

Investigating the Viability of Stay Interviews at the United States Patent and Trademark Office

An Interactive Qualifying Project submitted to the faculty of
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

December 15, 2022

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This report represents the work of the WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its website without editorial or peer review.

Abstract

The goal of this project was to determine the viability of a stay interview and design a process with questions that would assist the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with addressing retention challenges. To accomplish this goal, we first researched other organizations that used stay interviews. We then conducted ideation sessions with a USPTO team to compile and organize information and opinions that would be used to create the stay interview process. Finally, we created the questions that would be used in the stay interview. After our research and meetings, our recommendations included changing the name of the process to *stay conversations*, implementing stay conversations, evaluating the process after implementation, and a manager training program.

Acknowledgements

Our team would like to thank the following individuals and organizations that assisted us in countless ways throughout this project:

- Professors Fred and Linda Looft for their knowledge, support, and guidance throughout the duration of the project. They provided insightful feedback, upon which we improved our research, writing, and presentation skills.
- Martin Rater, for acting as our project head and main point of contact within the USPTO throughout the course of the project. His guidance proved invaluable to our team.
- Our sponsors at the USPTO, for providing us the opportunity to participate in this project, as well as assisting us throughout the process:
 - Gregory Tryder
 - Daniel Sullivan
 - David Fitzpatrick
- The following members of the USPTO for being part of our team during the project, working with during meetings on developing our deliverables:
 - William Kelleher
 - Kara Geisel
 - Robyn Sirkis
 - Amber Beam
- The participants of our peer survey, whose responses provided us with valuable data for our project.
- The staff at the Dupont Circle Metro Offices location for providing us a clean and functional workspace.
- Dave, Mauricio, and the rest of the staff at the Residence Inn by Marriott Dupont Circle location for their kindness and generosity during our stay.

Investigating the Viability of Stay Interviews at the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Executive Summary

December 15, 2022

Employee retention is important to all businesses, but especially to those that rely on skilled and knowledgeable employees for growth and development. To mitigate attrition, companies are working to develop strategies that help them understand why employees are quitting or choosing to stay.

A [stay interview](#) is designed to be a proactive process for assessing employees' opinions of the company (Bowes, 2022). Stay interviews are discussions between a facilitator, often a manager, and an individual employee where the facilitator asks about specific actions that they can take to increase the employee's engagement and retention (Finnegan, 2018a).

The USPTO is exploring stay interviews as a regular practice in their organization to help retain their talented and highly educated patent examiners. By using stay interviews, the USPTO will have a tool to measure what excites employees about coming to work, what might cause them to want to leave the organization, and how they can be better managers of their employees to support overall workplace wellness.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this project was to determine the viability of a stay interview and design a process with questions that would assist the USPTO with addressing retention challenges. To achieve the goal of this project, we developed the following three objectives.

1. Create vignettes of organizations' opinions regarding stay interview best practices.
2. Engage in ideation sessions with a team of USPTO experts to identify themes.
3. Develop stay interview questions.

Methods

To achieve this goal, we reviewed articles about stay interviews and examined how other employers implemented a stay interview process. To compile this information, we created short descriptions, or *vignettes*, about how each company implements and utilizes stay interviews. We

then worked with a team at the USPTO to identify themes and administrative procedures which were based both on our research and their knowledge of the organization. Lastly, we created open-ended stay interview questions that correlated to the identified themes.

Key Results

We developed vignettes of nine different organizations. Each vignette is a summary of a company's applications and opinions of stay interview practices and procedures identified during research. These vignettes helped us define themes and topics to be addressed during our ideation sessions with the USPTO.

Through six ideation sessions, we created two different Lotus Blossoms to categorize the themes and administrative procedures deemed necessary for a stay interview process at USPTO. For a full description of the Lotus Blossom Technique, see [4.2 Results from Objective Two: Lotus Blossoms and Branding](#). We decided in these sessions to change the terminology to a *stay conversation*.

We developed questions to be used by the USPTO in a stay conversation. These questions were categorized into three tiers. Tier One questions were designed to build trust between facilitators and employees. Tier Two is basic job-related questions. Tier Three questions are more career oriented and focus on organizational excellence.

We then implemented this tier system as a form of organization in the Question Library. Within the Tier Three section, the questions are categorized by employee length of service. Each length of service section is then further organized by the theme from which the questions were developed. Please see [Appendix H](#) to see the full formatting for the Question Library. We also developed four, one-page, quick reference guides (QRGs) to accompany the library, categorized by length of service and the eight major themes. These reference guides were designed to prepare the facilitator to conduct a stay conversation, based on who is participating in that conversation.

Additionally, we conducted a survey that was given to our peers that posed one question, "Imagine you are in your first year out of college: What are the TWO most important things that would attract you to work at the USPTO?" For details about the results of the survey, please refer to [4.4 Additional Peer Survey](#) in our Results chapter.

Recommendations

1. The USPTO should adopt and implement stay conversations.

The direct supervisor should facilitate the stay conversation. The responses to Tier Three questions should be noted anonymously and can be documented with the employee's consent. The method for documenting the employee responses will be left to the sponsor's discretion.

2. The USPTO should provide training for their managers regarding stay conversations.

Managers should receive training on how to conduct stay conversations effectively before being asked to conduct them with their examiners.

3. The USPTO should evaluate the stay conversation's effectiveness.

The USPTO should examine how well the stay conversation works for their agency. Below are four ways to measure that effectiveness.

1. Survey participating employees.
2. Measure the participation rate.
3. Compare retention rates within the USPTO when the organization sees fit.
4. Explore and monitor the consistency and continuity of the stay conversation over time.

Table of Contents

- Abstractii
- Acknowledgementsiii
- 1.0 Introduction 1
- 2.0 Background 2
 - 2.1 Employee Wellbeing 2
 - 2.1.1 Stress in the Workplace 2
 - 2.1.2 Employee Satisfaction..... 3
 - 2.1.3 The Impact of COVID-19 on Workplace Wellbeing..... 3
 - 2.2 Workplace Retention Strategies..... 3
 - 2.3 The United States Patent and Trademark Office..... 6
 - 2.3.1 Why Stay Interviews at the USPTO? 7
- 3.0 Methodology 8
 - 3.1 Identify, analyze, and create vignettes of external organizations’ opinions and procedures regarding stay interview best practices. 8
 - 3.2 Engage in ideation sessions with a team of USPTO experts to identify themes. 8
 - 3.3 Develop stay interview questions. 9
- 4.0 Results 10
 - 4.1 Objective One: Vignettes and Additional Best Practice Research 10
 - 4.1.1 Vignettes 10
 - 4.1.2 Additional Best Practice Research 11
 - 4.2 Objective Two: Lotus Blossoms and Branding 11
 - 4.2.1 Lotus Blossoms 11
 - 4.2.2 Stay Conversations Branding 13

4.3 Objective Three: Questions.....	13
4.4 Additional Peer Survey.....	14
4.5 Impediments: Managerial Concerns.....	15
5.0 Recommendations.....	16
References.....	17
Appendix A. Vignettes	23
Appendix B. How to Read Notes from Vignettes	27
Appendix C. Notes from Vignettes listed by Themes, Procedures, and Impacts	29
Appendix D. Notes from the vignettes listed by organization.....	33
Appendix E. Lotus Blossoms.....	38
Appendix F. USPTO Ideation Team Members.....	43
Appendix G. The Power of Stay Interviews Book Summary	44
Appendix H. Stay Conversation Questions Library	47
Appendix I. Quick Reference Guides	60

Authorship Table

Section	Author	Editor
Abstract	AN	All
Executive Summary	All	
1.0 Introduction	All	
2.0 Background Introduction	JS	
2.1 Employee Wellbeing	AN & JS	
2.2 Retention Strategies	YL & AN	
2.3 USPTO	JS & JM	
3.0 Methodology Intro	JM	
3.1 Methodology Objective 1	AN	
3.2 Methodology Objective 2	JM	
3.3 Methodology Objective 3	YL & JS	
4.0 Results Introduction	JS	
4.1 Results from Obj. 1	JS	
4.2 Results from Obj. 2	JS	
4.3 Results from Obj. 3	JS	
4.4 Survey	JM	
4.5 Impediments	YL	
5.1 Recommendation #1	AN	
5.2 Recommendation #2	JS	
5.2 Recommendation #3	JS	
Appendix A	All	
Appendix B	AN	
Appendix C	AN	
Appendix D	AN	
Appendix E	All	
Appendix F	YL	
Appendix G	JS	
Appendix H	All	
Appendix I	All	

1.0 Introduction

Employee retention is important to all businesses, but especially to those that rely on skilled and knowledgeable employees for growth and development. The inability to retain employees leads to costly sourcing and hiring of new personnel which directly impacts churn, the number of employees who leave a company over a given period. Churn typically results in productivity losses and an increase in the costs associated with hiring and training new employees (Narayanan et al., 2019).

