



BTAC BULLETIN

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE | LAW ENFORCEMENT & COUNTERINTELLIGENCE | CYBERSECURITY | EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS | THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

EMPLOYEE DEPARTURES

Organizational Change & Organizational Risk

Whether voluntary or involuntary, employee off-boarding represents a period of elevated risk and increased potential for insider threats. While most employees would not intentionally cause harm when departing, even the most well-meaning individual can inadvertently cause damage. It is important to recognize and respond appropriately to all behaviors of concern observed during periods of employee departures. It is equally important to maintain awareness of the employees who remain and are directly impacted by the absence of co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors. Whether through increased workload or concern about the impact of organizational changes, individual experiences during employee offboarding differ but risk indicators are consistent across most scenarios and should be addressed proactively.



Only 45% of employees that left their jobs were satisfied with how the employer handled the exit, increasing risk of becoming disgruntled.¹

RISK MITIGATION THROUGH INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Leaders should emphasize that a primary goal of InT programs is to mitigate risk through the proactive **support of employees** who display concerning behaviors or may be impacted by organizational change. Generally, the more stressors that exist in a person's life, the more difficult it will be for them to cope. As such, it is critical to remain observant as cumulative stress can escalate quickly and the effects may vary for everyone. Ascertaining a person's reaction to stressors is as important as identifying the stressors themselves. Leaders should seek to identify early warning signs and proactively implement

organizational solutions to decrease stress, increase transparency, reduce ambiguity and make support resources readily available (e.g., behavioral health, EAP, religious counseling). Leaders are also encouraged to continue to check in regularly, communicate in a timely and transparent manner, remain neutral, empathic, and avoid expressing personal opinions/views.

[-Workplace Stress Resources](#)
[-Tips for dealing with Uncertainty](#)
[-BTAC Bulletin on Leadership Transitions](#)



70% of Intellectual Property (IP) theft occurs within 90 days of employee departure²

DEPARTURE RISKS

MAY INCLUDE

- ❑ **Disgruntlement**— individuals leaving may feel frustrated with the circumstances or how their employer handled their departure. This can set the stage for risk of pathway to violence behavior, insider risk, or harm to self.
- ❑ **Espionage and Data theft** — departing employees may exfiltrate sensitive data, intellectual property, or trade secrets for personal gain or to benefit a competitor.
- ❑ **Unauthorized access** — retaining access to company or command systems post-departure can lead to data breaches or misuse of privileged information.
- ❑ **Sabotage** — disgruntled employees may delete or alter critical data, misconfigure servers, or plant malware.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

1 COMMUNICATE

- Communicate clearly, factually, and regularly; be transparent and, whenever possible, offer clear timelines and key milestones.
- Be mindful that lack of information leads employees to fill in gaps with assumptions, which may lead to increased fear, anger, and frustration.
- Respond to employees with patience and empathy; avoid expressing personal opinions/views.

2 COORDINATE

- Coordinate with HR, Labor & Employee Relations, IT, and personnel/physical security to make organized comprehensive departure plans.
- Establish a centralized location to document FAQs, allow employees to submit questions, and provide links to resources/support services.

3 CARE & SUPPORT

- Provide easy access to support services, including mental, emotional, financial, substance abuse, and career counseling programs for both departing and remaining employees.
- Help retained employees stay focused on the mission; ensure they have clear lines of communication with leadership



1. Agrawal, S & Wigert, B. (2019, February 11). [3 ways to create a positive exit experience for your employees](#). Gallup Workplace. 2. Agnew, R., (2019, OCT, 10). [Your Employees are Taking Your Data](#). Infosecurity Magazine.



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