

We're All Ears! Using Exit Interview and Stay Interview Data for Lawyer Retention

BACKGROUND INFORMATION, EXIT AND STAY INTERVIEW SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Background Information

- Office Location
- Department/Practice Area
- Seniority (Class Level)
- Hire Source (Summer Program, Lateral Hire)
- Law School
- Ethnicity
- Date of hire
- Date of termination
- Departure destination
- Departure classification (Regretted/Unregretted)

Reason for Departure

- Is there anything the Firm could have done differently that would have prevented you from leaving?
- What factors led you to look for a different opportunity?
- What is the primary reason you have chosen to leave the Firm?
- Are there other reasons that affect your departure?
- Did anything in particular trigger your decision to leave? Please explain.
- Were compensation and benefits a factor in your decision to leave the Firm?
- Can you provide any additional feedback that will enable us to understand why you are leaving, how we can improve, and what we can do to become a better firm?
- What is your new position?
- How did you become aware of this new opportunity?
- What do you hope to gain professionally or personally by leaving?
- Was a search firm responsible for your new placement?

Career/Work Expectations

- Was the work assigned to you, throughout your time at the Firm, challenging and a good utilization of your skill set?
- To what degree was your experience at the Firm in alignment with your initial career expectations?
- What do you know now about this profession or about the Firm that you wish you had known when you were first hired?
- My interviews were accurate in portraying what to expect from the Firm. (agree/disagree scale)
- I was provided with opportunities for interesting and challenging work assignments. (agree/disagree scale)
- I was satisfied with the level of responsibility I was given. (agree/disagree scale)
- Was it your intention to stay at the Firm until you were promoted to a senior role?
- Have you received interesting and meaningful work while at the Firm?
- Were the projects aligned with your interests?
- Did you receive too much or too little work?
- Do you feel you were given the appropriate amount of responsibility? If no, please explain.
- Do you feel that the partners you worked with provided you the appropriate guidance, opportunities and work experiences to advance in your career?

Professional Development

- Were you provided with the necessary tools and training to assist you in doing your job well?
- My skills and qualifications were a good match for my practice group. (agree/disagree scale)
- I received the training I needed to perform my job well. (agree/disagree scale)
- Were there any specific trainings you found particularly valuable?

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- What additional training programs do you recommend we offer to associates in your practice group and/or level, if any?
- How would you rate the Firm's commitment to training within the firm as a whole, within your practice group, and within your office/client team?

Evaluation Process and Feedback

- The attorneys for whom I worked provided me with guidance and direction to do my job. (agree/disagree scale)
- Do you feel you fully understood the Firm's and your practice group's expectations regarding work assignments, billable hours, investment/non-billable opportunities, etc.?
- Did you feel adequately informed about your progress?
- Do you have any recommendations regarding other reward and recognition efforts?
- Do you have any suggestions on how the Firm can improve giving feedback?
- Please provide feedback regarding the associate evaluation process and let us know if you have any suggestions for improvement.
- Rate your satisfaction with the feedback you received from the partner/s with whom you worked.
- The performance evaluation process was a fair measurement of my performance. (agree/disagree scale)

Mentoring/Personal Experience/Personal Development

- Did the senior lawyers with whom you worked take the time to explain assignments and answer questions?
- I felt fully integrated into the Firm. (agree/disagree scale)
- My opinion was valued. (agree/disagree scale)
- I was treated with respect. (agree/disagree scale)
- The amount of stress I experienced on the job was reasonable. (agree/disagree scale)
- My formal mentor was a valuable resource to me. Would you mind sharing the name?
- How would you assess the level of supervision and mentoring you received?
- What can we do to improve the supervision and/or mentoring?
- Who were the most influential attorneys over the course of your career with the firm?
- Rate the quality of the informal mentoring you received while at the firm.
- Rate the quality of the "formal" mentoring you received while at the firm. Please provide names, if you wish.

Firm/Office Culture (including Diversity)

- Overall, was there a strong sense of teamwork across the various teams that you were staffed on?
- The Firm fosters a cooperative atmosphere. (agree/disagree scale)
- Communication within the Firm is good. (agree/disagree scale)
- The Firm has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. (agree/disagree scale)
- Given the many opportunities for employment, why did you initially choose the Firm?
- How would you describe the Firm's culture?
- Rate associate morale at the Firm and let us know what you feel does/would contribute to higher morale at the Firm.
- Rate the diversity of the Firm and let us know if there are actions the Firm can take to retain and attract diverse attorneys.
- How confident are you that you had equal opportunities and/or access to work and to clients as your peers?