Attrition is defined as the departure of employees from a company for any reason (“Definition of Attrition”, n.d.). To mitigate attrition, companies are working to develop strategies that help them understand why employees are quitting or choosing to stay. The strategies being investigated are designed to boost retention rates as companies work to enhance employee satisfaction while providing a better work environment.

Many companies are trying to address churn with Human Resources (HR) programs that focus on employee benefits. When hiring an employee, the initial offer typically must be enticing enough for the candidate to accept the job offer and, more importantly, stay at the job. While position and salary are key factors shown to positively impact retention, other factors make the hiring and retention problems more complex (Silaban & Syah, 2018). For example, COVID-19 affected businesses by forcing employee layoffs and requiring many employees to work remotely (Hughes, 2022).

[Stay interviews](#) have been implemented by some companies and are becoming increasingly important in today’s work environment. At a basic level, a stay interview is the opposite of an exit interview. It is designed to be proactive in assessing employees’ opinions of the company (Bowes, 2022). Stay interviews are designed to gain insight into what employees like and dislike about their work (Bowes, 2022). Because no two companies are alike, each organization investigates and develops a stay interview protocol to match the company’s needs

The goal of this project was to determine the viability of a stay interview and design a process with questions that would assist the [United States Patent and Trademark Office \(USPTO\)](#) with addressing retention challenges.

2.0 Background

This chapter will provide an overview of factors that affect employee retention and current strategies companies are using to improve retention rates.

2.1 Employee Wellbeing

Employee wellbeing is defined as the state of being happy at work (Bangalore, 2021). Wellbeing focuses on mental health but includes physical health as well. Managers can improve employees' wellbeing by creating programs and policies that remove stress, promote work-life balance, and give support physically and emotionally ("Effective Ways," 2021).

The wellbeing of an employee is crucial to retention because mental health, wellness, and satisfaction can all contribute to employee success. Recognizing the impact of wellbeing in the workplace, employers have invested in wellness programs to improve performance and retention. One company, [Bluedog Design](#) provided employees with mental health days, half-days on Fridays in the summer, access to mental health professionals, gym memberships, in-office massages, and pet insurance to encourage wellness (Braff, 2022). With these wellness resources in place, employees at Bluedog Design report they feel less stress and said that they are more likely to stay with the company (Braff, 2022).

2.1.1 Stress in the Workplace

Workplace stress is linked to poor job performance and worsening mental health. Poor performance from stress happens when the employee cannot accomplish the assigned task successfully or in a timely manner because they become unmotivated to work (Piao et al., 2022). [Deloitte US](#) defines "workplace burnout" as stress that causes exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. They conducted a survey in 2018 and found that 77% of employees feel workplace stress to the point where it influences them to want to leave their job (Malesic, 2022).

Managers can help employees suffering from workforce stress by communicating with employees and providing wellness resources. Communication and supportive resources can create mindfulness and awareness of an issue to be solved by management (Shute, 2021). Another way managers can help with an employee's stress is to give breaks and time off which encourages them to relax (Jones & Daigle, 2018). Because workplace stress lowers the motivation to complete work, wellbeing is important to the retention rate (Foy et al., 2019).

2.1.2 Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is defined as how content the employee is with their job and their experience working (“What is Employee Satisfaction?”, 2022). Satisfaction is a component of employee wellbeing and is a factor in employee retention. It can be assessed by measuring enjoyment of varied factors such as career development, benefits, work environment, and relationships with other employees (Mohammad et al., 2019). Employee satisfaction is critical to retention as 81% of employees that are satisfied with their company are more inclined to stay (Kimberly, 2022).

Factors that contribute to employee satisfaction are training, benefits, and trust between managers and staff because they trigger positive emotions such as confidence and enthusiasm (Golden, 2022). Training and trust between the manager and employee can improve satisfaction by giving the employee clarity in their role and support on how to complete their tasks. Benefits provide a reward along with pay to motivate and keep the employee satisfied (Prentice, 2022).

2.1.3 The Impact of COVID-19 on Workplace Wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the work environment, requiring companies to adapt and overcome many challenges as they navigated a new normal. Companies needed to develop solutions that could keep productivity high, while trying to minimize the burden placed on employees. Remote work or being able to work entirely from home without the need to go to the office, was one of the common solutions companies implemented to reduce the risk of employees contracting COVID-19 while at the workplace. However, remote work impacts how employees feel about their job (Kar, 2022). Some employees do not want to return to the office and favor a more permanent remote environment or a hybrid system that would allow them to come into the office a few days during the work week instead of full-time. Employees have enjoyed the benefits that come with hybrid work such as less commuting and a better work-life balance (Kar, 2022).

2.2 Workplace Retention Strategies

By early 2021, there was a labor shortage due to the [Great Resignation](#), a phenomenon in which many employees quit their jobs (Serenko, 2022). The “quit rate” rose from 1.6% in April 2020 to 3.0% in November 2021, reaching a historical high (Gittleman, 2022). The resignation rate demonstrated a need to adapt to the post-COVID-19 environment and why effective

retention strategies are necessary for maintaining a company's talents and ensuring the stability, growth, and development of the organization (Krishna & Garg, 2022).

Retention strategies have a considerable effect on employees' willingness to stay in their current positions. In the post-COVID-19 era, the emphasis on retention strategies has shifted towards building trust and commitment between organizations and employees. Organizations want to develop transparency in hopes of increasing employee longevity (Porkodi, 2022). Common retention strategies are monetary compensation, boosting work engagement, and professional development programs (Breitling et al., 2021).

Compensation

Financial compensation directly affects employee longevity (Saputra & Riana, 2021). Employment data has long indicated that a higher salary decreases the turnover rate for employees. Conversely, an unsatisfactory salary will result in an increase in turnover rate (Silaban & Syah, 2018). This implies that the employer must provide satisfactory wages to retain employees. In addition to salary, other forms of monetary compensation, such as bonuses, can help with retention (Tessema et al., 2022). Providing a bonus can demonstrate appreciation for employees' work and motivate them to stay.

Post-COVID-19, the focus has shifted from a single area of compensation to evaluating the entire compensation package. Employees still value the financial aspect of the package, but they are also more aware of the benefits a company is providing. Examples of these benefits are professional development programs, the ability to work from home, and student loan repayment plans (Stemmler & Hampton, 2020). Such benefits improve the wellbeing of employees by making them feel that the company is doing more than just paying them (De-la-Calle-Durán & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2021).

Professional Development

Employees value continuous growth and professional development (Cloutier et al., 2015). One way to show that the company is willing to invest in its current employees is by offering professional development programs. These programs are associated with improving or expanding employee skills (Breitling et al., 2021). According to one professional development survey, 56% of companies surveyed have already implemented coaching. Additionally, 39% of the companies surveyed are planning to include coaching and mentorship programs (Niebelschuetz, 2022).

