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## Ways to deal with Exit of Star Performers | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director | Editor's Collection

It can be difficult to process and initial reactions often include wondering if you have done something wrong, and can encourage you to doubt your own management style or even business plan.

**Just remember that no-one is indispensable.**

Here's what you can do to deal with it –

- Accept Their Decision

It is tempting to offer the world in exchange for them staying but do you want this to become the norm, and can you afford the price? If someone has told their boss they



are handing in their notice and leaving, they have made up their mind and whilst they may wobble if offered a promotion/pay rise or anything else they want to bargain for, it is likely they will still leave. If they do decide to stay, they will not be fully engaged, motivated and will leave at the next opportunity. Mentally they have left the organisation, and you need to accept that.

- Prepare Yourself

You may be feeling knocked sideways, talk it over with a mentor, or just breathe and take stock. The other person has prepared and is ready for the conversation, and you need to have this discussion equally prepared. Ask them to keep it confidential and arrange to see them once you have gathered your thoughts. This should be as soon as possible – certainly on the same day – but will give you time to prepare.

Be clear that they will be missed but that you wish them well, and congratulate them on their new position. Stay professional, positive and encouraging.

- Telling the Team

You want to be clear that it is your role to tell the wider team, to avoid gossip and speculation and you need to do that as soon as possible. Ensure the senior team are told first, followed by communication through the hierarchy. Your communication plan needs to be relevant and appropriate to each group:

Senior Team – they will be concerned with the impact on the business, and what the contingency is for short term cover initially. There is time to discuss the long-term solution later.

Team – they will be concerned with the impact on their own workload, and maybe even their own job security and role which may need to change as a result. The communication needs to be positive. Involve them in the plan, and ask for input.

- Notice Period

Ensure that your employment contract has a suitable notice period. You can always agree on a shorter period should the business needs allow it, but you need time to process and plan before the star performer departs. If your star performer resigns, is five working days enough time to communicate to the organisation, get work covered and produce a contingency plan?

You may need them there for handover or it may be suitable due to client confidentiality to let the employee go on gardening leave. Whatever your decision, it must comply with their contract.

- Exit Interview – The Time To Ask Questions

There is a difference between asking what you can offer for them to stay, and discussing what has encouraged them to make this decision. Finding out their views on how the team works, how the company operates, what has attracted them to their new role, can all add value to your future plans. An exit interview can help stop losing your next star performer!

- It's A Small World

Your star performer can now have a role as a raving fan if you manage their departure appropriately. Being generous and supportive of their new venture will leave them speaking fondly of the organisation. Encourage them to leave a forwarding email so colleagues can stay in touch and say goodbye in person and wish them luck. You never know when you will come across them again – they may become a client, or even come back to work with you again.

- See The Positive

Now is a great time to review those job descriptions, bring in a short term consultant, change policies or procedures, review your succession planning.



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