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# Why Do Employees Quit on Their Bosses? Because They Never Get Asked These Important Questions

According to Gallup research, these questions may be the key to stopping your best people from leaving. 

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For nearly five decades now, ever since Robert K. Greenleaf wrote his seminal essay "The Servant as Leader," leadership thinkers have attempted to replicate, rehash, and reinterpret the concepts of great leadership.

Stripped down to its basic and most practical form, leadership has always been and will always be about meeting the needs of people and developing them to their fullest potential.

If the idea of "people development" is new, it has been proven as a key differentiator in those "100 Best Companies to Work For," published annually in *Fortune* magazine.

## **"Learning spirit"**

If we drill down to how great leaders go about developing people in those Best Companies, you'll see that they champion a "learning spirit" within their teams, providing them plenty of opportunities to learn, stretch, and grow.

There is a high commitment on the part of these leaders to give employees the right exposure and skills that fit their strengths, a well-defined career track, and meaningful work; there's also a commitment to identifying next-generation leaders to carry the torch so high-performing cultures are sustained.

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Part of growing employees is ensuring them of an engaging and positive work experience. If anybody has something to say about this idea, it's Gallup. Over the decades, it has interviewed tens of thousands of employees to find the core of a great workplace, resulting in its "Q12 Engagement Survey."

The results of this massive study boiled down to 12 questions every leader or manager needs to ask to measure the elements of a great workplace, *and* to ensure an awesome onboarding experience for their new hires.

If you're a leader or manager and your employees were asked the following about you, how would you do in this assessment?

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission/purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important

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11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

12. In the last year, I had opportunities to learn and grow.

Here's a fact: When employees don't get the tools, training, time, development, clear expectations, vision, or resources to do their jobs well, they experience low morale. They stop caring and they stop trying, unfortunately, early on in the game.

Here's a side note I think you'll find captivating: Research is saying that a typical employee's mind isn't made up about staying or leaving a new company until month six.

Great managers don't just tell employees what's expected of them and leave it at that; instead, they frequently talk with employees about their responsibilities and progress, especially during those first few months on the job. They don't save those critical conversations for once-a-year performance reviews.

### **3 things to ensure a great new hire experience**

With those 12 questions in mind, I want to bring out three key elements that every leader should implement for an effective new hire experience:

1. Be intentional about setting goals with measures for success (30, 60, 90 days, and so on) for the first six months of an employee's job or project. Make sure to discuss these plans periodically.
2. Help new hires identify key resources they must have to do their work.

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Ask them additional questions like: What are you learning? What roadblocks are you encountering? How can I (the manager) help in the best way possible? Any feedback about our onboarding that I can incorporate or pass on? Do you have a sense of what you'd like to learn next?

## Bringing it home

Asking these questions fosters a sense that employees are doing meaningful work, belonging, and making a difference. While some of these questions invite answers that might make leaders and managers uncomfortable at first, that's not a bad thing. The key is for such managers to be open to dialog, and do a bit of learning and introspection themselves. Additionally, asking smart follow-up questions will help such managers understand where each employee is coming from.



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## Modern CEO

from the publisher of *Fast Company* and *Inc.*

A refreshed look at leadership from the desk of CEO and chief content officer Stephanie Mehta

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