Impact Employees:** Start with employees who have a significant influence on your business to maximize the impact.



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"After 12 years at Lawline, I feel stuck in my role because there are no new challenges for me. I have started looking for new opportunities."

Finance Foundation



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Questions



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