" A comparison of manufacturing industries in the South East and their use of exit interviews as a tool in gathering information to formulate retention strategies"

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AUTHORSHIP DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of B.A. (Hons) in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been citied and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Retention is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "the capacity for holding or keeping something". Productive employees are considered valuable assets in an organisation and when time and energy has been invested in finding, training and developing them and they are, in turn, positively impacting the bottom line, it is important those employees remain in the organisation. Employee turnover is an issue with significant bottom-line impact. Organisations have recognised that their employees are their most vital assets and are, therefore, investing in them to ensure they are motivated, productive, and capable of being developed to meet future challenges.

The objective of this project is to examine some of the reasons employees leave organisations, what strategies can be put in place to help retain them and how effective those strategies are in practice. This particular research was undertaken to compare the existing theory to twenty-first century practice and effectiveness in industry and to see if the general theories on why employees leave an organisation are still found in industry.

The primary research method undertaken in this project involved interviews with three companies involved in manufacturing in the South East of Ireland. The research involved three comparative case studies which entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with the Human Resources Managers of each company in June 2004.

The main findings of the research were that organisations did, to some extent, monitor employee turnover by electronic systems. The main method of assessing the reason for employee turnover was exit interviews. The organisations felt that people in general were not completely honest in the exit interviews and the reasons for this were the fear of being given a negative reference in the future or not wanting to 'rock the boat'.

The findings in relation to why employees leave an organisation concur significantly with the literature already available. Turnover was generally attributed to lack of career progression, poor benefits, job insecurity, childcare, redundancy, uninteresting work and job offers from other companies.

The organisations surveyed had put in place strategies to counter act these issues and they included training and development - to motivate and develop employees for career progression, benchmarking of benefits, and the introduction of family friendly initiatives like job sharing and flexi-time. The success of implementing certain strategies to reduce high levels of employee turnover are not always successful, and this may be down to the fact that the strategies implemented are not specific enough, and are not aimed at the real problem areas. However, it is difficult to address these problem areas if you do not know what they are.

It was also found that some level of turnover in an organisation is desired to ensure new and fresh ideas are introduced to give different perspectives to new opportunities and ideas. Very low turnover levels bring with them their own difficulties. Trying to get the

balance right where there is a 'healthy' level of employee turnover will remain a major challenge for organisations.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

When a valued employee leaves an organisation for another one, it can be viewed as a major failure by the organisation in terms of having an environment that is conducive to motivating, developing and retaining its valued workforce. Some organisations simply shrug their shoulders and accept employees leaving as a normal part of doing business, others kick themselves for allowing a situation to arise where the employee no longer wants to work for them. However an organisation views employee turnover, one fact remains clear, the cost both financially and long-term of replacing a high contributing employee can have serious consequences.

The global economy in which many organisations now operate becomes more competitive by the day and having employees who can develop and grow to react to constant changes and challenges is the only real competitive advantage that can sustain growth for that organisation.

If we acknowledge that it is important to hold onto our employees, then it is vital we understand why they leave and what can be done to ensure they stay. Only by truly understanding why employees leave an organisation can effective strategies be implemented to hold onto them.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reasons for employee turnover, the strategies organisations put in place to reduce it, and their effectiveness of the

information gained at exit interviews in shaping retention strategies. A number of objectives will be looked at in relation to the above, these include:-

- Assess how a number of manufacturing industries gather information from departing employees
- Assess the benefits of gathering this information and the accuracy of it
- Discuss when the best time to gather this information is, who should gather it and where
- Determine how that information is used to change current retention strategies or shape new ones

1.3 Method of Research

The research objectives will be fulfilled by undertaking primary and secondary research. The secondary research will involve a comprehensive study of relevant literature on the subject. This literature will be collected from books, journals, databases and the Internet.

The primary research will consist of four mini case studies to be conducted by way of semi-structured interviews with the Human Resource Managers of four manufacturing companies in the South East of Ireland. Semi-structured interviews have been deemed the most suitable technique for the study, as they allow for a more open discussion to ensure understanding and probe into relevant areas, and also because the content of the survey information obtained is confidential.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The first chapter introduces the subject and outlines the main objectives of the study and also introduces the methods which will be used to gather primary data. Following on from this the literature which already exists will be reviewed in relation to employee turnover, the implications of turnover and the various authors' opinions on the most effective methods by which companies can retain their most valuable employees.

The study then examines the research methodology and this will explore the manner in which the data will be collected and compiled. The research method will consist of a questionnaire which will gather relevant information by conducting interviews as part of a case study. The findings of the case study will then be discussed in detail.

Following on from the above will be the discussion chapter. It is at this stage that the findings will be discussed in comparison and contrast to the literature review section and what conclusions, if any, we can draw from both.

The final chapter will state the summary and conclusions of the project based on the research carried out and the existing literature already available. This chapter will also contain research limitations, recommendations for organisations in general, and suggested future study projects.

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

2.1   Introduction

In today's highly competitive labour market, there is extensive evidence that organisations regardless of size, technological advances, market focus and other factors are facing retention challenges. (Sunil, 2004). This is concurrent with Love (2004) who states that employee turnover remains a costly concern for many organisations. Undesirable turnover imposes significant recruitment and training costs, plus the intangible costs associated with the loss of knowledge capital. For these reasons, it is important to measure and predict turnover and understand the contributing factors.

Dibble (1999) believes a revolution has taken place in relation to retention of employees. The revolution is the changing role of employees in our organisations. Employers are realising that skilled employees can play a part in the organisations success or failure. The art of holding onto talented employees is likely to get even more difficult in the future.

2.2   Turnover Costs

Turnover is measured by applying the following formula, according to IBEC (2004):

<center>**Number of Full Time Permanent Staff that leave between mm/dd/yy – mm/dd/yy   x100**</center>

<center>**Number of Full Time Permanent Staff @ dd/mm/yy**</center>

Employee turnover is defined as the rate at which permanent full-time employees leave an organisation on a voluntary basis (excluding redundancy) within a specified time

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period (i.e. the number of employees who have left the organisation and (i) were replaced, and / or (ii) for whom a vacancy still exists).

It is generally accepted that there are costs associated with losing a good employee and according to Dibble (1999) we cannot accurately assess turnover unless we have factual data. She has identified a structure which estimates the costs to an organisation when a talented employee leaves, these include:-

- Separating an employee from the organisation - exit interviews and administration (taking employee off payroll, processing final pay, P45, transfer of pension).
- Hiring a new employee – drawing up a job description, recruitment, selection, induction programmes, administration and providing necessary equipment.
- Developing the new employee – resources put into training and developing which may include coaching, mentoring and testing.
- Loss between the time the old employee leaves and the new employee is productive – lost business, increased costs due to lower skills, poor morale from other workers because somebody has left, overtime put in by employees to ensure consistency in workload and the payment of temporary workers whilst the new person is coming up to speed.
- Loss of the potential future contribution of an exceptional employee - value of contribution.

As well as the above, Barry and Greville (2001) state that there are other "soft" costs to losing employees that are not calculated in turnover costs but nonetheless effect the operations of an organisation. One of the most damaging is the loss of intellectual capital.

> *"When seasoned employees leave, they take with them intimate knowledge of the internal workings of an organisation – of its procedures, systems, equipment, personnel, and customers".*

Other "soft" costs can include lost opportunities, one less resource in the pipeline, decreased morale amongst remaining staff, and increased stress as other employees strive

to fulfil the responsibilities of the employee prior to replacement. It is important to note that both financial and soft costs increase as you lose your higher performers.

Mooney (1999) says that there can be no end to the quest by employers to stop (or at least to slow down) their revolving doors through which good employees come and go. The task is simply too critical to competitive business. To slow the movement of the door, every employer concerned with the cost and turmoil of frequent staff changes must constantly seek new and better ways to choose and hire good people and keep them. It does not happen automatically. There are no shortcuts to help companies find and retain quality candidates. It takes planning, commitment and hard work.

2.3   Turnover at Senior Levels

According to Berkman et al. (2001) there can be serious consequences when a more senior employee leaves the organisation because the effects can be far reaching. One of the consequences of losing an executive is that it can affect the competitive position of the organisation due to this vacant position but it can also manifest itself in other ways. These include, triggering turnover at other levels throughout the organisation, creating a loss of intellectual and developmental resources and disrupting and weakening customer relationships.

This is borne out in a study by the Corporate Leadership Council (1998) who state that apart from the short term financial costs of searching for and finding a replacement when an employee at a professional level leaves an organisation, a number of examples reported in the studies highlight the more long term consequences of unexpected turnover. For example, the loss of a significant number of professionals in the same discipline can seriously hamper the long-term development and progress of an organisation as they have to spend money, time and resources in hiring those professionals and waiting for them to come up to speed and try to run the business effectively whilst engaged in this process. Losing employees to competitors can also

have serious consequences as they not only have to replace them but they may also pass on strategic information about the organisation they left in order to help the organisation they went to.

Graske et al (2001) states that the competition to retain key executives will remain intense in the years to come, and top level executives and HR departments will continue to spend huge amounts of time, effort and money trying to figure out how to keep their people from leaving.

2.4 Turnover Drivers

Some of the reasons employees leave an organisation, according to the CIPD (2004), are dissatisfaction in their present jobs due to the relationship with their line manager, lack of training and development, lack of career and developmental opportunities and poor benefits.

