

Exit Interviews an Important Learning Opportunity for Call Center Managers

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EAST GREENWICH, RI—The exit interview can be a treasure trove of information that can be useful for call center managers as they examine the health of their call centers. Yet, says, Carolyn Merriman, President of the Corporate Health Group, this can often fall through the cracks. In some cases, that's because HR is doing it (and even then, it sometimes doesn't happen.) In other cases, the call center manager might mean to do it and it just doesn't happen.

However, doing the exit interview is "important to keep a pulse on the culture," she says. The call center may be rather isolate within the institution and that exit interview can help the manager understand more about the dynamics within and any changes that should be made.

Normally, it would be the call center manager who would do the interview. However, if the manager isn't comfortable with it or doesn't feel that it would be productive for the conversation to proceed in this way, then another from within the call center can be chosen to do it. For example, Merriman says, perhaps there's another supervisor or another call center employee who is known as a good listener.

She suggests a staff meeting that informs everyone that so and so has been designated the official exit interviewer because of their listening skills. This appointment can integrate right into a culture that is team based, she adds.

In some cases, the individual may be leaving for reasons unconnected with the job such as spouse job transfers or a major lifestyle shift. In others, it may be connected to the job. In either case, there may be valuable things learned that can help make the call center a better place to work in the future.

Then, there are those cases where the person who is leaving is actually the one causing some or even many of the perceived troubles in the call center. In those cases, the exit interview may want to be a joint one with human resources and the designated call center representative, Merriman says. In those cases, it's more important to listen, then afterwards the call center representative can correct the record with HR. And even in these cases, there may be some important things to be gleaned that can help improve the call center.



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