

Exit interviews for Outgoing Board Members

While exit interviews are commonplace for employees leaving an organization, they are far less common for exiting board members. The opportunity to learn and improve is just as present when interviewing an outgoing board member as it is for an employee, with an additional added benefit – the chance to keep this individual connected to the organization as a supporter and donor. The exit interview is a graceful way to thank an outgoing board member, recognize his/her accomplishments and end their involvement on a positive note.

Who conducts the exit interview for board members?

The Board Chair should decide who and how the exit interview process is handled. The Board Chair and Executive Director may conduct the exit interview or perhaps the task is assigned to the Governance Committee. Some organizations ask the person working most closely with the outgoing member to take them to lunch, thank them, and get their advice on improving board service. What matters most is that the organization establishes a process to routinely thank its board volunteers and learn from their experience.

Here are some questions you can consider using:

1. How would you describe your board experience? How would you describe its culture? What did you like about being on the Board? What things about the Board could use improvement?
2. Were board and committee meetings productive? Was your time used effectively? If you were Board Chair, what would you do differently?
3. Did you feel like your contributions to the Board were fully appreciated? Did you feel you were listened to and respected in meetings?
4. Did a long-range planning process occur during your time on the board? What did you think of it?

5. Did you feel prepared for your board responsibility? Were board expectations made clear? Were you surprised by anything?
6. What do you think about how decisions were made by the Board? Any suggestions for improvement?
7. What are some things that would be important to tell Board candidates about the Board?
8. What is the single most important project or process the Board has accomplished in the last year? What should it next undertake?
9. Overall, how would you suggest improving the working of this board?
10. How would you like to stay involved with the organization?