There are many reasons why people voluntarily leave organisations, according to Graske et al (2001), some are personal – changes in family situations, a desire to learn a new skill or trade, or an unsolicited job offer. Other reasons can include observing the unfair treatment of a co-worker or not receiving promotion.

Graske goes on to say that there are four paths people take when leaving a job:-
- Following a plan – you know you will leave if/when a certain event takes place e.g. accepted into some sort of educational programme.
- Leaving without a plan – somebody you didn't like became your boss, request turned down etc.
- Leaving for something better –like where they are but the alternative is better.
- Leaving an unsatisfied job – not where they wanted to be, sometimes leaving without another job.

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Pennington (2003) has found that employees stay, leave, or contribute based on their relationship with their manager and their opportunity to both contribute and advance in their jobs. They want to work in a place where they can succeed and feel their contribution is appreciated. He suggests asking ourselves the following questions and if the answer is not yes then there are improvements to be made.

Does a clear focus and direction exist for the business and the individual? Do people receive the time, tools, and training to accomplish their jobs? Are efforts recognised and appreciated? Is poor performance addressed? Are honest mistakes used as a learning opportunity? Is specific and accurate feedback provided in a positive manner and do people have fun?

Gunnigle et al (1997) suggests that the propensity to leave employment was highest during the early stages of employment where socialisation into the organisation is important. Induction programmes must be focused and aimed at making new employees comfortable with their new work environment and work colleagues.

2.5 Positive Aspects of Employee Turnover

A high level of employee turnover can seriously damage the future of an organisation, however, very low turnover rates also bring their own issues. Acknowledging that turnover will happen and planning for it can help.

According to Mendonsa (1998), a healthy organisation should experience some level of turnover.

> *"Some forms of turnover are really quite healthy as people who have checked out of their jobs and the overall effort may need to leave".*

The Corporate Leadership Council (1999) also suggest that the best turnover rate is not necessarily the lowest turnover rate, retention rates need to reflect both employee performance patterns and mix management goals. Trying to manage retention to such a low level can sometimes have a more negative effect than positive. Another problem is

reliance on high retention of internally developed talent. This can develop into 'leadership myopia' a narrow view of the future and opportunities.

Barry and Greville (2001) state that there is a natural attrition rate encouraged by organisations to avoid atrophy in the work environment and this is considered to be approximately 5% for those in a stable industry environment and 15% in some fast-moving industries.

CIPD (2004) also suggest that some employee turnover positively benefits the organisation.

> *'This happens when a poor performer is replaced by a more effective*
> *employee, and can happen when a senior retirement allows the*
> *promotion or acquisition of welcome fresh blood'*

Moderate levels of staff turnover can also help reduce staff costs in organisation where business levels are unpredictable month on month.

2.6   Retention Strategies

Barry and Greville (2001) found that if you are to retain your star employees you need to concentrate on four main areas. **Career development** - by allowing employees the autonomy to self-manage their training and development plans, make the commitment to develop employees' marketability, carry out regular performance reviews and introduce accelerated career progression programmes for star employees. **Rewards** – flexible benefits that suit the employee's lifestyle, bonus schemes linked to performance reviews, targeted retention rewards and share options. **Management** – clear statement of vision and excellent internal communications, respect for people, excellent HR and line manager support for all employees, managing with excellent interpersonal skills. **Work environment / culture** – create a culture of honesty that gives employees "reasons to stay rather than reasons not to go", develop work / life balance initiatives, instil a culture of coaching and mentoring and create a challenging work environment with a good atmosphere of teamwork and support.

Mooney (1999) reports similar factors as playing a pivotal role in employee retention: competitive salaries and benefits, open communication, good work environment, incentive programmes, periodic reviews / counselling, promotions, stock options, deferred compensation, management by objective programmes, a fair and meaningful employment contract, savings and matching programmes and profit sharing. Mooney also emphasises that along with the items above, little things mean a lot and the following is a list of benefits that cost little or nothing but can have a major effect in retaining employees: praise, personal notes for achievements, desirable assignments, public recognition, titles, small gifts for special occasions, tickets to sporting events and shows, temporary help or assistance, free coffee and snacks, facilities for heating lunch and a pleasant work environment.

In line with the above, Gering and Conner (2002), state that managers who are interested in retaining their employees should plan and expect an acceptable return on investment, provide compelling reasons for employees to be a part of the organisation, satisfy the personal and practical needs of employees, demonstrate the value of each employee, create processes that provide daily engagement and advancement, provide focused reward and recognition and act on unacceptable performance.

Withers (2001) suggests putting forward 'carrots' for both finding and keeping great staff and these include, being proactive in offering employees a better work/life balance, promote a sense of deeper cause, offer the chance for professional growth and development, treat employees more like partners and provide workers with a sense of community.

The Corporate Leadership Council (1999) suggests that some of the problems with retention strategies are that in an effort to retain as many of their employees as possible, companies overcompensate and retain mediocre talent and as a consequence under compensate high calibre individuals. The serious side of this philosophy of 'one size fits all' is that it can drive talent out of the organisation. Some compensation systems in

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organisations do not reflect employee performance and instead end up rewarding the bottom-end and underpaying top performers, the results being that top talent is driven out and the bottom talent clings to the organisation.

2.7 Monitoring Employee Turnover

Understanding the root causes of turnover is not an easy task. It requires access to accurate, timely and comprehensive data about employees, managers, compensation and benefits, training, evaluation results and absence. It is not about getting more data so much as analysing the right type of data the right way. (Love, 2004).

There are several methods of data collection and analysis that organisations can implement when assessing the drivers of turnover. Moreover, the information gleamed from the data collection serves as a vital tool in restructuring companies' overall human resources strategies, particularly retention. When analysing the causes of turnover within an organisation, employers have to choose the types of data they will collect, when this data will be collected, as well as who will collect it. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1998).

2.8 Exit Interviews

Having looked at the many opinions on why employees leave an organisation and the importance of holding onto valuable employees, we will now look at exit interviews, why they are conducted, when, by whom and what, if anything, is done with the information afterwards.

IBEC (2001) say that exiting employees are in a unique position, in that they can offer candid opinions, without fear of recriminations, on all aspects of the job that may cause dissatisfaction. Management should brace themselves for negative feedback, but the process should not be viewed as merely an opportunity for the employee to moan about

the nature of the job, management and work environment. An exit interview should be viewed positively as an opportunity to build good employee relations and as a method of refining retention strategies. It can help to identify areas of concern in employment conditions within the organisation, bad management practices inadequate and uncompetitive salaries.

Buhler (1998) also states that once data information has been collected and analysed, the organisation has a clearer understanding of the turnover drivers. From this point the employer can begin to implement changes as per the findings of the data.

French Dunn (2002) states that whether a staff departure is surprising or expected, the first impulse is to find a replacement as soon as possible. But it is important to take a step back and re-examine the vacated position so that you can make that position all the more effective going forward. One key step in that process is the exit interview.

> *"Who better to ask about the effectiveness of a position than the employee who has held that position"*.

That person can provide information about how things really work and give you a different perspective on the organisation and staff morale.

In line with the above, the Corporate Leadership Council (2002) suggest that, typically, exit interviews are used to obtain information that will result in better selection, placement and development and training practices, as well as improved supervision. This in turn can assist to reduce attrition, improve working conditions, detect and correct problems on the job that may lead to termination, and in general, enhance public relations by having each employee leave with a positive view of the company.

Further literature suggests that exit interviews can be utilised to reduce turnover by gaining a clear understanding of why employees are departing, identifying attractive and unattractive aspects of the employment position and identifying any compensation issues that may result in high attrition rates. Moreover, companies may seek to gather

information or views about the organisation from departing employees that would not be readily available by those still constrained by office politics. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999).

Frase-Blunt (2004) says that the information collected in an exit interview can give a company a unique perspective on its performance and employee satisfaction. People who leave may be brutally honest about their experiences without fear of immediate repercussions. In addition, it's likely they have recently been job hunting and interviewing and can offer some useful intelligence on how the company compares with other employers.

Whilst exit interviews have many advantages, it is also recognised they have limitations which will now be discussed.

2.8.1 Limitations of Exit Interviews

The CIPD (2004) say it is important to appreciate that the reasons people give for their resignation are frequently untrue or only partially true. The use of exit interviews is widespread yet notoriously unreliable, particularly when conducted by someone who may later be asked to provide a reference, therefore, employees prefer to give less contentious reasons for their departure.

Finn (1999) says employees will only talk freely if they are sure that any comments made will not have a bad effect on a future reference or earn them a reputation as a trouble-maker. Employees also need to feel that action will be taken where necessary. It is important to agree with the leaver who the information will go to.

> *"It's important not to treat exit interviews in isolation but tie them in with other activities in the organisation ".*

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Taylor (2002) suggests that many employees fail to tell the whole truth about why they are leaving for a number of reasons which include; a reluctance to criticise managers who they have worked closely with, fear that managers will take criticisms personally, a wish not to burn bridges because a favourable reference may be sought in the future, a wish to leave open the possibility of returning to work for the employer at a later date, or a wish to protect colleagues who are not leaving. Taspell (1999) also states there is an assumption that employees will be candid at exit interviews, however, this is questionable because in many cases employees who are leaving do not want to burn bridges because of fear that their responses might be attributed to them (Taspell, 1999).