[Adobe](#) offers employees up to \$1000 per year for short-term learning opportunities including conferences, professional memberships, or language courses (Professional Development Reimbursement, n.d.). Such programs show how the company supports its employee's growth and development. The inclusion of a training or development program also incentivizes loyalty by broadening the employees' involvement within the company (Krishna & Garg, 2022).

Through this sort of training, employees are less likely to feel stagnant in their current positions (Kamalaveni et al., 2019). Another professional development method that helps employees feel valued is internal hiring which not only saves the time and expense of recruiting new hires but can also promote loyalty (Bevis, 2018). Internal hiring is when a company fills a vacant role within the company, with an existing employee (Oliver, 2022). According to one study, internal promotion boosts motivation and retention as candidates stay 41% longer at a company with higher internal hiring rates compared to companies with lower internal hiring rates (Bayuk & Lloyd, 2021). Hiring internally has the potential to increase employees' attachment to the company and decrease turnover rates.

Engagement

Increasing employee engagement is one strategy to increase retention rates (Al-Emadi et al., 2015). Engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their current organizations ("What is engagement", 2017). According to Hanaysha (2016), work engagement has a significant and positive effect on employee retention. One way to boost engagement is employee recognition. Recognition can be in the form of verbal or written appreciation or non-monetary rewards at the company (Hancock, 2022). Employee recognition can positively impact engagement and boost employee motivation (Madhani, 2020).

Another way to increase engagement is by providing employees with feedback. Meaningful feedback can stimulate an employee's development, which boosts motivation (Knight et al., 2017). As a result, it is important for managers and supervisors to effectively communicate with their employees regarding their work to identify their developmental needs. It is also a way to demonstrate that the company is paying attention to the employees' efforts and willingness to see them grow (Nayak et al., 2020).

Stay Interviews

Managers are conducting stay interviews as a retention strategy because they are effective for receiving employee feedback on issues that influence turnover rate (Driscoll, 2022). Stay interviews are discussions between a facilitator, often a manager, and an individual employee where the facilitator asks about specific actions that they can take to increase the employee's engagement and retention (Finnegan, 2018a). Amy Zimmerman, the Chief People Officer of [Relay Payments](#) and co-founder and principal of [PeopleCo](#), states that stay interviews are an innovative idea if the managers use the feedback to address issues the employee expresses (Driscoll, 2022). Stay interviews can build trust between supervisors and employees. Trust is one of the most crucial factors that can increase retention and engagement because it creates healthy work relationships (Finnegan, 2018a). Liz Sweet, Head of Global Talent at [Intercom](#), has been using stay interviews separate from performance reviews (Jacobs, 2022). The interviews focus on specific improvements that raise engagement and retention, rather than giving the employees feedback designed to push them to perform better (Finnegan, 2018a). Stay interviews also allow an employer to tackle the issue of retention rates, by focusing on employee wellbeing. Since wellbeing has a strong correlation with employee turnover rates, it also assists with monitoring and managing overall workplace wellness (Skelton et al., 2019).

2.3 The United States Patent and Trademark Office

The USPTO is a federal agency with multiple offices across the United States (U.S.) and its headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. The agency has a strong commitment to carrying out its new mission to drive U.S. innovation, inclusive capitalism, and global competitiveness and its vision of unleashing America's potential. They accomplish this by fulfilling the mandate laid out in Article I, Section 8, Clause 8 of the Constitution, which was established to help promote and protect the rights that authors and inventors seek for their artistic creations and discoveries (United States Patent and Trademark Office, 2022b). The USPTO also plays a key role in advising the President of the United States, the Secretary of Commerce, and other U.S. agencies about "intellectual property (IP) policy, protection, and enforcement" (United States Patent and Trademark Office, 2022b). In short, the USPTO seeks to optimize patent and trademark quality and timeliness and provide domestic leadership to improve IP policy (United States Patent and Trademark Office, 2022a). Given the specialized nature of the work at the USPTO and the importance of retaining its talent and credibility, employee stability is of key importance.

2.3.1 Why Stay Interviews at the USPTO?

The USPTO is exploring stay interviews as a regular practice in their organization to help retain their talented and highly educated patent examiners. Their management makes a large investment in training patent examiners, so losing that talent would result in a loss of time and resources. According to internal reports, from 2001 to 2022, 43% of the total annual attrition happens in the first year (M. Rater, personal communication, November 14, 2022). The USPTO is hoping to establish a practice that engages current patent examiners and gauges how they feel about their current roles. The intentions behind the project are understanding and fostering what will make USPTO a desirable place to work. By using stay interviews, the USPTO will have a tool to measure what excites employees about coming to work, what might cause them to want to leave the organization, and how they can be better managers of their employees to support overall workplace wellness.

3.0 Methodology

The goal of this project was to determine the viability of a stay interview and design a process with questions that would assist the USPTO with addressing retention challenges. To achieve this goal, we developed the following three objectives.

1. Identify, analyze, and create vignettes of external organizations' opinions and procedures regarding stay interview best practices.
2. Engage in ideation sessions with a team of experts from the USPTO to identify themes.
3. Develop stay interview questions.

The methods associated with each of these objectives are detailed below.

3.1 Identify, analyze, and create vignettes of external organizations' opinions and procedures regarding stay interview best practices.

To achieve this objective, we reviewed articles about stay interviews and examined how other employers implemented a stay interview process. To compile this information, we created short descriptions, or *vignettes*, about how each company implements and utilizes stay interviews. We specifically took note of the themes that management focused on such as the procedures used, and improvements to the employees' quality of life, based on employee and management feedback.

3.2 Engage in ideation sessions with a team of USPTO experts to identify themes.

We worked with a team at the USPTO comprised of our sponsors, members of research and development, statisticians, and HR ([Appendix F](#)) to identify themes and administrative procedures which were based both on our research and their knowledge of the organization. The themes and administrative procedures would be used in Objective Three as the guide for what questions to include. With direction from our sponsor, themes were organized using the [Lotus Blossom Technique](#), which is further explained in our Results chapter. This process was repeated with a group of supervisory patent examiners (SPEs), as well as many of the same original team members to identify topics related to the implementation of stay interviews.

3.3 Develop stay interview questions.

We created open-ended questions that correlated to the identified stay interview themes. The questions were based on the themes derived from the corresponding Lotus Blossom. The USPTO team also developed questions based on their own background knowledge and shared those questions with us. We then compiled the questions in a document and sorted them by different categories which are elaborated upon in the Results chapter.

4.0 Results

This chapter presents the results from the methods conducted throughout the project.

4.1 Objective One: Vignettes and Additional Best Practice Research

4.1.1 Vignettes

The vignettes shown in [Appendix A](#) are the result of the first objective in our methodology. Each vignette is a summary of a company's stay interview practices and procedures identified during research.

For example, we created a vignette for Relay Payments, shown in Figure 1, using a published interview with their Chief People Officer, Amy Zimmerman, which detailed how management implemented stay interviews at their company (Driscoll, 2022). Reading through the interview, we noted the main points mentioned by Ms. Zimmerman. These points included how often the stay interview is conducted, what topics are covered in the interview, and what the company does with the responses. These were topics we deemed as valuable, due to our background research, and believed USPTO should consider them when crafting their own stay interview process. This process was repeated for all nine companies that we researched. These vignettes helped us define themes to be addressed during our ideation sessions with USPTO.