General Feedback

- What things do you think the Firm does well?
- What could we improve to make the Firm a better place to work?
- What factors contributed to your accepting a job with the Firm?
- The orientation that I attended when I joined the firm was helpful. (agree/disagree scale)
- I feel that my total compensation was comparable to the market. (agree/disagree scale)

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- The Firm offers its attorneys a competitive benefits package. (agree/disagree scale)
- I was satisfied with the level of support I received from the Marketing Department.
- Did you feel you were given adequate information and communication about the Firm's goals and direction?
- What are the Firm's positive attributes?
- What are the Firm's negative attributes?
- Rate the accessibility of information regarding firm policies and procedures.
- Is there anything we have not discussed that you believe is important for me to know with respect to your experience at the Firm?

Future Considerations

- Would you consider returning to the Firm in the future? If no, why not? (only to regretted departures)
- Would you recommend the Firm to others as a good place to work?

STAY INTERVIEW DISCUSSION TALKING POINTS

- As you reflect on your experience at the Firm, what are some of the key things that have attributed to your success?
- Is the Firm fully utilizing your talents and expertise? If yes/no, how or why?
- What are the best aspects of your position at the Firm? What do you enjoy most?
- What factors might entice you away from the Firm? Or what factors do you think have enticed your former colleagues away from the Firm?
- With regard to advancing diversity and inclusion, what do you think the Firm is doing well?
- What areas does the Firm most need to improve?
- Who have been the most influential attorneys in your development at the Firm?

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Departure Destination:

- ☐ *Solo practitioner*
- ☐ *Law firm associate*
- ☐ *Law firm partner*
- ☐ *Law firm administrator*
- ☐ *Law school administrator*
- ☐ *Law school faculty/professor*
- ☐ *Judicial clerk*
- ☐ *Judge (appointed or elected)*
- ☐ *Other government legal job*
- ☐ *Government elected position*
- ☐ *CEO/Executive Director*
- ☐ *Staff or contract attorney*
- ☐ *Corporate in-house counsel*
- ☐ *Corporation or business job (non-legal)*
- ☐ *Caretaker for dependents (child or elder care)*
- ☐ *Non-profit staff (legal/non-legal)*
- ☐ *Student*
- ☐ *Undecided at the time of departure*
- ☐ *Other destination: _____*

Reasons for Departure:

What is the primary reason you have chosen to leave?

- ☐ *Hired by firm client*
- ☐ *Accompanied other departing attorney(s)*
- ☐ *Pursuit of specific practice interests*
- ☐ *Pursuit of better partnership prospects*
- ☐ *Desire to work in smaller firm*
- ☐ *Desire to work in larger firm*
- ☐ *Desire to work in public interest job*
- ☐ *Career change to other type of legal job*
- ☐ *Pursuit of personal business venture*
- ☐ *Running for elected office*
- ☐ *Better compensation/bonuses*
- ☐ *Better benefits*
- ☐ *Desire for organization-sponsored child care*
- ☐ *Desire for enhanced training and development*
- ☐ *Desire for mentors or role models*
- ☐ *Desire to reduce billable hours*
- ☐ *Desire to gain a more regular schedule*
- ☐ *Desire to work part-time*
- ☐ *Desire to telecommute from home*
- ☐ *Family or dependent responsibilities*
- ☐ *Better support for work-life balance*
- ☐ *Relocation of spouse/partner*
- ☐ *Desire for new geographic locale*
- ☐ *Desire to take break from work for a while*
- ☐ *Decided not to return after leave or clerkship*
- ☐ *Desire to work in more diverse organization*
- ☐ *Pursuit of education*

Are there other reasons that affect your departure? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ *Hired by firm client*
- ☐ *Accompanied other departing attorney(s)*
- ☐ *Pursuit of specific practice interests*
- ☐ *Pursuit of better partnership prospects*
- ☐ *Desire to work in smaller firm*
- ☐ *Desire to work in larger firm*
- ☐ *Desire to work in public interest job*
- ☐ *Career change to other type of legal job*
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