Coleman (1999) believes that many people are unwilling to give genuine reasons for their departure especially if company policy is the root of their problem. Coleman contends that if employees are looking for references they will not want to upset their employers by appearing too critical. Another problem, according to Kumar (2000) is that the exit interview is often conducted by a line manager or Human Resources who view it as a routine formality.

2.8.2 Conducting Exit Interviews

IBEC (2001), suggest that opinions differ on who should carry out an exit interview, whether it is by the HR function, the line manager or an independent body and suggest it depends on the nature of the employee departure. A line manager who has a closer relationship with the employee may elicit more information, however, if the line manager is responsible for the exit in the first place another manager should be chosen. On the other hand, it is argued that the HR function is responsible for the recruitment of the employee and for consistency should conduct the exit interview. This is supported by Vitello (1997) who suggests that exit interviews should be conducted by the HR department who can better create an atmosphere of objectivity as opposed to the supervisor or manager of the departing employee.

Again, Foot & Hook (1996) are of the view that exit interviews should be conducted by the HR department because employees will be more willing to talk about problems with a person who does not work directly with them and the HR professional is in a better position to understand broader issues involving company policy.

In contrast to this, Martellotti (2001), suggests that exit interviews should be conducted either in person or by telephone with an independent third-party who can ask sensitive questions that employees might hesitate to answer to an employer. Sweeney (2002) suggests that interviews should be conducted by an outside interviewer. She suggests hiring an outside person with no interest in the process to design and conduct the interviews.

> *"Don't let the employee's manager or supervisor conduct the interview as there will be little meaningful dialog and both parties will be cagey or defensive".*

Higgins (1997) would also contend that outside consultants should be used as they offer an open atmosphere for discussion and are more qualified to conduct the interview objectively.

Regardless of who conducts the interview the interviewer must ensure confidentiality and explain that the information gained is to be used to identify trends rather than to act on information on any individual (Foot & Hook, 1996). Igoe (2001) points out that the inter viewer needs to be able to gain the trust of the employees and needs to be able to interpret the issues correctly and put them into context.

2.8.3 Where should Exit Interviews be Conducted?

IBEC (2001), state that, again, it depends on the nature of the departure as to whether the interview should take place in the employee's department, the Supervisors office, HR office or off-site. The important point is that the employee should feel at ease whatever the location. French Dunn (2002) suggests that is appropriate to consider moving the exit

interview off-site – perhaps over lunch because the more relaxed the atmosphere, the more information you are likely to obtain. She also suggests that this may not always be the best option as an unhappy employee may feel free to unload in the privacy of your office.

2.8.4 When should Exit Interviews be Conducted?

IBEC (2001), suggest say that it is generally accepted that the interview is conducted on the employee's final day or as close to this as possible. Arguments against conducting the interview weeks before departure are that the employee may fear recriminations. They also suggest that it is inadvisable to conduct the interview after the individual has left the organisation. Martellotti (2001) suggests interviews should be conducted as soon as possible after the employee's resignation and again four to six months afterwards.

Sweeney (2002) also suggests that breaking the interview into two parts, one just before an employee leaves and another four to six months later. The reason for this is that employees are more emotional at leaving time and their answers will reflect this, months later they will give more reasoned responses. According to Ashby & Pell (2001) if a follow-up interview is conducted several months after the employee leaves the organisation the reasons given for leaving in the initial interview vary greatly from the reasons given in the follow-up and the reason for this is that the employee by this time has secured a job and dos not fear retaliation from their former employee.

2.9 Implementing the Information from Exit Interviews

When ever the information is gathered from a departing or departed employee the important issue to be addressed is what is done with that information.

Jackson (2004) states that although many companies meet with departing employees to conduct exit interviews, they often fail to get a return on investment for the time spent developing the process and conducting the interviews.

"That's because much of the time, they forget the most important step in the exit interview process; linking the information gathered back to the organisations operations".

Too often, exit interview notes are filed and forgotten. Completing the process means reviewing the data and probing to find out more. The data can then be looked at for trends and emerging patterns of both good results and problem areas. Based on the data, management teams are encouraged to work with HR to develop action plans for improving work processes, team communication or on-the-job training. Individual managers may be encouraged to change leadership or communication styles, or to implement recognition programmes to improve employee retention and to celebrate successes with the employees who remain.

The Corporate Leadership Council (2002) would concur with the above in that they believe while most companies have developed an exit interview process, the information collected is not generally utilised in a specific manner. Most companies simply perform the interview and then compile the data electronically for future use. According to Igoe (2001) the value of exit interviews depends to a huge extent on what is actually done with the information. Francis (2001) says that companies will often conduct exit interviews but never use the information that has been accumulated, instead the information is simply filed away and not utilised to analyse trends or improve problem areas.

IBEC (2001), suggest that, in most situations, the company should not make policy changes or reprimand other employees based on the information from the exit interview. Instead, trends over the long term should be looked at and if any one issue is consistently referred to then action should be taken.

2.10 Summary

When valuable employees leave an organization the cost can be high in terms of replacing the individual and the loss of intellectual capital. There are many reasons why employees choose to leave, however, it is paramount that the organization understands why they leave and what they should be doing in order to increase retention rates to a healthy level.

Exit interviews are a valuable way of gaining insight into both positive and negative aspects of the organisation. It is important that exit interviews are performed in a systematic manner by experienced individuals in order to ensure consistency and useful feedback and ultimately to implement changes based on trends that point to issues in the organizations retention policies.

Chapter Three

PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The literature review has examined various opinions and research findings in relation to employee turnover, why it happens, what retention strategies can be put in place and how exit interviews are used as a tool to gather information on why employees leave the organisation. The objective of this chapter is to explain the reasons for the methodology used to gather the primary research. Brannick and Roche (1997) state that research methodology is a decision making process whereby the literature and the researchers ideas and data are interwoven by the researcher through a process of inner reflection.

The chapter begins by stating the objectives of the primary research and then discusses the methodology used.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the primary research are:

- Assess how a number of manufacturing industries gather information from departing employees
- Assess the benefits of gathering this information and the accuracy of it
- Discuss when the best time to gather this information is, who should gather it and where
- Determine how that information is used to change current retention strategies or shape new ones

3.3   Secondary Data

Kent (1999) states that it is sensible to begin any project by researching any data which already exists (secondary data) and which is relevant to the research project. This is known as the literature review and involves the examination of literature which exists in relation to your research topic. Cooper and Schindler (2001) state that examining secondary data is an integral part of a larger research study and enables the researcher to develop a greater understanding of the research topic to decide what further research needs to be taken.

Secondary data is literature which already exists on a given subject. Secondary methods use materials collected for other purposes: censuses, surveys done for other projects, school records, departmental figures, even reference books. The advantage of such materials is that it is almost always quicker and cheaper to use than to collect primary data. However, the disadvantage is that because they have probably been collected for another purpose, they may have a different focus, or even gaps or hidden flaws. (Kane & O'Reilly – De Brun, 2001). This is backed up by Domegan and Fleming (1999) who also stress that there are limitations associated with secondary data, mainly that the information may be inconsistent as different researchers may reach different conclusions on the same topic. It is, therefore, important to carry out primary research.

For this project the following sources were used to gather the secondary data:
- Academic Books
- Management and HR Journals and Periodicals
- Internet Sites

3.4   Primary Data

Domegan and Fleming (1999), describe primary data as data or information that is collected first hand by a researcher in order to solve a specific research objective.

Primary literature sources are the first occurrence of a piece of work. They include published sources such as reports and some central local government publications. They also include unpublished manuscript sources such as letters, memos and committee minutes that may be analysed as data in their own right. (Saunders et al, 2003).

3.5   Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Gill and Johnson (1997) emphasise the importance of being aware of the different research methods available, and their inherent strengths and weaknesses that need to be taken into account in relation to the goals of the research.

Brewerton and Millward (2001) state that in order to select an appropriate method to explore your research question, a number of points are worth considering, mainly, is the method appropriate to your research objective, used appropriately in the context of its original formulation and development, adequately piloted, ethically sound and able to elicit a form of data appropriate to testing your hypothesis or addressing your research question?

Some of the main approaches to research are described as quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative approaches emphasise the quantifiable nature of the information concerned by identifying its predictive power (e.g. the relationship between organisational culture and performance) and measuring distinct elements or dimensions as objectively as possible. In contract, qualitative approaches seek to characterise multi-dimensional nature using ethnographic approaches and often requiring 'psychological immersion' in an organisation. Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data such as interviews, documents and participant observation. (Brewerton & Millward. 2001).

Having regard for the above, the qualitative research method is deemed appropriate for this project because the information gathered will help to examine the comparisons and

differences between the three companies. The information will be gathered using a mini case study.

3.6   Case Studies / Semi Structured Interviews

Case studies are a good method of gathering a lot of information on a particular subject and then comparing that information. To conduct the case study, semi-structured interviews will be used and the main reason for this is due to the sensitivity of the subject matter. It is felt that by talking to the HR Managers in a face to face interview situation, it will encourage them to be more open and they will also be personally assured of confidentiality by the researcher.

This method would be backed up by Kane & O'Reilly – De Brun (2001), who state that when you want to explore something in some depth with a group or a number of individuals or when you need to get a better understanding of information gathered, the semi-structured interview can be used.