Relay Payments

Relay Payments have implemented stay interviews into their employee merit conversations, as a way of gathering employee feedback. The company is already very employee-need conscious, conducting brief monthly pulse surveys for short-term check-ins with employees in addition to yearly engagement surveys. However, for them, a stay interview is a way to let employees freely speak their minds directly to their managers in a different format than a standard questionnaire-style survey. They state that they cover three main topics during their interview, manager feedback, employee roles and growth in said roles, and the work culture and environment. Relay Payments records these interviews and analyzes them with a team in their HR department, to determine how they should address the employee concerns into applicable changes. To them, honest communication with the employee about their plans to address concerns, even if their plan ends up being to not change anything, demonstrates a willingness on the managerial staff's part to listen to criticism and makes employees feel heard. For Relay Payments, the stay interview is not the end-all solution, but it is a tool they're using to their benefit (Rubio-Licht, 2021).

Figure 1. Sample Vignette of Company Interview Practices and Procedures

4.1.2 Additional Best Practice Research

To supplement our best practice research, we consulted *The Power of Stay Interviews* by Richard P. Finnegan. Mr. Finnegan has been cited as one of the primary advocates for stay interviews. Therefore, we thought it would be valuable to read this book in addition to looking at other companies' practices. The book touched upon subjects such as the benefits of stay interviews, how and when to conduct them, and provided example stay interview questions and scenarios. For a more complete summary of the book, see [Appendix G](#).

4.2 Objective Two: Lotus Blossoms and Branding

4.2.1 Lotus Blossoms

Through six ideation sessions, we created two different Lotus Blossoms to document the themes and administrative procedures deemed necessary, based on our background knowledge and our sponsors' preferences, for a stay conversation process at USPTO. According to [Lucid Meetings](#) (n.d.),

The Lotus Blossom Technique is a structured brainstorming exercise used to expand on a central idea or problem. Teams place the original problem statement in the center box in a 3x3 matrix, then add related themes or elements of the problem in the 8 boxes surrounding it. After filling out this central box, 8 new grids are created with an idea from the first grid in the center. The process repeats, with the team adding 8 ideas for each of the 8 initial aspects from the first grid.

The result of performing the Lotus Blossom Technique is a Lotus Blossom.

We developed a list of eight themes, such as "Promotion potential", that would help us develop our own Lotus Blossom. We used our background research that related to stay interviews in conjunction with the USPTO team's knowledge to create a list of these themes, which can be found in Figure 2. Then, we, the WPI team, completed the Blossom independently. Concurrently, the USPTO team completed the same exercise.

Mental health/Well-being	Promotion potential	Employee Development
Engagement	Themes	Organizational Culture
Relationships	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Diversity and Equity

Figure 2: Central Blossom of Themes Lotus Blossom

After each group independently completed the Lotus Blossom, we met to share and discuss ideas identified by each team. This meeting proved to be informative for both teams as the research we completed, and the USPTO team’s knowledge of their organization, gave each team a unique perspective on the topics. Our team’s Lotus Blossom can be found in [Appendix E](#) under the title, *WPI Themes Lotus Blossom*. The USPTO team’s Lotus Blossom can also be found in [Appendix E](#) under the title, *USPTO Themes Lotus Blossom*.

After comparing the Lotus Blossoms, we combined the ideas from each team into one, cohesive Lotus Blossom, found in [Appendix E](#) under the title, *Combined Themes Lotus Blossom*. For example, under the “External factors” section, our team suggested “Availability of talent” as one potential idea and the USPTO team suggested “pipeline/quality of potential employees”. When combining ideas, these two concepts were merged into one broader category “Availability/pipeline/quality of talent and potential employees.”

After completing the Themes Lotus Blossom, we worked on forming the Implementation Lotus Blossom. Initially, we had ideas about how USPTO should implement a stay interview but struggled to finish the entire Lotus Blossom, due to our lack of knowledge of the agency’s operations. Following a conversation with the USPTO team about this concern, they invited a group of recently promoted supervisory patent examiners (SPEs) whose input would provide valuable information to the project. This group could give both the perspective of an

examiner/interviewee, and a supervisor/facilitator. The Lotus Blossom produced from the meeting with the SPEs can be found in [Appendix E](#) under the title *SPE Implementation Lotus Blossom*.

This meeting proved to be informative, as most of the group did not believe that a stay interview was a valuable resource and raised several concerns about using the technique at USPTO. After this concern was discussed with the USPTO team, we were instructed to continue working on a stay interview and to address the supervisors' concerns in our recommendations. This concern is further explored in section [4.5 Impediments: Managerial Concern](#).

4.2.2 Stay Conversations Branding

Originally, our goal involved designing a stay interview process. After talking to USPTO during ideation sessions, a decision was made to change the terminology to a *stay conversation*. USPTO noted that employees should feel a sense of belonging in their work environment. The reasoning behind the terminology change was to ease the concerns of supervisors and increase their comfort with the concept of the process.

4.3 Objective Three: Questions

Using the themes established in Objective Two, we developed questions to be used by the USPTO in a stay conversation. First, we discussed how to best organize the questions. We and the USPTO team agreed that organizing the questions by theme in a tiered library would help increase efficiency. The USPTO team sent us an initial draft of what they thought the library might look like, which was a table format. We kept the general organization of their idea but modified it to be like a searchable catalog, which they agreed to.

We categorized the questions into three tiers. Tier One consists of questions that were designed to build trust between facilitators and employees. An example of a Tier One question is, "How was your weekend?" Tier Two consists of basic job-related questions such as "What do you look forward to when you come to work?" Tier Three questions were derived specifically from the Themes Lotus Blossom and are more career and organizational excellence oriented. For example, a question addressing mental health for all employees would be "Are you able to unwind from work or take the time off you need to recharge?" Within the Tier Three section, the questions are categorized by employee length of service. There is a general section for questions that apply to all lengths of service, and four additional sections for first year, early-career,

middle-career, and 15+ years employees. Each length of service section is then further organized by the theme from which the questions were developed. The Question Library can be found in [Appendix H](#).

We then developed four one-page quick reference guides (QRGs) tailored to first-year, early-career, middle-career, and 15+ years, which can be seen in [Appendix I](#). The idea was developed during discussions with the USPTO team to expedite the preparation for the facilitator. For example, in the QRG for a first-year employee, the beginning of the document includes bullet points providing a brief overview of the stay conversation process. The guide then includes two questions per theme, allowing the facilitator to make a quick selection.

4.4 Additional Peer Survey

We conducted an anonymous, online survey that was given to our peers that posed one question, “Imagine you are in your first year out of college: What are the TWO most important things that would attract you to work at the USPTO?” The participant was prompted to select two answers from a list of multiple-choice options, including:

1. Company culture (positive environment, office goals, communication from managers)
2. Employee development (mentorships, collaborative work, expansion of skillset)
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) resources
4. Relationships (employee-manager, coworker-coworker, new hires-current employees)
5. Mental health/wellness resources (HR programs, mental health days, on-site psychiatrists)
6. Career development (promotions, recommendations, stepping-stones)
7. External factors (salary, job security, benefits)
8. None
9. Other

There were 59 responses, each differing in how many choices the participants selected. More specifically, some participants only selected one answer, while others selected three, which is why there are 122 answers selected instead of 118, the anticipated number if each of the participants had selected two answers. The answer distribution in Figure 3, “External factors...” had the highest number of responses, followed by “Company culture” and “Career development.”

