

TIP SHEET: Exit Interviews

From **Termination of Employment** by Clark Reed / Netgain Partners Inc.
(Cultural Careers Council Ontario and Cultural Human Resources Council, 2003).

Usually carried out when an employee resigns or is leaving involuntarily but amicably, exit interviews can be highly valuable.

1. *The interview should be conducted by someone other than the person's immediate superior.* In a very small organization, you might want to give the employee a simple exit interview questionnaire and ask them to complete and mail it back to you.
2. *Prepare for the interview by briefly talking with the employee's manager and reading the employee's personnel file, performance reviews, etc.*
3. *Allow enough time for discussion.* Prepare questions like:
 - i. *(If a voluntary departure)* Is there anything more you can tell me about why you've decided to leave?
 - ii. *(If a voluntary departure)* Is there anything we could have done to keep you here?
 - iii. Do you feel management communicates well here?
 - iv. If you were running the place, what would you do differently?
 - v. What changes do you think would help our staff do their jobs better?
4. *Hold the meeting as close as possible to the person's departure.* Many organizations plan this as the absolute last stop for departing employees.
5. *Explain that the purpose of the interview is to gather information about the person's perception of the organization and how it treats its employees.* Assure the person that their comments during the exit interview will remain anonymous unless they are alleging misconduct on the part of another employee.
6. *Set a relaxing tone.* Be warm, receptive and interested in what the person has to say.
7. *Listen!* Don't add your own personal comments, give opinions or defend the organization and its actions. Your role is to get information and stay objective.
8. *If it hasn't already been done, gather or verify that all company property and material has been returned.*
9. *Document the exit interview.* Organizations often develop an exit interview form that is completed by the interviewer.