Cooper and Schindler (2001) define a personal interview as a two-way conversation initiated by the interviewer, for the specific purpose of obtaining the relevant research information from the interviewee. Brewerton and Millward (2001) describe a semi-structured interview as an attempt to cover a specific list of topics or sub areas, while still allowing the interviewer to explore and probe in more depth, certain areas of interest. A semi-structured interview differs from a conversation because the topic and issues to be covered have been determined prior to interview.

Sekaran (2000) believes that the main advantage of conducting personal interviews is that it enables the researcher to adapt the questions as necessary, clarify any doubts and ensure that the responses are properly understood by repeating or rephrasing the questions.

3.7 Limitations of Semi-Structured Interviews

However, according to Proctor (1997) the interview method also has limitations. The value of an interview depends largely on the interviewer. The accuracy of the data obtained is influenced by the manner in which the questions are put to the respondents and the skill with which follow-up and probing questions are handled.

3.8 Questionnaire

To obtain information an interview questionnaire will be used on the respondents. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information on the companies business, how and if they monitor employee turnover, the reasons they believe employees leave based on exit interview feedback and the strategies, if any, they have put in place to retain employees based on that feedback.

The design of the questionnaire is based on five sections. Section 1 was business information to get an understanding of the type of business, number of employees and whether indigenous or foreign owned. Section 2 is measuring turnover rates, section 3 looks at reasons for employee turnover i.e. why employees are leaving, section 4 concentrates on exit interviews – if they are conducted, when and by whom. Finally, section 5 tries to assess if the information gained at exit interviews is being used to amend or create retention strategies.

Please see **Appendix 1** for semi-structured interview questions.

3.9 Questionnaire Pilot

To ensure the questionnaire was easily understood, a pilot semi-structured interview was conducted with three Managers in my own organisation. This resulted in a number of

grammatical changes and the elimination of some questions as they were deemed to be repetitive.

3.10   Profile of Companies

For the purpose of this project, a comparative mini case study will be undertaken in four companies (one of which is my own organisation – Waters Technologies) using semi-structured interviews.   All four organisations are involved in manufacturing and based in the South East of Ireland.   One of the main reasons for choosing these companies was because the researcher had built up a relationship with the various Human Resources Managers and was confident that they would allow interviews to take place and they would be as open and honest as possible.   The objective was to speak to companies who were directly involved in manufacturing, conducted exit interviews and were based in the same region.   All companies fitted this profile.   All Companies wished to remain anonymous because they deem some of the information e.g. turnover rates as sensitive and private.   The companies were assured of that the information they provided would remain confidential.   Consequently, the companies will be referred to as Company A, B and C.

Below is a brief profile of the Companies who took part in the research.

3.10.1 Company A – Overview

Company A was established in Waterford in 1968 and its primary function is the manufacture of pharmaceutical and healthcare products.   The company employs 160 people in Waterford and is foreign owned.   The parent company is based in France.   The Human Resources Manager was interviewed as part of this project.

3.10.2 Company B – Overview

Company B was established in Wexford in 1978 and is an ophthalmic manufacturer of lenses. The company employs 203 people and is foreign owned. The parent company is based in the USA. The Human Resources Manager was interviewed as part of this project. The company has gone through a major downsizing programme in the past two years.

3.10.3 Company C – Overview

Company C was established in Waterford in 1978 and manufacturers components for the automotive industries. The company employs 700 people in the Waterford facility and is foreign owned. The parent company is based in the USA. The Human Resources Manager was interviewed as part of this project.

3.10.4 Company D – Waters Technologies

Waters Technologies Ireland Ltd. have been in operation in Wexford since 1997 and employees 145 people. The parent company is based in the USA and the company manufactures High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Mass Spectrometry and Thermal Analysis products and services.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS

4.1   Introduction

The findings in this chapter are based on three interviews with HR Managers at Company A, B and C and analysis gathered by the HR Department at my own Company (Company D). The interviews examine the levels of employee turnover, the reasons for employee turnover, if exit interviews are carried out and if so by whom and when. Finally we will look at what strategies have been put in place in order to reduce employee turnover and whether these strategies are as a result of the feedback gained from the exit interviews. Each chapter outlines the findings under the main headings of the primary research interviews.

4.2   Company A

4.2.1 Employee Turnover Levels

There are two methods of monitoring the level of employee turnover in the company, exit interviews and an electronic time and attendance system. Exit interviews will be discussed in point 4.2.3.

This electronic time and attendance system is primarily used to track the number of employees leaving as opposed to the reasons they leave. The system produces reports on the start date, department and leaving date of the employee amongst other things. This is then used to find the number of employees who have left in a given year and from which departments. This analysis is carried out approximately twice a year.

The employee turnover rate for 2004 has been calculated at 10%. This is calculated by taking the total number of employees who have voluntarily left the organisation at the end of the year and dividing by the total number of employees. The average length of service of the employees who left was between three and five years.

It was found that the Quality department had a particularly high rate of turnover compared to other departments and the average length of service in that department was less than three years.

4.2.2 Reasons for Employee Turnover

The HR Manager addressed the turnover levels in two areas, namely, manual level employees (Operatives or non-professional level employees) and professional / salary level employees.

The main reasons given for manual workers leaving was that they were young people who were more interested in money than long term career progression and as a result would move to another company for more money. Another reason for turnover at this level was shift work. There is a three-shift cycle which includes a night shift and if employees have the opportunity to get off shift by getting another job they will go. The Culture was another factor for manual employees leaving:

> *"There are a lot of 'cliques' in the factory and if a new employee is not made to feel welcome and fit in with a certain group then it contributes to them leaving the organisation".*

The main reasons given for professional workers leaving were the rates of pay and promotional / career progression and opportunities. The HR Manager recognised that the company was not at the top of the scale in relation to pay and the majority of professional

staff left because they felt they could not move up in the organisation either at all or in a time frame that was acceptable to them. In the Quality department the reason for the higher rate of turnover was directly attributed to there being other accessible industries in the immediate vicinity.

> *"Other companies were looking for trained professionals in the quality field and were willing to pay a better rate and also actively headhunt from local industry".*

4.2.3 Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are conducted with all employees who leave the organisation regardless of how long they have been employed there, this includes students who are specifically taken on for the summer months. All employees complete an exit interview questionnaire prior to sitting down with the Human Resources Manager and then discuss the contents of the questionnaire. The exit interview usually takes place in the HR Manager's office on the last day of employment. There are two exit interview questionnaires used – one for hourly employees and one for salaried employees. The majority of questions are the same on each with the main difference being the salaried employees are asked about file passwords and PC information which will be of use to the next person who uses the PC.

An exit interview questionnaire is used as it is felt that important issues may not be asked or discussed if there is no prompt to do so and it is also felt that getting departing employees to complete the questionnaire prior to the actual interview allows them to give more time and consideration to their answers. The HR Manager felt that it was most appropriate to conduct the interview on the employees last day as they would be inclined to be more forthcoming with any sensitive information as opposed to giving this feedback when they had a number of days or weeks left in the organisation. It is also felt that the HR department are more suited to carry out the interview because they will be impartial and, where necessary, confidential.

Please see **Appendix 2** for copy of Exit Interview Questionnaire used by Company A.

The HR Manager believes the information gathered at exit interviews is, in the majority of cases, truthful. The HR Manager stated that:

> *"It is obviously taken into consideration the fact that the employees can be liberal with the truth because of the potential requirement to give them a good reference now or in the future ".*

The information gained at the exit interview is filed manually and analysed for specific trends. The trends which have been noted to-date are highlighted above in section 4.2.2.

4.2.4 Retention Strategies

The HR Manager confirmed that changes had been made to their policies as a direct result of information gained at the exit interview. The most significant change was in relation to benefits. A number of people gave the main reason for leaving as:

> *"The benefits and pay rates in the Company I am going to are better".*

As a result of the above, the Company decided to carry out a benchmarking project of benefits against others in the industry and in the locality. The result of this benchmarking highlighted the fact that the company was paying on the 'low' side and this was a factor in people leaving them. The company has since increased their rates of pay and also introduced more indirect benefits, for example, job sharing.

Other retention strategies have been put in place over the last eighteen months but not necessarily as a result of feedback from exit interviews. These strategies include short and long term training and development of all staff, manual and professional in order to motivate them in their current role and develop them for relevant future roles. The company has also put in place a recognition programme called 'Pride'. This is specifically to encourage and motivate all employees to a) take an interest in their work and think of better ways of doing things and b) to reward them financially for doing so and hope they will continue to come up with new ideas.

In relation to manual workers, specifically, there has been an effort made to try to vary their work as much as possible to ensure they do not get bored with the every-day mundane tasks. This is achieved by the Supervisors having a cross-training programme where employees work on different lines or machines every week or, in some instances, change departments.

The HR Manager does believe the exit interview has benefits, the main one being that you can see if a pattern is emerging as to why people are leaving. She believes the strategies have lead to a *"small decrease in employee turnover but nothing significant"*.