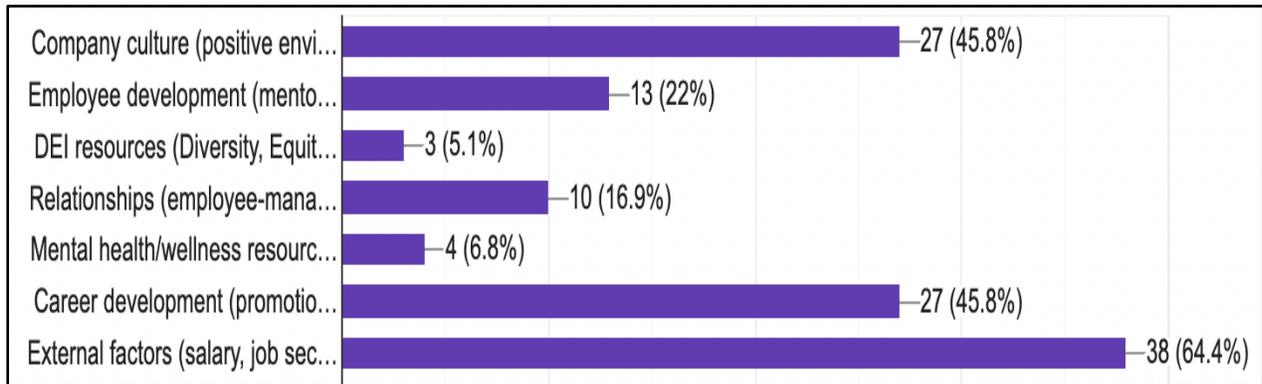


Figure 3: Answer distribution data from additional peer survey.

4.5 Impediments: Managerial Concerns

During the SPE ideation session mentioned previously, the SPEs expressed how employees may not feel comfortable talking or sharing information with their direct supervisors. The SPEs expressed concern that employees would believe anything they shared during the conversation could be used against them in the future. We believed this could prompt dishonest answers and reduce the effectiveness of stay conversations.

The second challenge we identified is that the SPEs feel uncomfortable conducting stay conversations. They expressed this concern because they report they were never trained to perform this exercise and it is perceived as additional responsibilities. This concern about a combination of additional work and lack of training created doubt for the project from the group of SPEs. Such an attitude can impact the development of trust between employees and supervisors.

5.0 Recommendations

1. The USPTO should adopt and implement stay conversations.

The direct supervisor should facilitate the stay conversation. However, for conversations that the employee may be uncomfortable having, the employee should be given a choice of who conducts the conversation. These optional facilitators could be an HR representative or a neutral third party. The stay conversations should not be one-way like an interview but rather a discussion that allows for questions and feedback from both sides. The responses to Tier Three questions should be noted anonymously and can be documented with the employee's consent. The method for documenting the employee responses will be left to the sponsor's discretion. The responses should be used to address, to the extent possible, issues raised by the employee or to make organizational changes if needed.

2. The USPTO should provide training for their managers regarding stay conversations.

Managers should receive training before being asked to conduct stay conversations with their examiners. Our discussions with SPEs indicated they were not fully confident in their ability to conduct a stay conversation. Therefore, a training program focused on how to best conduct a stay conversation should be given to managers before they conduct them to help increase their confidence.

3. The USPTO should evaluate the stay conversation's effectiveness.

The USPTO should examine how well the stay conversation works for their agency. The impacts of the stay conversations must be evaluated to determine the effectiveness and if changes need to be made to the process. Below are four ways to measure that effectiveness.

1. Survey employees who participate for feedback about the process itself.
2. Measure the participation rate. If a large portion of employees are willing to participate, then it signifies employees are likely finding value in the process.
3. Compare retention rates within the USPTO to see if there is a positive trend when the organization sees fit.
4. Explore and monitor the consistency and continuity of the stay conversation over time.

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Appendix A. Vignettes

The vignettes below are the result of the first objective in our methodology. Each vignette is a summary of an organizations' opinions and procedures regarding stay interview best practices. These summaries were then further categorized using the method presented in Appendices B, C, and D.

Paylocity

On a small scale, this company prioritizes high-performing and at-risk employees first when it comes to performing stay interviews. By focusing on this group, the managers receive a potential wealth of information about their employees' opinions of the company. Additionally, they value letting the employee pick an interview format that they are most comfortable with, such as video conferencing, phone calls, or in-person meetings. To engage the employee and foster a two-way conversation, managers encourage them to ask questions or raise any concerns that they have. After the stay interview, it is very important to follow up with the employee because it reiterates the employer's commitment to improving the company culture ("Engage and retain", 2022).

LinkedIn

This reputable company uses stay interviews to gather feedback from their employees and boost retention, as they help to identify what might make the employees want to leave. Something that they focus on is having one-on-one conversations with every employee on the team so that everyone feels valued and that their voices are heard (Hartvickson, 2021). For these managers, the goal of the stay interview is to identify issues or topics to address with the entire team to produce a more collaborative environment. Overall, they believe that this will benefit career development and improve company culture (Shandrow, 2022).

PeopleCo

A concept that this company pays close attention to is continuous feedback, which is offering ongoing support for employees and management through one-on-one mentorship and consultation. Amy Zimmerman, a co-founder of PeopleCo, says that stay interviews could be more effective if the managers use the feedback from the employees by either following up with them for further questions or fixing the necessary issues. These stay interviews focus on

employee engagement and development to combat retention obstacles. They are effective in creating a positive environment for employees and recognizing their accomplishments (Driscoll, 2022).

InterCom

This software company also refers to stay interviews as “retention” interviews, which is helpful for our research to know how other companies label it. They think that the interviews help to humanize the organization after several months of remote work. Liz Sweet, Head of Global Talent at InterCom, says “The market is hot, it’s an employees’ market now,” implying that the employees are the reason behind the success of the working world, so their feedback needs to be valued for the company to be successful (Jacobs, 2022).

Relay Payments

Relay Payments have implemented stay interviews into their employee merit conversations, as a way of gathering employee feedback. The company is already very employee-need conscious, conducting brief monthly pulse surveys for short-term check-ins with employees in addition to yearly engagement surveys. However, for them, a stay interview is a way to let employees freely speak their minds directly to their managers in a different format than a standard questionnaire-style survey. They state that they cover three main topics during their interview, manager feedback, employee roles and growth in said roles, and the work culture and environment. Relay Payments records these interviews and analyzes them with a team in their HR department, to determine how they should address the employee concerns into applicable changes. To them, honest communication with the employee about their plans to address concerns, even if their plan ends up being to not change anything, demonstrates a willingness on the managerial staff’s part to listen to criticism and makes employees feel heard. For Relay Payments, the stay interview is not the end-all solution, but it is a tool they’re using to their benefit (Rubio-Licht, 2021).

Adzuna

Adzuna is a job search company that has implemented stay interviews as a retention strategy. Lily Valentin, head of operations for North America at Adzuna, has been using stay interviews as informal conversations between the seniors and employees focusing mostly on challenges with work-life and motivation. They decide to conduct these at a minimum of twice a

year but try to schedule them quarterly (Cuadra, 2022). The interviews are scheduled for an hour, but the conversation doesn't need to be the whole hour. For the interviews, the employee should feel comfortable the entire time (Driscoll, 2022). To do this, the managers prepare beforehand to get the right timing, setting, and questions for the employee. After, the managers should take the feedback and either make changes or plan to make changes (Herd, 2022).

Isolved

Instead of calling the process a stay interview, Isolved has branded it as engagement check-ins. It shows the different company approach. Amy Mosher, the Chief People Officer at Isolved, believes that this process establishes transparency between managers and employees (Zigmond, 2022). It enables the employees to share their opinion and make them feel that they are trusted within the organization. This process also helps sharpen the manager's leadership skills as they will be more confident in supporting their teams (Bergeron, 2022). It also sets up a company culture that is centered around open communication, which could become a selling point to work at the company or motivate employees to stay (Zigmond, 2022).

Contented Cow Partners

Contented Cow Partners, a leadership company, recommends doing a stay interview soon after a new hire has started to learn issues with the onboarding process. This shows that the employer is invested in the employee's success and sets the tone for a regular schedule of stay interviews later. Bill Catlette, a partner at Contented Cow Partners, says "The [employer-employee] relationship is particularly fragile in the very early days and weeks." He also notes, "It's much more likely to break [early on] than it is after two years. So, I want to know what's working for [employees] and what's not [from the beginning]" (Hall, 2022). Catlette makes it known that he believes stay interviews encourage open discussion and show appreciation for the employee. This company's focus is on engagement with their employees, which they display through surveys and interviews. This sets the expectation that employers will make changes based on employee feedback. To meet this expectation, they may have follow-up meetings to find what actions would be best to solve a specific problem.

