

Stay interview invitation email template

Invite a valued employee to a conversation about what keeps them here and what might make them leave.

Updated October 15, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team.

When to use this template

A stay interview is the exit interview you hold before the employee leaves. It's a structured conversation between a manager and a valued employee about what they enjoy, what frustrates them, and what would make them stay longer. It works best before problems appear, and it surfaces issues while you can still fix them.

The invitation matters, because an unexpected meeting with the manager makes many people nervous. Make clear this isn't a performance review and nothing is wrong. Share the questions in advance so the employee can think about them. Our employee retention strategies guide explains how stay interviews fit into a retention program.

Version 1: Manager invitation

SUBJECT A conversation about your work here (nothing is wrong!)

Hi [Employee first name],

I would like to set aside 30 minutes to talk about your work here: what you enjoy, what gets in the way, and what would make [Company] an even better place for you. This isn't a performance review, and nothing is wrong. I'm asking because you matter to this team, and I would rather hear ideas now than guess.

Here are the questions I will ask, so you can think about them ahead of time:

1. What do you look forward to most when you start work?
2. What frustrates you or slows you down?
3. What would you like to learn or do more of?
4. What might tempt you to leave?
5. What can I do differently to support you?

I have sent an invitation for [Day and time]. Move it if it doesn't work.

[Manager name]

Version 2: Follow-up after the conversation

SUBJECT Thanks for the conversation

Hi [Employee first name],

Thank you for being so open on [Day]. Here is what I heard and what I'm going to do.

What you value: [Summary]

What gets in the way: [Summary]

What I will do: [One or two specific actions, with dates]

Let's check in again in [Number] months. If anything changes before then, please tell me.

[Manager name]

Subject lines to try

- A conversation about your work here (nothing is wrong!)
- Thanks for the conversation
- 30 minutes to talk about what's working
- Your ideas for making work better
- Can we talk about your next year here?

How to personalize it

- Say clearly that nothing is wrong.
- Share the questions in advance.
- Follow up in writing with specific actions.
- Start with your highest-impact or highest-risk employees.

Mistakes to avoid

- Holding a stay interview only after someone resigns.
- Promising raises or promotions on the spot.
- Getting defensive about criticism.
- Asking the questions and then doing nothing.

When to send it

Once or twice a year for key employees, and around natural moments such as a work anniversary or after a big project. Avoid scheduling during review season, so it isn't mixed up with ratings.

| Before you hit send

- Feedback is tied to specific examples and dates, not personality.
- Deadlines avoid peak workload periods and holidays.
- Nonexempt employees can complete the task during paid time.
- HR reviewed anything formal, such as a PIP, for timing and consistency.
- Employees know how their input will be used.

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