4.3 Company B

4.3.1 Employee Turnover Levels

This company does not have a 'formal' means of tracking employee turnover although they do know what their turnover levels are by looking at their electronic time and attendance system on a yearly basis and comparing employee start dates with their leaving date. In the past twelve months 200 employees have left the organisation and this is broken down as follows:-

Compulsory / Voluntary redundancy   -   178

Summer students	-	6
Normal attrition	-	16

In previous years (when compulsory / voluntary redundancies were not sought) the turnover rates were approximately 3%. A current rate of approximately 50% is primarily attributed to the redundancy situation. The average length of service of people who have left the organisation both voluntarily and through redundancy is 10 years. The reason for the redundancy was based on global restructuring which resulted in some of the business being moved abroad.

In normal circumstances, employee turnover was higher in professional level employees working in the production departments. At the moment their highest attrition seems to be from the Finance department and this is creating difficulties as it is very difficult to recruit professionals into the organisation because people have little confidence that the business is stable and, understandably, do not want to take up a new position in a company with an uncertain future.

4.3.2 Reasons for Employee Turnover

The response given to the question on why employees leave was that in 'normal' circumstances the reason for employee turnover in manual workers was due to staying at home to look after Children. In relation to the professional level employees the main reason given was job security. The HR manager feels this is due to a small number of redundancies over the last five to seven years.

> *"Mention the dreaded R (Redundancy) word and it creates uncertainty and ambiguity for employees".*

4.3.3 Exit Interviews

Exit Interviews are only conducted with professional level employees or 'staff'. The exit interview is conducted in the last week before the employee leaves and there is no set format or questionnaire. The interview usually takes place away from the work area e.g. conference room and the responsibility falls between the persons' supervisor and the HR Manager. Any notes taken at the exit interview are filed with the employees other records. There is no comprehensive analysis of the findings.

The HR Manager feels it is better to work with a 'blank canvas' when conducting the interviews as the interviewee feels free to talk about what they deem important rather than what the interviewer deems important. The logic between either the supervisor of the individual or the HR Manager conducting the interview is based on who happens to be free at the time.

> *"The company does not really have any set policy on who carries out the exit interview".*

The interview is carried out at some stage in the last week of employment and generally not the last day as the employee is usually only interested in saying goodbye to people and getting on their way.

The HR Manager said that exit interviews were not carried out with manual level employees because they never saw a worryingly high level of turnover and they were also easily replaced in the locality. It was felt that because professional level employees were more difficult to replace that there was value in interviewing them.

The HR Manager believes the information given at exit interviews is flawed because:-

> *"I do not believe employees give the real reason they are leaving and this is because of future references which may be required and*

because it's a small place syndrome i.e. you never know who you will meet or who your Boss will be in a future job so it is wise not to say anything negative about a person or the company".

The HR Manager does not believe the exit interview has any real benefits because she feels people will only tell you what you want to hear and, therefore, the information is not realistic.

4.3.4 Retention Strategies

The HR Manager confirmed that no new retention strategies or changes to existing ones were made as a result of the information gained at the exit interview. The main reason for this is because the company had a low natural turnover rate and did not have a retention problem, the only strategy it had put in place over the last number of years was to change working conditions. This involved changing employees start and finish times in order to facilitate them bringing their Children to childminders or school and collecting them. Other than that no other strategies had been put in place.

The above strategy was successful in that it allowed employees to juggle their work with childcare responsibilities and did retain employees who may have left because of this difficulty.

4.4   Company C

4.4.1 Employee Turnover Levels

Employee turnover is monitored by means of exit interviews. Exit interviews are carried out with all employees. The average length of service of employees who leave is approximately four years.

The organisation has in the past eighteen months gone through a downsizing period where a number of employees have been made redundant. Approximately 200 employees have left the organisation due to this factor. Outside of the redundancy situation, the average employee turnover rate is less than 1% in normal circumstances.

The employee turnover rate was highest in the Finance department but in the last twelve months this has decreased due to structure changes and specific training and development strategies. The turnover level also seemed to be higher for professional level employees as opposed to manual.

4.4.2 Reasons for Employee Turnover

The primary reason stated for manual workers leaving the organisation over the last eighteen months is due to redundancy. The HR Manager believes:

> *"If it were not for the redundancy situation very few manual level employees would leave the organisation".*

In the case of professional level employees, the main reason given was that they were headhunted by other local industries or recruitment consultants, again the HR Manager believes if it were not for this fact there would be a very small turnover rate.

The company is known to be a very good place to work, basic pay is high and benefits are generous, therefore, they do not have trouble in attracting candidates for vacancies and when somebody joins, with the odd exception, they tend to stay.

4.4.3 Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are conducted with all employees who leave the organisation. The turnover rate for the last number of years is less than 1% across all areas of the company and the HR Manager believes this is because *"we pay too much"*.

The exit interview is usually conducted in the last week of employment by either a Manager or HR and always away from the person's normal work area. A specific questionnaire is used because it is believed the same questions should be asked of all departing employees and also if a questionnaire is used, within reason, anybody can carry out the interview. Because the natural turnover rate is less than 1% there is generally always a HR professional available to carry out the exit interview – only if a HR professional is not available will a Manager of the exiting employee carry out the interview. It is felt that the last week of employment is the correct time to carry out the exit interview. If it is conducted prior to this it is felt that the person will not be as liberal as they should be because they may have to live with the repercussions of their opinions. The HR Manager confirmed that confidentiality is assured to all employees when completing an exit interview.

Please see **Appendix 3** for copy of Exit Interview Questionnaire used by Company C.

The information is stored manually and electronically and monitored for trends. The HR Manager believes that the exit interview does have benefits in that it can give a picture of why people are leaving – although a limited picture.

In relation to the exit interview itself, the HR Manager believes that:

> *"People will tell you what you want to hear as opposed to being totally up-front with their opinions. The reason for this is because the*

person does not want to burn any bridges and may need a reference in the future ".

4.4.4 Retention Strategies

Although the employee turnover rate is low for the company they have looked at two main strategies over the last number of years. One is in relation to manual employees. This has included some work / life balance strategies, particularly annualised hours. This works by allowing an employee to work a number of hours a week or month in whatever format they wish as long as they work a certain number of hours in the year. This has the advantage of allowing them to work a long week one-week and a short one the next.

In relation to professional level employees and in particular the Finance department, where turnover was higher than any other area in the plant, the structure was changed from six reporting layers to three. This gave people an opportunity to be closer to the Finance Director which made them feel they had a say in how things were done and more opportunities to progress in the organisation. There was also an individualised training programme put together for the finance employees.

Both of the above strategies were received very well by the employees and the HR Manager believes they were successful and contributed to a lower level of turnover.

4.5   Company D – Waters Technologies Ireland Ltd

4.5.1 Employee Turnover Levels

As the Company was a start-up which began in late 1997, employee turnover has been measured since 1999. The employee turnover rate over the last number of years has been 12% and the average length of service of people who left was 2 years.

Turnover is measured by taking the number of employees who have voluntarily left over a specific timeframe and who have or will be replaced. Exit interviews are used extensively as a means of monitoring employee turnover.

4.5.2 Reasons for Employee Turnover

There are two main reasons for employee turnover in the organisation and this information comes from direct analysis from exit interviews which highlighted the fact that manual level employees generally leave because they have to work a three shift cycle and professional level employees feel career opportunities and progression are not available to them in the short term.

4.5.3 Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are conducted with all employees who voluntarily leave and who have been employed for at least 3 months. Exit interviews are not carried out with employees with less than three months service because it is felt they are not with the organisation long enough to get a real feel for the culture and work practices. A structured exit interview questionnaire is used with all employees and it is felt that this is a more suitable approach rather than leaving the conversation open. It is also easier to analyse trends when a structured questionnaire is used.

Interviews are conducted on the last day of employment by the HR department. The reasons given for conducting the interviews on the last day is that employees will have been given the questionnaire beforehand and asked to complete it before the interview takes place and it is felt they will be more truthful and open when they are practically going out the door. Because the organisation is relatively small with 145 employees the HR department conducts the interviews because they understand the importance of the

exercise and have been trained to elicit more information than somebody who has not been trained. As the organisation grows, consideration will be given to having line managers conduct the interviews – with proper training.

Please see **Appendix 4** for copy of Exit Interview Questionnaire used by Company D.

The HR Manager believes the information gathered at the exit interview is more truthful at lower levels and less so from professional level employees.

> *"Employees at manual level, for example - Operators, have less to lose and tend to 'say it how it is' and do not seem to have an issue with really telling you where they have had issues. In contrast, the professional level employees are more concerned about their future career and who they may bump into down the line and tend to say everything was rosy in the garden and wouldn't really be going except it is an offer they couldn't refuse or an opportunity for promotion ".*

The HR Manager believes that the exit interview process is beneficial because it allows trends to be addressed when they present themselves and if they cannot be addressed then at least the organisation is aware of the issue and can plan for those instances. The exit interview questionnaires are stored both electronically and manually and analysed for comparisons or trends.

4.5.4 Retention Strategies

At Operator level one of the main reasons for turnover is a three shift cycle. This works on a three week cycle basis, week one is days, week two is nights and week three is evenings. The shift cycle has been considered on many occasions, however, other alternatives, for example, twelve hour shifts have not been greeted with enthusiasm either. Employees have suggested permanent days, nights and evenings but this is

something that the company would not implement as it completely limits the contact hours night and evening workers have with other employees and management in the organisation. The organisation has accepted that there will be a fall out by having the three shift cycle and plan to the best of their ability to deal with it.