Narwhal Capital Management

At this company, stay interviews prompted leaders to update and improve their policies, such as parental leave. The managers were also able to gather ideas to strengthen the company

culture. Natalie Rogers, Director of Human Resources and Operations at Narwhal, says, “Stay interviews give you a look into what you are doing great, why your best employees stay with you, and what could make an employee leave” (Hall, 2022).

Appendix B. How to Read Notes from Vignettes

A visual of how notes from the vignettes are formatted. The notes are placed in the next two appendices.

Company by Categories

Themes

1. Specific Themes
 - a. Company
 - b. Company
 - i. Any explanation why the company fits, if given (sometimes not always available since the company may say they focus on it without specifics)

Procedures

1. Broad topic/procedure (ex. Talks about who is involved, when, etc.)
 - a. Company
 - i. Specific details

Impacts

1. Addressing Issues/themes
 - a. Company
 - i. Specific outcomes
2. Policy Changes
 - a. Company
 - i. Specific outcomes/description of the policy change

Categories by company

1. Themes
 - a. Specific theme
 - i. Any explanation why the company fits if given (sometimes not always available since the company may say they focus on it without specifics)
2. Procedures
 - a. Specific procedure

- i. Any specific explanation of what the company does (sometimes not always available since the company may say they do something without full details)

3. Impacts

- a. How they are addressing issues/themes
 - i. Specific outcomes

Appendix C.

Notes from Vignettes listed by Themes, Procedures, and Impacts

These are the specific notes about the companies researched in Objective 1. In this appendix, organizations are listed under different categories focused on in the research, such as themes, procedures, and impacts.

Themes

1. Organizational Culture
 - a. LinkedIn
 - b. PeopleCo
 - i. Making a good work environment
 - b. InterCom
 - i. Humanizing remote work
 - c. Relay Payments
 - i. ISolved
 - d. Narwhal Capital Management
2. Employee Development
 - a. LinkedIn
 - b. PeopleCo
 - c. Relay Payments
 - d. Adzuna
 - i. Long-term goals
 - e. ISolved
 - i. “Improving leadership skills”
 - ii. Employee roadmap
3. Engagement
 - a. LinkedIn
 - i. Value
 - ii. Productivity
 - b. PeopleCo
 - i. Recognition
 - c. Relay Payments
 - d. Adzuna
 - i. Recognition
 - e. ISolved
 - f. Contented Cow Partners

4. Relationship
 - a. Paylocity
 - b. Relay Payments
 - i. Manager feedback
 - c. ISolved
 - i. Build trust with employees
 - ii. Focus on giving support to employees from managers
 - d. Contented Cow Partners
5. Mental health/well-being
 - a. LinkedIn
 - i. Motivation
 - b. Adzuna
 - i. Motivation
 - ii. Employee satisfaction
6. External Factors
 - a. Narwhal Capital Management
 - i. Parental leave

Procedures

1. Who is involved
 - a. Paylocity
 - i. Prioritize interviewing high performing/at-risk employees
 - b. LinkedIn
 - i. 1-on-1 manager/employee
 - c. PeopleCo
 - i. 1-on-1 manager/employee
 - d. Relay Payments
 - i. Manager and employees
 - e. Adzuna
 - i. Senior employee interviews a junior employee
 - f. ISolved
 - i. Managers and employees
 - ii. Managers are trained on the importance of why employees stay
 - g. Contented Cow Partners
 - i. Focuses on new hires then sets regular occurrences afterward
 - ii. Talks about when and frequency
 - h. Relay Payments

- i. Once a year
 - i. Adzuna
 - i. 2-4 times a year
 - j. Contented Cow Partners
 - i. Soon after a new hire starts and then figure out regular occurrences after
- 2. How to conduct the interview
 - a. Relay Payments
 - i. Recorded
 - ii. One-way conversation - interviewer prompting interviewee
 - iii. Don't make it feel like a burden
 - iv. Don't send questions ahead
 - v. Ready to analyze and use feedback
 - b. Adzuna
 - i. Schedule for an hour even if not a full hour
 - ii. Conduct in a comfortable setting
 - c. ISolved
 - i. Not structured
 - ii. Not long, only scheduled when time conflicts
 - iii. Rebranding as "Engagement check-ins" to imply trust rather than transactional
 - iv. Continuous Improvement and Follow-Up
 - d. Paylocity
 - i. Makes follow-up meeting
 - e. PeopleCo
 - i. Must use feedback to fix issues

Impacts

- 4. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - a. LinkedIn
 - i. Better collaborative environment
 - ii. Improve culture
 - b. PeopleCo
 - i. creates good environment
 - c. Relay Payments
 - i. Manager-employee relationships improve by showing investment from managers
 - ii. Get employees on the same page for high-level themes

- d. Adzuna
 - i. Makes changes or a plan to change
- e. ISolved
 - i. Good culture
 - ii. Communication and relationships
- f. Contented Cow Partners
 - i. Trust in relationships
 - ii. Employers make changes based on results (engagement and relationships)
- 5. Policy Changes
 - a. Narwhal Capital Management
 - i. Feedback to update policies

Appendix D. Notes from Vignettes Listed by Organization

These are specified notes of the companies researched in Objective 1. In this appendix, the companies are organized by the different research categories such as themes, procedures, and impacts.

Paylocity

Categories

1. Theme
 - a. Relationship
2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. Prioritized high performing/at-risk employees
 - b. Action learning or continuous learning
 - i. A follow-up to get more
3. Impacts (Did not say)

LinkedIn

Categories

1. Theme
 - a. Organizational Culture
 - b. Employee Development
 - c. Engagement
 - i. Value
 - ii. Productivity
 - d. Mental Health
 - i. Motivation
2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. 1-on-1 manager and employee
3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Improves culture
 - ii. Address issues to make a better collaboratives environment

PeopleCo

Categories

1. Themes

- a. Engagement
 - i. recognition
- b. Employee development
- c. Organization culture
 - i. Making good environment
- 2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. 1-on-1 manager/employee
 - b. Continuous improvement
 - i. Must use feedback to fix issues
- 3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Creates good environment

InterCom

Categories

- 1. Themes
 - a. Organization culture
 - i. Humanizing remote work
- 2. Procedures (none)
- 3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Humanize organization after remote work

Relay Payments

Categories

- 1. Themes
 - a. Engagement
 - b. Organizational culture
 - c. Employee development
 - d. Relationships
 - i. Manager feedback
- 2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. Employees and manager
 - b. When
 - i. Once a year
 - c. How

- i. Recorded
 - ii. One-way conversation - interviewer prompting interviewee
 - iii. Don't make it feel like a burden
 - iv. Don't send questions ahead
 - v. Ready to analyze and use feedback
- 3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Gets employees on the same page for high-level themes
 - ii. manager-employee relationships improvement
 - iii. Show investment from managers

Adzuna

Categories

- 1. Themes
 - a. Engagement
 - i. Recognitions
 - b. Mental health/Well-being
 - i. Motivation
 - ii. Satisfaction
 - c. Employee development
 - i. Long-term goals
- 2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. Senior interviews junior (same department)
 - b. When
 - i. 2-4 times a year
 - c. How
 - i. Schedule for an hour even if not a full hour
 - ii. Conduct in a comfortable setting
- 3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Use feedback to make changes or create a plan to change

ISolved

Categories

- 1. Themes
 - a. Engagement

- b. Relationships
 - i. Build trust with employees
 - ii. Support for employees from managers
 - c. Employee development
 - i. “Improving leadership skills”
 - ii. roadmap
 - d. Company culture
2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. Managers and employees
 - ii. Managers are trained on the importance of why employees stay
 - b. How
 - i. Rebranding as “Engagement check-ins” to imply trust rather than transactional
 - ii. Not structured
 - iii. Not long, only scheduled when time conflicts
 3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Increased communication
 - ii. Good culture

Contented Cow Partners

Categories

1. Themes
 - a. Engagement
 - b. Relationship
2. Procedures
 - a. Who is involved?
 - i. Focuses on new hires and then keeps interviewing them regularly
 - b. When
 - i. Soon after a new hire starts and then regular occurrences after
3. Impacts
 - a. Addresses issues internal issues identified
 - i. Trust for employer
 - ii. Employers make changes based on results

Narwhal Capital Management

Categories

1. Themes
 1. Company culture
 2. External factors
 - a. Parental leave
2. Procedures (Did not say)
3. Impacts
 - a. Policy changes
 - i. Use feedback to update policies

Appendix E. Lotus Blossoms

These are the Lotus Blossoms discussed in the results section. Each Lotus Blossom is accompanied with a title and presented on a separate page starting on the next page.

