

ALIGNMENT CHECK

Sometimes They Quit Before They Tell You

7 ways to build alignment into employee relationships

If you've ever been blindsided by someone leaving your organization, consider that it might be one of these four reasons:

- They changed
- Their circumstances changed
- You (or your organization) changed
- They anticipated a change that hasn't happened

Each of these circumstances will lead to the loss of alignment—the disconnection between an employee and the forces that should be keeping them connected to you. Let's look at each briefly, and how they upset alignment.

They changed: If we aren't paying attention, our employees can change, and if we aren't in close communication with them, they can get out of alignment quickly. We often assume people are set in who they are and what their goals are, and this isn't always the case.

Their circumstances changed: Things can be going along well, and then a baby, wedding, divorce, death, or other life event can rock your employee's world. If you aren't tuned in, your employee could include changing organizations with other sweeping changes.

You (or your organization) changed: In some cases, your employee doesn't necessarily change, but the organization does. A common example is a new manager disrupting the employee's existing patterns, possibly due to a change in the vision or culture of the company.

They anticipated a change that hasn't happened: Sometimes employees join organizations with the hope (realistic or not!) that things will change. Opportunities will open up or negative aspects will be taken care of. When these things don't happen, employees may lose hope and trust in the organization.

So, what can you do about it?

It's important that you keep up with your people—that you stay in touch with their needs and notice when situations change. Just as important, keep your managers in tune with alignment or lack thereof. Managers are the most important relationship that will keep employees in alignment—or push them away.

We like to look at seven elements of alignment. For different people, some of these will be more important than others. These areas are: Skill, Growth, Behavior, Compensation, Leadership, Culture, and Lifestyle.

On the next page is a useful tool that provides questions you can ask an employee to check in on their alignment in these seven categories. You can do this interview at one sit-down meeting, or at regular check-ins. The purpose is that you see the breadth of issues that could cause someone to get knocked out of alignment.

ALIGNMENT CHECK

Name:	Position:
Job Alignment	
Skill Alignment How have your skills grown this year? How do your skills need to grow more to excel in this role?	
Growth Alignment How did you grow in the last year? How could you continue to grow within this position? What do you see as your next level of growth in the organization?	
Behavioral Alignment How do you feel your behavioral style is fitting with your role? What adjustments could make you more effective?	
Compensation Alignment How well are you meeting your compensation goals? How directly tied is your financial success to actions you control?	
Leadership Alignment How empowered do you feel in this role? How accountable do you feel? How is your relationship with your direct supervisor?	
Cultural Alignment How well are you fitting with the culture? What would you like to do to impact the culture?	
Lifestyle Alignment How well does the job fit with your desired lifestyle? What would make the job a better fit with your desired lifestyle?	