In relation to professional level retention strategies where employees felt there was a lack of promotional opportunities, progress has been made by identifying 'high potential' employees and providing dedicated and, where necessary, accelerated career progression programmes. Succession planning has also been given a lot of time and resources. By identifying opportunities for employees higher up the organisation this allows for movement and progress at the lower levels in the organisation. It must also be recognised that, depending on the size of the organisation, it is not always going to be possible to fulfil the ambitions of all employees who want to progress at a pace where opportunities are not available.

A retention strategy aimed at all levels in the organisation was the introduction of job sharing which was introduced to facilitate employees with children who did not desire to work full time.

4.6   Conclusion

The interviews conducted with the three companies, plus my own organisation, provided an interesting and frank insight into industry practices. All of the industries knew what their turnover rates were by electronic systems, exit interviews or a mixture of both. Two of the companies were in a situation where, in normal circumstances, their turnover rate was low whilst the other two were considerably higher at 10% and 12%. It is apparent from research and the findings that employee turnover is inevitable. The important factor is that organisations understand why people leave and address accordingly. The exit interview would seem to have benefits in identifying why people leave.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

5.1   Overview

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate and assess the importance of the primary research by relating it to the secondary data, which is contained in the literature review. The discussion will concentrate on the main themes that have emerged from the literature review and which formed the basis of the interview questions.

5.2   Employee Turnover Levels

All four Companies measure employee turnover rates at some level and the main method of gathering data from departing employees is an exit interview. Exit interviews will be discussed specifically in point 5.5.

5.3   Reasons for Employee Turnover and the Implementation of Retention Strategies

Company A, over the last number of years, has had an employee turnover rate of over 10% and company D has an average turnover rate of 12%. Company B and C seem to have naturally low (when compulsory redundancy is taken out of the equation) employee turnover rates. All of the above companies are involved in manufacturing. There is a striking difference in the level of turnover in companies A and D and companies B and C.

IBEC (2004) conducted a Human Resources Management Survey and found that the average employee turnover figure for 2004 in manufacturing was 7.9%. Based on these figures, company A and D are above the average and company B and C considerably below the national average.

We will now discuss the main reasons highlighted for employee turnover from each of the companies.

5.3.1 Pay Rates

Company A believes one of the reasons for employee turnover at the unskilled level is due to the young age of the workforce who are more motivated by money than career progression or job security. The company also recognised they were not paying the market rate for the industry, and this resulted in people leaving. One of the reasons for turnover at the professional level was also due to rates of pay. Company C found they had a very low turnover rate and one of the contributing factors was that they 'pay too much'. Company B and D did not highlight pay rates as a contributing factor to their turnover levels.

Dibble (1999) believes that one of the contributing factors to employee turnover is paying employees at the middle of the market. Company A recognised that they were paying below the market rate and as a result lost employees.

As a result of the low pay rates, company A specifically went out to benchmark their pay and benefits and found that the benefits did not stack up against the competition.

Brannick (2001) believes that compensation and benefits can be effective in relation to retention. Barry and Greville (2001) concur with that and also believe that rewards play an important part of any retention strategy.

Company A were paying below the market rate and as a consequence had high turnover rates, whilst Company C were paying 'too much' and had a very low turnover rate.

Based on the above, the findings would strongly concur with research which suggests that paying well does result in lower turnover levels.

5.3.2 Shift Work

A major contributing factors for turnover at the unskilled level in company A and D was shift work. Employees would always move department or company if they could get off a three-shift cycle which included nights. Both companies looked at altering the shift pattern but did not move forward with any changes for a number of reasons. In company A, to help motivate employees, a programme was put in place called 'Pride'. The aim of this programme was to encourage employees to take an interest in their work, come up with better ways of doing things and receive recognition for good ideas which were implemented. Research has defined recognition as an important retention factor for organisations. These include Mooney (1999) who emphasises that it is not always the 'big' things that make a difference to employees but some simple activities that cost little, like public recognition. Gering and Conner (2002) encourage employers to demonstrate the value of each employee by providing focused reward and recognition. The Corporate Leadership Council (1999) goes a step further in relation to reward and recognition and advises keeping away from a 'one size fits all' scenario which over compensates mediocre talent and under compensates high caliber individuals.

The 'Pride' programme is a positive step in the right direction for recognising and rewarding positive contributions in light of the fact that the organization was not in a position to alter the shift pattern.

Company D looked at altering the shift pattern to a 'continental shift' system (12 hour shifts over 3 days) but found this was not acceptable to the work force either. The employees on the three shift cycle requested the company to cut out the night work altogether and remain with a two shift system. This was something the organisation could not do if it wanted to remain competitive and profitable. Maximum utilisation and efficiency required production to be running 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. It was recognised that a level of turnover would always be attributed to the three shift cycle and this would need to be managed accordingly. Both company A and D recognised that they

were going to continue to experience a level of turnover because of shift work and planned to manage the business around this.

As previously mentioned in the literature review section, Barry and Greville (2001) state that there is a natural attrition rate encouraged by organisations to avoid atrophy in the work environment.

5.3.3 Company Culture

Another factor for company A was the company culture. New employees felt it was very hard to integrate into the 'cliques' that had already formed in the company and this left them feeling unwelcome and isolated.

Barry and Greville (2001) found the employee culture and environment an important factor in keeping employees, he suggests instilling a culture of coaching and mentoring and creating a challenging work environment with a good atmosphere of teamwork and support. Mooney (1999) concurs with this by saying a good work environment is an important factor in employee retention. Gunnigle et al (1997) believes that the socialisation of employees into an organisation is critical and the Induction process plays an important factor in this. Employees may leave as a direct result of the work environment.

It is important that company A concentrate on their Induction programme and the socialisation of new employees into the organisation. The time and money spent on recruiting new employees may be wasted by not concentrating on the employees socialisation into the organisation.

5.3.4 Career Development / Progression

Companies A, C and D recognised they had a problem with career progression prospects for employees.

Company C was in relation to the Finance department. The level of turnover in the Finance department was higher than any other area and the reasons given were that there were too many layers and not enough opportunity to progress in this position. As a result of this, the company acted and reduced the amount of reporting layers. This gave the employees more access to and the opportunity to be recognised by their immediate Manager.

Company A concentrated on training and development initiatives to motivate employees in their role and develop them for future roles in the organisation and ultimately progression. Similarly, company D focused on succession planning and development programmes to help encourage employees to stay with the organization.

In relation to the problem of career progression being a contributing factor to the professional turnover rate, Pennington (2003) found that employees stay based on their opportunity to advance in their jobs, a point which is agreed with by Mooney (1999) who states that competitive salaries and career advancement play a pivotal role in employee retention. Barry and Greville (2001) believe that career development which contributes to employees' marketability is important in reducing employee turnover.

The importance of these factors is stated by Brannick (2001) who recommends improved training programmes for employees as part of retention strategies. Withers (2001) stresses the importance of employees feeling they have a chance for professional growth and development and finally, Gering and Conner (2002), encourage the creating of processes that provide daily engagement and advancement for employees.

This suggests that employees are generally interested in advancing in organisations and if they do not see a clear path to do so, they may leave. The above companies did act on these issues, particularly company C who reduced the number of reporting layers in the

finance department whilst company A and D concentrated on training and development in order to advance employees.

5.3.5 Headhunting

Company A and C believed their employees were being headhunted by other organisations. Graske et al (2001) stated that unsolicited job offers do contribute to turnover rates.

Both companies seemed to be resigned to the fact that their employees will be headhunted and there is nothing they can do about it. They believe their employees do not actively go out to seek another employer i.e. they are passive in this situation, the job comes to them! As a result neither company have put in place any strategy to counteract this, it's just 'one of those things'. The facts remain, however, that the employees would not leave even if they were headhunted if they were completely happy in their current environment. They are obviously unhappy about some aspect of their employment or the new employer is offering them something they do not already have. Neither companies are doing anything to try and find out what the underlying issues really are.

5.3.6 Family Commitments / Personal Circumstances

Although the turnover rate at company B is low, one of the reasons given for turnover was childcare. Employees felt they could not work on a full time basis and cope with the demands of full time childcare. In all of the companies surveyed, whether they had a low or relatively high turnover rate, they all introduced some form of work life balance / family friendly work initiatives in order to reduce employee turnover. Company A and D introduced job sharing opportunities which have been received very well by the workforce and have had a considerable take-up rate. Company B introduced flexi time in order to facilitate childcare arrangements i.e. dropping off and collecting children from school and company C now have annualised hours where employees can work a long or short week as long as they work a certain amount of hours in the year.

Work life balance / family friendly work initiatives are arrangements which help employees manage their work and personal lives. An IBEC Human Resources Management Survey (2004), described family friendly work initiatives as job sharing, flexi time, personalised hours, annualised hours, teleworking, compressed working week, term time working and career breaks.

Graske et al (2001) concurs with this as does a 2001 CIPD survey which found that changes in family situations and childcare were major factors in employee turnover.

Withers (2001) would be in direct agreement with the above and suggests being proactive in offering employees a better work / life balance in order to keep them. Barry and Greville (2001) would also suggest that work / life balance initiatives are good retention strategies.

All of the companies recognised the fact that employees find it difficult to manage their work and private lives and all introduced some type of system which made this balance easier to manage. The evidence suggests that allowing employees some flexibility in their working patterns to accommodate their personal circumstances can help retain them.