WPI Themes Lotus Blossom

Stress/burnout	Satisfaction/Happiness at work	Mental Health Support (therapy, psychiatrist, etc.)
work/life balance	Mental health/Well-being	Physical Health/standard
Motivations to work	Do employees feel comfortable at work?	awareness and sensitivity

Roadmap for promotion	Incentives to reach for promotion	Performance Evaluation
0	Promotion potential	0
0	0	0

Training Programs	Opportunities for Collaborative Work	Clear Roadmap to follow
Having a mentor or someone to go to for any help	Employee Development	Feedback
Falling behind/stagnation	Utilization and expansion of skillset	proper accommodations and equipment

Do you feel valued?	Do you feel recognized?	Is work/projects being done/ worked on?
Are you participating in company's outings or events?	Engagement	Is work more than just a paycheck?
Collaboration and trust	Are you following the company's goals, objectives, and motto?	Is the USPTO just a stepping stone for an employee?

Mental health/Well-being	Promotion potential	Employee Development
Engagement	Themes (WPI Team)	Organizational Culture
Relationships	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Diversity and Equity

Do we have consistent methods between AUs/BUs	Positive Environment	Communication between managers and employees
Office Goals	Organizational Culture	Is good work recognized?
What do formal interactions look like?	What do informal interactions look like?	Do managers set the proper tone?

Peers	Managers	External Stakeholders
Organization	Relationships	Clients
Encouraged relationship between new hires and existing employees?	Mentors?	Other departments

Covid	Family	Current Events
Are we competitive (salary, job security)	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Federal Level Changes
Employee Lifestyle	Availability of Talent	Technological issues/developments

Do employees feel comfortable at work?	Can employees express themselves?	Demographics
Sensitivity to other groups	Diversity and Equity	Do employees feel unfairly treated by their peers?
Are there any judgements being made about diversity and equity in people around you?	Are resources available for employees in a position of greater need/less privilege?	Do employees feel unfairly treated by their managers?

USPTO Themes Lotus Blossom

Stress related to subjective ratings	Production based stress	OT burnout
Saving leave and not using it when needed	Mental health Well being	micromanager stress
Social connections with coworkers, clubs, etc. helps with mental well-being	Isolation of the job	Repetition stress

SPE position availability (recent hiring of SPEs/pause in SPE hiring)	Do you feel your job promotions are going at a rate you'd like? (i.e., not ready for it and stressed, or too slow and bored)	Not given the opportunities to develop skills to get promoted (training, details, etc.)
Ratings affect promotions	Promotion potential	unfair workloads
Do certain groups feel like it's harder for them to get promoted? (Age, ethnicity, etc.)	The politics and gripes of upper management cause people to not want to get promoted	is promotions a popularity contest/popular people getting choice details

Do you feel you have enough training to do the job to your satisfaction?	Peer assistance	IDP for examiners
leadership programs	Employee Development	developing your own interests...should they have the opportunity for their own interests
coaching and mentoring/mentorship program	Soft Skills	technical skills

Do you feel valued?	Do you feel connected to the mission of the office?	Is the work you are doing enjoyable?
It's hard to be engaged with the job when you are dealing with distractions	Engagement	Do my suggestions get considered (does upper management listen to employees)?
Opportunities (side projects, details etc.) improve engagement	Ignoring and regular negative feedback reduces engagement with the job	Do you know what is expected of you on the job?

Mental health/Well-being	Promotion potential	Employee Development
Engagement	Themes	Organizational Culture
Relationships	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Diversity and Equity

Do we have consistent methods between AUs/BU's	Are you rewarded/recognized for your work	Is the communication effective?
Office Goals	Organizational Culture	Are we being transparent enough?
telework changes the organizational culture	Are you aware of what your supervisor's goals are (do you know why the processes work the way they do?)	Failure is not always a negative (that is not something that's currently happening)

Peers	Managers	External Stakeholders
Organization	Relationships	Mentors
Friends and family at the office (Would you recommend working here to a family member?)	Affinity groups/clubs	relationships need to be two way not one way

Covid	Elder care/child care	Current Events
Are we competitive (salary, job security)	External factors (outside USPTO control)	pipeline/quality of potential employees
diversity of hires	perceptions on value of IP (does that have an impact on employees or potential employees)	Health factors of the employee

RA when needed for medical/cultural/religious ...are we making appropriate accommodations	equity and opportunities and influence (if we don't give diverse groups the same opportunities, then they don't have the same job)	do managers look and act like me
is there a self-comfort in sharing own culture	Diversity and Equity	0
0	0	0

Combined Themes Lotus Blossom

Stress/burnout	Saving leave and not using it when needed	Do employees feel comfortable at work?
Work/life balance	Mental health Well being	Social connections with coworkers, clubs, etc. helps with mental health
Motivations to work	Isolation of the job	Physical health/standard

SPE position availability (recent hiring of SPEs/pause in SPE hiring)	Do you feel your job promotions are going at a rate you'd like? (i.e., not ready for it and stressed, or too slow and bored)	Not given the opportunities to develop skills to get promoted (training, details, etc.)
Roadmap for promotion	Promotion potential	is promotions a popularity contest/popular people getting choice details
Do certain groups feel like it's harder for them to get promoted? (Age, ethnicity, etc.)	Performance Evaluation	Unfair workloads

Do you feel you have enough training to do the job to your satisfaction?	Opportunities for Collaborative Work	developing your own interests...should they have the opportunity for their own interests
Utilization and expansion of skillset	Employee Development	Soft/technical skills
Clear Roadmap to follow	coaching and mentoring/mentorship program	proper accommodations and equipment

Do you feel valued and recognized?	Do my suggestions and feedback get considered? Is there trust between managers and examiners?	Is work/projects being done/ worked on? Is it enjoyable?
It's hard to be engaged with the job when you are dealing with distractions	Engagement	Is work more than just a paycheck?
Opportunities (side projects, details, company outings, events, etc.)	Are you following the company's goals, objectives, expectations, and motto?	Is the USPTO just a steppingstone for an employee?

Mental health Well being	Promotion potential	Employee Development
Engagement	Themes	Organizational Culture
Relationships	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Diversity and Equity

Do we have consistent methods between AUs/BUS	Communication between employee and manager / Effective communication	Transparency
Office Goals	Organizational Culture	Recognition/Reward for good work
Remote work / telework	Employees and supervisors are on the same page	Constructive feedback

Peers	Managers	External Stakeholders
Organization (same department, other departments)	Relationships	Mentors-mentee/new hires
Affinity groups/clubs	Friends and family at the office (Would you recommend working here to a family member?)	relationships need to be two way not one way

Covid/other health factors	Family/elder care/child care	Current Events (can include federal level changes)
Are we competitive (salary, job security)	External factors (outside USPTO control)	Availability/pipeline/quality of talent and potential employees
employee lifestyles	perceptions on value of Intellectual Property (IP) (does that have an impact on employees or potential employees)	Technological issues/developments

equity and opportunities and influence (if we don't give diverse groups the same opportunities, then they don't have the same job)	Do employees feel unfairly treated by their peers?	Demographics (ethnic groups, religious) note: Do managers look and act like me?
Can employees express themselves? Are they comfortable sharing their own culture?	Diversity and Equity	Sensitivity to other groups
Are there any judgements being made about diversity and equity in people around you?	Are resources or reasonable accommodations available/being used?	Do employees feel unfairly treated by their peers?

