

India Inc outsources exit interviews

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Mumbai: Employee exits can be painful, but exit interviews can be even more agonizing. Emotions run high and most of the times the company is left clueless about the reasons behind the talent departure.

In a novel practice, some companies have begun to outsource exit interviews to a third party. This not only retains the confidentiality factor, but also helps the company understand the lead theme around employee exits.

Some of the companies which outsource exit interviews or exit surveys include Marico and Mondelez India Foods. A large majority, however, continues to conduct exit interviews internally.

"We don't believe exit interviews are a crib session. Attrition is a reality of life. We cannot wish it away," said Ashutosh Telang, chief HR officer, Marico, which outsources exit interviews to a third party and the same is kept ultra confidential. At Marico, the management only gets to see the themes and not the reports.

ENSURING ANONYMITY

► Cos that have stopped conducting exit interviews in-house have done so to seek a more qualitative report rather than a tick box kind

► The third party involved in the process ensures the company's management gets to see only the theme of an employee's exit



and not the actual report

► Such an exit interview is free of prejudices, guarantees objectivity as well as neutrality to encourage honest feedback

► The anonymity also ensures that the doors are always open to ex-staffers who want to return to their old employer

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"This is because we are interested in the 'what' and not the 'who'. We would rather go in for a qualitative exit interview and not the tick box kind of report," said Telang. Incidentally, ex-staffers form 10% of Marico's working population, which means people come back to the company.

Losing out on top talent can be a setback for a company. That's why companies prefer to keep their doors open just in case former employees

want to come back and this can be facilitated if exit interviews are kept confidential by a third party.

According to Mahrukh Bandorawalla, organization development, HR consultant and coach: "There are no names involved in an exit interview that is outsourced to a third party, there is no malintent assumed and it's free from prejudices."

According to a former HR consultant who has experience

in this area, when exit interviews are outsourced, there is objectivity in the process and a level of neutrality is maintained. Some organizations use such services to ensure that departing employees are able to share feedback openly, especially if they are leaving due to a bad experience. "This service offers anonymity and hence they can express themselves freely," said Savitha Gajkwad, managing partner, Antal International Network.

An analysis of such exit trends can be of great value to the employer. "Most times when exit interviews happen internally, employees may just say they are leaving for growth or performance reasons — but their actual triggers may be entirely different," said Gaikwad.

So Mondelez India Foods uses exit surveys to learn from feedback and put it to good use: "A third party offers specialized expertise and a scientific methodology of both collecting the inputs and converting them into insights to be acted upon," said a Mondelez spokesperson.