5.4   Low Turnover Rates

In contrast to company A and D, company B and C have low employee turnover rates, however, their turnover rates have been high in the last couple of years due to compulsory redundancy. Outside of this their turnover rates are around 1% which can create issues in itself because of a lack of 'new blood' coming into the organisation or fresh ideas. Barry and Greville (2001), suggest there should be a natural attrition rate encouraged by organisations to avoid atrophy in the work environment. The Corporate Leadership Council (1999) agree with this and state that trying to manage retention to such low levels can sometimes have a more negative effect than positive because short vision can develop with narrow views which hinder future opportunities.

Low turnover rates need to be managed, all be it differently, as well as high turnover rates. Low turnover rates do not necessarily mean you do not have retention issues as you may be retaining employees you do not want.

5.5   Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are one of the most common data collection methods used when an employee is leaving an organisation. (Kiechel, 1990). Kiechels' opinions on the use of exit interviews would be strongly backed up by many authors and surveys, these include, Frase-Blunt (2004) who ascertain that the information collected in an exit interview can give a company a unique perspective on its performance and employee satisfaction. People who leave may be brutally honest about their experiences without fear of immediate repercussions. In addition, it's likely they have recently been job hunting and interviewing and can offer some useful intelligence on how the company compares with other employers. White (1999) also believes that interviewing employees for their opinions before they leave can give the organisation valuable information on its strengths and weaknesses.

All of the companies interviewed use exit interviews as their primary method of gathering data on why employees leave the organisation and their opinions of various aspects of the company. In fact, company C uses it as their only method of data collection. Company B, in contrast to the others, only carry out exit interviews with professional level employees. Company B do not use a specific structured questionnaire for conducting the exit interviews whilst all the other companies do.

Company A and D conduct the exit interviews on the last day of employment because they believe employees will be more truthful in giving information on sensitive issues because they are on their way out the door. Companies B and C conduct the interviews in the last week of employment. Company B, in contrast to company A and D, found that it was better to conduct the interview before the last day as the employees were really only interested in going on their last day. Company C believe conducting the interview

before the last week would lead to unrealistic information because the employee did not want to have to deal with any repercussions before they left.

The truthfulness and value of the information gathered at exit interviews is not always seen to be wholly beneficial. Coleman (1999) suggests that people are unwilling to give genuine reasons for their departure and the findings would support this theory. All of the companies interviewed would, to varying extents, agree with the above. Whilst all agree there is a level of honesty and frankness, they would also suggest that employees are reserved in their opinions and 'tell you what you want to hear' because they may require a good reference in the future or for fear of burning bridges.

The above suggests that the exit interview process is, to some extent, flawed because people are not being completely honest about the reasons they leave which, in turn, means the strategies being implemented may not be getting to the root cause of the issues.

Company C was the only organisation who did not carry out exit interviews with all employees, use a specific questionnaire or do any type of analysis. They may be missing important information on the organisations practices by not interviewing unskilled employees. Perhaps, because of the very low turnover rate they do not believe this is an issue. There is no analysis of the findings from the exit interviews which may be due to the fact that trends are not always obvious because there is no structure or set questions used.

The conclusion for company B would indicate that the exit interview process is not something the company places a great deal of value on. This is contrary to the literature review which, according to the Corporate Leadership Council (2002) suggest that, typically, exit interviews are used to obtain information that will result in better selection, placement and development and training practices, as well as improved supervision. This in turn can assist to reduce attrition, improve working conditions, detect and correct problems on the job that may lead to termination, and in general, enhance public relations by having each employee leave with a positive view of the company.

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5.6 Effectiveness of Strategies

In relation to the effectiveness of the various strategies put in place in order to reduce employee turnover, company A believed that the strategies did not have a significant impact on reducing the level of turnover. Company B and C believe that because their turnover rate is low they do not really have to do anything significant apart from the family friendly policies they introduced. They both accept their employees will be headhunted and they are resigned to the fact that this is inevitable rather than trying to find out what the real problems are. Company D believe the strategies implemented as a result of the feedback from exit interviews are limited in their effectiveness because the information gathered from the exit interview is limited.

Apart from work / life balance initiatives introduced in company B, these companies did not actively or consciously make any other changes or put in place any particular strategies to reduce employee turnover as a direct result of the feedback gained at exit interview.

This concurs with Jackson (2004) who states that although many companies meet with departing employees to conduct exit interviews, they often fail to get a return on investment for the time spent developing the process and conducting the interviews. That's because much of the time, they forget the most important step in the exit interview process; linking the information gathered back to the organisations operations.

5.7   Conclusion

You can only address employee turnover if you truly understand what the issues are. The success of the retention strategy depends largely on the issue it is addressing. If exit interviews are the main source of information on why people are leaving and we believe they are not giving an accurate picture, can organisations realistically be addressing the

correct issues? Or is the exit interview process flawed to such an extent that there is little point in carrying them out in the first place.

The findings do not indicate that information from exit interviews is driving strategies that are significantly reducing high turnover rates.

Chapter Six

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Objectives of the study

Employee turnover is a situation that occurs in all organisations. Some companies spend a great deal of time and money trying to figure out why it happens and put strategies in place to stop valued employees from leaving. It is hoped that this study added some value to the existing research in this area. The objective of the primary research was to determine some of the reasons why employees leave an organisation, what type of strategies can be put in place in order to stop high turnover rates and if exit interviews are being conducted is the information being used to implement new retention strategies or change existing ones. In order to determine this, a number of research objectives were outlined in chapter three. These were as follows:-

- Assess how a number of manufacturing industries gather information from departing employees
- Assess the benefits of gathering this information and the accuracy of it
- Discuss when the best time to gather this information is, who should gather it and where
- Determine how that information is used to change current retention strategies or shape new ones

6.2 Literature Review Conclusions

The literature review highlighted the importance and necessity to gather and monitor information on employee turnover, even though it may exist in many different formats and in many different systems within an organisation. Once the information has been

gathered it is important that organisations analyse it in detail to both find out why employees leave and what can be changed or implemented in the current environment to ensure more do not follow.

The reasons why employees leave an organisation include, lack of career progression, below the market benefits, job insecurity, childcare, redundancy, uninteresting work and job offers from other companies. Some of the main strategies suggested in the literature review for keeping employees include, competitive salaries and benefits, good work environments, public recognition, work life balance initiatives, career development, learning opportunities and training and development.

It was noted in the literature review that exit interviews were a very common method of gathering information on why employees leave, whilst most of the companies believe exit interviews have benefits, they also recognise the process has limitations. Employees may not be totally honest in the information they provide at exit interviews for fear of retribution or future reference seeking.

It must also be recognised that some level of turnover in an organisation is desired to ensure new and fresh ideas are introduced to give different perspectives to new opportunities and ideas.

6.3 Primary Research Conclusions

All of the respondents interviewed in this project had methods of monitoring and measuring employee turnover, which, in all cases included exit interviews. It must be recognised that exit interviews have their limitations. The truthfulness and value of the information gathered at exit interviews is not always seen to be wholly beneficial. Because of the amount of time and money that is put into strategies to stop high levels of turnover, organisations need to look deeper into the reasons behind it.

Two of the organisations in normal circumstances had very low turnover rates but over the last number of months were going through a downsizing phase which entailed compulsory and voluntary redundancy situations. These companies had been used to managing turnover at a low rate. Low turnover rates can be as problematic as high turnover rates. The ideal balance is having a steady flow of 'new blood' into the organisation whilst not loosing high contributing employees.

Pay and benefits have an effect on turnover. Paying too little encourages employees to leave for better benefits whilst paying too much can instil a culture of apathy in the organisation i.e. people will never move on or be encouraged to stretch themselves because they are already getting what they want in terms of pay.

The reasons found for employee turnover in the primary research section and that of the literature had a strong correlation. The main reasons for turnover in the respondent companies included lack of career progression, poor benefits, culture and environment, family responsibilities and job insecurity. Strategies which were put in place by the surveyed organisations again agreed with some of the findings in the literature review, the two main strategies being the introduction of family friendly initiatives and career progression.

6.4 Limitations of the Project

There were a number of limitations encountered when undertaking this project and these included:-
- Having access to more organisations who would give facts and figures on their turnover rates and the reasons behind them.
- The author would have liked to undertake full case studies with more organisations broken down by organisation size, age of the company, type of industry and location of the industry to compare and contrast the results.
- The author would also have liked to have access to a number of former employees of each organisation in order to obtain their view on why they left

the organisation compared to why they said they left the organisation at their exit interview.

6.5 Recommendations

A number of recommendations can be made for organisations in general and for possible future research.

For Organisations in General:

Having low turnover rates is not necessarily the best situation. The implications of low turnover rates i.e. not having regular fresh employees into the organisation needs to be addressed as it can hinder future development. A low turnover rate could also encourage apathy and a less productive workforce or practices which, in turn, lead to low efficiency and profitability which, ultimately, lead to the business being moved to more low cost, productive, efficient countries.

To really find out why employees are leaving, organisations have to look beyond the traditional methods such as exit interviews. One strategy which could be used is to undertake an employee attitude survey to get to the bottom of why employees are really leaving. This would give the employees an opportunity to say what they really think with the security of being anonymous whilst giving the organisation an opportunity to implement strategies that are really getting to the root of the problems as opposed to putting money and energy into the wrong type of retention strategies.

