Creating an Effective Stay Interview Program

BACKGROUND

What are Stay Interviews?

Stay Interviews are facilitated discussions between an employee and an interviewer acting on behalf of the organization. In a typical employee lifecycle, an employee is interviewed twice during their time working for an organization: prior to being hired (job interview), and prior to exiting the organization (exit interview). Under this framework, there is a distinct lack of direct communication from the employee to the organization for the entirety of their employee tenure. Stay Interviews aim to close this gap by periodically interviewing employees on key issues and topics while they are still working at the organization.

Program Purpose & Goals

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) launched a pilot Stay Interview program to improve employee retention and engagement by increasing employees' net trust in the organization. WisDOT sought to signal its willingness and interest in listening to employees' points of view on key issues by opening this direct channel of communication. Directly asking employees why they choose to stay allows an organization to identify common themes and focus on bolstering those aspects of work that keep people coming back. Conversely, Stay Interviews also serve to identify pain points in employees' work life, which provide targeted insights on specific areas of improvement where an organization can quickly intervene to prevent resignations before they occur.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Structure

- Researched viable strategies for implementation.
- Assembled team of 9 "neutral" interviewers.
- Trained interviewers on note-taking, probing, and listening skills.
- Announce program to agency requesting anonymous volunteers.
- Randomly selected 100 employees from volunteer pool.
- Interviewed all 100 participants over 2 month period.
- Collected, compiled, and analyzed data.
- Presented feedback and key takeaways to agency leadership.
- Publish program overview and findings for employees.

Stay Interview Questions

1. What are the things you look forward to most as you start each workday?

2. When were you most engaged at WisDOT? Why? What were those circumstances?

3. In the last year have you considered leaving WisDOT? If so, why?

4. What keeps you working at WisDOT?
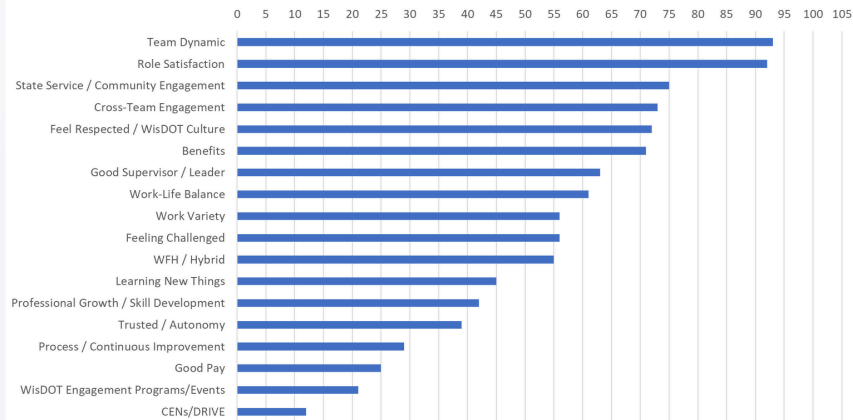
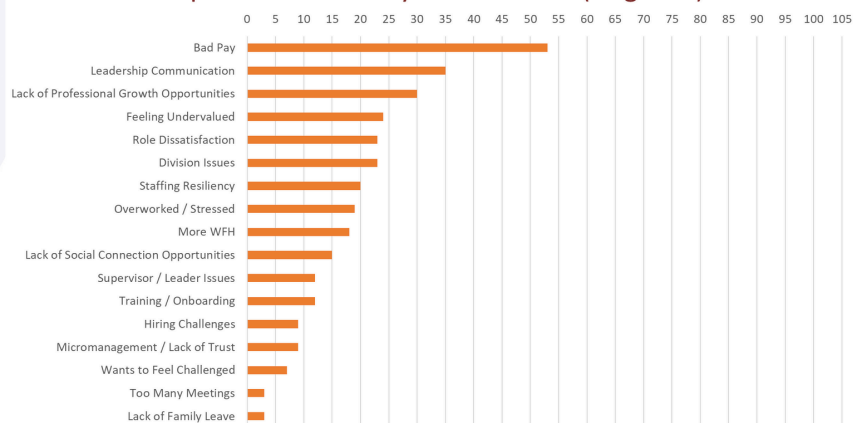# Creating an Effective Stay Interview Program

RESULTS

Key Takeaways

- The most important factor of job satisfaction for employees is being part of and surrounded by supportive and caring teams.
- Providing service and having positive impacts on the Wisconsin public is rewarding to employees and contributes to higher job satisfaction.
- Competitive compensation remains a critical factor in overall satisfaction.
- There is a continued desire to increase transparent communication from agency leadership on how/why decisions are made.
- Eliminating remote/hybrid work flexibility will negatively impact retention.
- Expanding remote work options to other headquarter cities could positively impact recruitment and retention.
- There are concerns about losing institutional knowledge when experienced employees leave the agency
- The perceived lack of professional advancement and growth opportunities impacts retention of dedicated and experienced employees.
- Flexible work schedules and variety in job duties are important factors in job satisfaction.
- Being trusted by supervisors to work autonomously is critical for creating a positive work environment.
- Having opportunities to interact with stakeholders and constituents is fulfilling to employees.
- There is interest in creating additional engagement opportunities for in-office and non-work social activities.

Compiled Feedback

Topics Mentioned by Interviewees (Positive)

(Scale: 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105)

- Team Dynamic
- Role Satisfaction
- State Service / Community Engagement
- Cross-Team Engagement
- Feel Respected / WisDOT Culture
- Benefits
- Good Supervisor / Leader
- Work-Life Balance
- Work Variety
- Feeling Challenged
- WFH / Hybrid
- Learning New Things
- Professional Growth / Skill Development
- Trusted / Autonomy
- Process / Continuous Improvement
- Good Pay
- WisDOT Engagement Programs/Events
- CENs/DRIVE

Topics Mentioned by Interviewees (Negative)

(Scale: 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105)

- Bad Pay
- Leadership Communication
- Lack of Professional Growth Opportunities
- Feeling Undervalued
- Role Dissatisfaction
- Division Issues
- Staffing Resiliency
- Overworked / Stressed
- More WFH
- Lack of Social Connection Opportunities
- Supervisor / Leader Issues
- Training / Onboarding
- Hiring Challenges
- Micromanagement / Lack of Trust
- Wants to Feel Challenged
- Too Many Meetings
- Lack of Family Leave

CONTACT

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