For further research:

Where time permitted, follow up interviews could be conducted with employees who have left an organisation in the last 6 months to find out if the reason they gave at exit interview stage was still the reason they would now put forward as to why they left.

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Appendix 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section 1. Business Information

    a) What is the nature of your business?

    b) How long have you been in existence in Ireland?

    c) Is your business Irish or Foreign owned? If Foreign owned, what Country?

    d) How many employees do you currently have?

Section 2. Turnover Rate

    a) What was the employee turnover rate in your organisation for 2004?

    b) What was the average length of service of the people who left?

Section 3. Reasons for Employee Turnover

    a) What does your organisation believe are the main reasons for employee

       turnover?

Reason

1.	Not happy with benefits	___
2.	Boring Work	___
3.	Was Headhunted	___
4.	Did not feel appreciated	___
5.	Stayed at home to care for Children	___
6.	Did not get on with my Boss	___
7.	Did not get on with my work colleagues	___
8.	Was made redundant	___
9.	Required more flexibility in work hours	___
10.	Time spent commuting to/from job	___
11.	Was dismissed	___
12.	Wanted to move Country / County	___
13.	Set up my own business	___
14.	Health problems	___
15.	Was demoted	___

16.	Spouse moved job (relocation)	____
17.	Retired	____
18.	Lack of career progression	____
19.	Other (please give details)	____

Section 4.   Exit Interviews

a) When an employee is leaving the organisation, do you conduct an exit interview with them?

b) Do you conduct an exit interview with all employees who leave voluntarily?

c) When do you conduct the exit interview?

d) Where do you conduct the exit interview? e.g. away from persons work area, in persons work area, in a conference room etc.

e) Who carries out the exit interview in your organisation e.g. HR professional, employees Supervisor / Manager or a Third Party?

f) Do you believe people are truthful with the information they provide at the exit interview?

If No, why not?

g) What do you do with the information gathered at exit interviews?

h) Do you believe the exit interview has benefits?

If Yes, what are they?

If No, why?

Section 5.   Retention Strategies

a) Have you used the information gathered at the exit interview to either change a current strategy or implement a new strategy in relation to employee retention?

If Yes, give examples.

b) Has turnover reduced as a result of point a above?

APPENDIX 2

COMPANY A

EXIT INTERVIEW

Name: _____

Department: _____   **Supervisor:** _____

Start Date: _____   **Finish Date:** _____

Home Address: **Business Address:**

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING x?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Did your job match what was described to you at your interview when you joined x.
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What do you think are the positive and negatives about the company as a plant wide facility.
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you were responsible for your area, is there any thing you would change?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you find communications both in your area and at a plant level?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you feel that your ideas and suggestions are given enough considerations?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you like to change about your job here?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

GENERAL

Who will be responsible for your PC data (files and folders) on your leaving?

_____

Power on passwords and password protected documents details:

_____

TO BE RETURNED TO THE COMPANY:

Key (lockers & offices)/ Cards (clock and visa)/ Equipment Lab Top

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

EXIT INTERVIEW (WEEKLY)

Name: _____

Department: _____ **Supervisor:** _____

Start Date: _____ **Finish Date:** _____

Home Address: **Business Address:**

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING x?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Did your job match what was described to you at your interview when you joined x
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____

What so you think are the positive and negatives about the company as a plant wide facility.
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you were responsible for your area, is there any thing you would change?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____

How do you find communications both in your area and at a plant level?

Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you feel that your ideas and suggestions are given enough considerations?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you like to change about your job here?
Answer:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

GENERAL

TO BE RETURNED TO THE COMPANY:

Key (lockers & offices)/ Cards (clock and visa)/ Equipment Lab Top

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX 3

COMPANY C

Exit Interview Form

Name:	
Forwarding Address:	
Job Title:	
Department:	
Team Leader / Manager:	
Start Date:	
Date of Leaving:	

ABOUT THIS FORM

This form is to be completed, in conjunction with a member of the HR department to enable the company to understand individual's reasons for leaving.

The information contained in this form is totally confidential and will only be used with the permission of the ex-team member.

There are 5 sections to be completed which cover:

  1. Your views on your present job
  2. Reasons for Leaving
  3. Your relationships within the company
  4. Working Conditions
  5. Remuneration & Benefits

We would be grateful if you could be as candid as possible as all information we gain from you can only help us in improving the company as an employer.

Exit Interview Form Completed by:

Name:

Job Title:

SECTION 1: YOUR JOB

How would you rate your current job? (please tick)			
Excellent ☐	Good ☐	Satisfactory ☐	Poor ☐

Comments:

(a) What are the major factors that attracted you to the company? (please list reasons in order of priority)
1.
2.
3.
4.
(b) Which aspects of the job did you enjoy best and why?
(c) Which aspects of the job did you enjoy least and why?
(d) How, if at all, did the job / company differ from your original perception?

SECTION 2: REASONS FOR LEAVING

Why are you leaving the company? (Please tick)

    1.   ☐ Resignation *
    2.   ☐ Maternity
    3.   ☐ Retirement
    4.   ☐ Other

   *If you are resigning, please rank your reasons for leaving in order of importance. (1 = most important reason)

1. ☐ Pressure / Stress   10. ☐   Lack of job satisfaction

2. ☐ Career Opportunity /   11. ☐   Lack of Training

Promotion

3. ☐ Career Opportunity /		12. ☐	Taking up further education Same Level
4. ☐ Career Change		13. ☐	Insecurity – change
5. ☐ Money		14. ☐	Working environment
6. ☐ Benefits		15. ☐	Childcare Arrangements
7. ☐ Travel Problems		16. ☐	Working Pattern
8. ☐ Dissatisfaction with Manager		17. ☐	Other – Please specify
9. ☐ Clash of Personalities		18. ☐	Not enough work / No Challenge in the role

Please comment on the job content

What is the name and type of company yon are moving to ?

Where will yon be located?

What is your new role?

What is the key difference between the company's remuneration package and your new offer?

SECTION 3: RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE COMPANY

How would you rate your relationship with your team leader / manager? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

How would you rate your relationship(s) with your direct report(s) – if appropriate (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

How would you rate your relationship with your peer group? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

How would you rate general communication with the company? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:
What can be done to improve communications?

SECTION 4 : WORKING CONDITIONS AT THE COMPANY

How would you rate the company as a place to work? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

<table>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td></tr>
</table>

How do you rate the facilities on the site? (e.g. canteen) (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

How would you rate working conditions / support services, including technology? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Satisfactory ☐   Poor ☐
Comments:

SECTION 5: RENUMERATION & BENEFITS

How would you rate your salary? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐　　　　Good ☐　　　　Satisfactory ☐　　　　Poor ☐
Comments:

How would you rate the benefits you received? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐　　　　Good ☐　　　　Satisfactory ☐　　　　Poor ☐
Comments:

How do you rate career prospects within the company? (Please tick)
Excellent ☐　　　　Good ☐　　　　Satisfactory ☐　　　　Poor ☐
Comments:

Any additional comments you would like to make?	
Signed by Interviewee :	**Date:**
Signed by Interviewer :	**Date:**

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 4

COMPANY D

Exit Interview Questionnaire
Waters

Name:
Commencement Date:
Date of Leaving:
Job Title:
Department:

| **KEY: 1=Very Satisfied   2=Satisfied   3=Dissatisfied   4=Very Dissatisfied** |

1. Present work environment	1	2	3	4
On the job training				
Guidance and Instruction				
Job Satisfaction				
Personal work load				
Allocation of work in area				
Utilization of skill and expertise in area				

2 Opportunities for Career Development and progression	1	2	3	4
General promotional prospects				
Personal development opportunities				
Training courses appropriate to career				
Access to Education				

3 Pay & Conditions	1	2	3	4
Salary				
Working Environment				
Working hours				
Technology				
Health & safety compliance				
Benefits (List benefits if desired)				

4 Communications	1	2	3	4
Availability of information to enable me to work effectively				
Feedback on performance				
Effectiveness of team/departmental/company meetings				
Opportunity to discuss and influence issues				
Understanding of company policies and procedures				

5 Company	1	2	3	4
Induction Process				
Training				
Recruitment & Selection Process				
Performance Appraisal				
Company Reputation				

6 Supervision/ Management	1	2	3	4
Adequacy of Supervision				
Equality of treatment				
Development of co-operation and teamwork				
Encouraged/ listened to suggestions				
Resolution of complaints and problems				
Recognition				

Reason For Leaving	Tick
Type of Work	
Compensation	
Lack of Recognition	
Self Employment	
Quality of Supervision	
Working Conditions	
Health Reasons	
Retirement	
Travel/ Moving out of area	
Personal Reasons	
Career Opportunity (Please Specify):	
Dissatisfaction (Please Specify):	
Other (Please Specify):	

PLEASE FILL IN YOUR COMMENTS BELOW

What would you change about the company/your job?

How do you rate us as an employer?

Would you recommend the company to a friend?

Would you work with the company again?

What did you enjoy most about the job?

What did you dislike about the job?

What would you consider to be the strengths of the company?

Do you have any comments on your training?

What are your future plans?

Thank You for completing this questionnaire