SPE Implementation Lotus Blossom

short form of stay interviews during midyear EOY reviews	use the data on attritions. Conduct interviews right before the time data shows there is an increase in employees leaving	Milestones (1 year mark, <u>1.5-year</u> mark); check in in 24 months
Before an employee reaches GS 12	When do we do these things	When promotions happen (when they hit primary); this reflects employee investment in the job and may be good timing to ask why they invested
tracking a person throughout their career might give better data; did a single individual's motivation change for staying over time	can we identify characteristics of employees who stay at the office that make them stay	Survey employees who come back to the office after leaving

If we are asking the same person multiple times and they are still happy, or their happiness is increased	What action items can be implemented because of the stay interviews	reduced attrition rates
increased retention rates at the first year	How do we measure success?	How much actionable data is collected and used for the action items
make things transparent and explain what we action items we are performing as a direct result of the interview	The success is going to depend on the specific reason we are doing the stay interviews (need to discuss this to clarify for project)	We can identify things that the office is doing right

Have you considered leaving, and why?	What benefits attracted you <u>to</u> the office, and are these benefits a factor in you staying?	What factors do you like most about your job?
Do you feel you have marketable skills outside of the office now (do they want to leave but feel they can't)?	What questions do we ask?	Where do you see yourself in x <u>amount</u> of years?
Is there a person or experience that has had an impact on you wanting to stay?	What factors would cause you to leave? (job particulars) what things, if removed would make you want to leave	How do you feel about current changes at the office?

Who gives the interview?	Who do we give the interview to?	Does someone observe/audit the interview?
SPE should not be doing the stay interview; neutral third party, and give information back to the manager	Who participates in the stay interview?	People stay for their immediate supervisor; so having them out of the interview would give more honest answers
surveys may be more helpful instead of one-on-one interviews with open boxes	Does making it personal or impersonal (survey vs. in person) change the affect of the meeting	Having an anonymous option would allow the answers to be more accurate and honest
When do we do these things	Who participates in the stay interview?	What data do we collect/store?
How do we measure success?	Implementation and administration	How do we report out?
What questions do we ask?	Action learning or continuous improvement	Adoption or willingness to participate

0	0	0
0	What data do we collect/store?	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	How do we report out?	0
0	0	0

0	0	0
0	Action learning or continuous improvement	0
0	0	0

send a survey asking who would like to participate - so they have a choice; get their information so you can use that to select the employees with the	Other Time will get more people to participate	if you make it mandatory it may have an opposite affect (make people want to leave, it's not in their PAP so they may gripe)
Making it mandatory would require a negotiation with POPA	Adoption or willingness to participate	if managers encourage their employees, they may be more willing to take it
have managers select people to take the survey (but may provide a selective bias)	There may be more willingness to participate if employees know or see something being done with the information	POPA may ask for aggregate data which could help generate action items

Appendix F. USPTO Ideation Team Members

This is a list of USPTO experts who worked with us and discussed any questions, comments, or concerns. We met in ideation sessions and progress report meetings with most of the team, 1-2 times a week for the duration of the project.

Name	Position
Daniel Sullivan	Technology Center Director, Biotechnology, Chemical and Pharmaceuticals
Gregory Tryder	Technology Center Director, Chemical and Material Engineer
Martin Rater	Chief Statistician
Kara Geisel	Supervisory Patent Examiner
William Kelleher	Supervisory Patent Examiner
Robyn Sirkis	Supervisory Statistician
David Fitzpatrick	Management Analyst
Amber Beam	Senior Talent Management Strategist

Appendix G.

The Power of Stay Interviews Book Summary

Background

Richard P. Finnegan has been working in HR since 1978 and built a reputation in the last 20 years as someone who pioneered the concept of the stay interview when he started his own company, C-Suite Analytics (Finnegan, n.d.). His book, *The Power of Stay Interviews*, is a valuable resource for people looking to understand the concept of stay interview and potentially implement it in their businesses (“Explore books”, n.d.). Below is a summary of the key points he addresses.

Why Stay Interviews?

Retention has been an issue that companies have been trying to solve for decades. Companies began reaching out to third parties to try and get answers to the question of why their employees choose to leave. The third-party groups have primarily focused on surveys and data collection as their primary method, popularizing strategies such as climate surveys and exit surveys. However, Finnegan believes these strategies are flawed in that they fail to get to the root of why the employees are leaving. Instead, managers and HR departments are given a list of broad factors employees cite as their reasoning which may not even be truthful, especially in cases of an exit survey where employees may be incentivized to withhold information for fear of losing a job reference. Finnegan has found the solution to be the stay interview, a new strategy focused on gathering more individual and detailed responses from employees, that can help management teams better address the issues and concerns of their employees (Finnegan, 2018b).

Stay interviews have three main benefits that a traditional survey system does not. There is more immediate response time because entire surveys no longer must be completed to gather usable data. Secondly, solutions can be found that can impact the engagement and retention of specific employees, such as high-talent workers. Third, because managers often conduct these interviews with their employees, the managers become the ones directly responsible for finding solutions applicable to their individual team needs (Finnegan, 2018b).

The Role of Supervisors

The relationship between an employee and their supervisor is cited as the number one motivating factor in employees choosing to leave their job. Especially in today’s working

environment, employees want to see their managers take on a coach or mentor-type role in the workplace, and when managers don't match that expectation employees take note. Employees also cite trustworthiness as a valuable characteristic. Both insights are key because employees often view their company through the singular lens of their immediate supervisor. Therefore, a healthy relationship with their boss reflects favorably on the company (Finnegan, 2018b).

The Stay Interview Basics

The basic outline of a stay interview is a one-on-one setting, where a manager interviews an employee who they oversee. Finnegan recommends that a few key principles be followed to have the best possible stay interview. They should be done in person (when possible) and scheduled well in advance so that employees and managers have adequate time to prepare. Also, they should be clearly defined for the employee, to not turn into a performance review. The final, and most important point is that the managers should conduct the interview themselves. This builds a relationship with the employees, which positively contributes to the trust factor mentioned earlier (Finnegan, 2018b).

An Example Stay Interview

Finnegan recommends that the stay interview should not be very long, and his example only includes five questions. The questions are designed to be as encompassing to his key themes as possible, while also allowing room for further lines of question and follow-ups depending on how an employee responds. The five questions are as follows:

1. What do you look forward to on your commute to work?

Designed to take employees' minds off things like pay and benefits and focus on other factors that may contribute to an engaging work environment.

2. What are you learning here and what more do you want to learn?

Employees want their skills to be used, and this question is designed to measure that. This question also measures development and what they are trying to gain on the job.

3. Why do you stay here?

This question requires employees to say very bluntly what makes them stay. It's an admission to both the manager and potentially themselves and can prompt further thoughtful discussion.

4. When was the last time you thought about leaving, and what made you think that?

This question can help gauge issues that are driving employees out and puts a timeframe into how often employees are thinking about leaving by asking when.

5. What can I do to make your job better?

This question is a direct ask to the employee on what they think can be done better. Again, it can help build trust between the employee and supervisor, especially if the supervisor shows the drive to take the employee's critique seriously and act on it.

Due to the open dialogue nature of the stay interview, managers should generally be prepared to have to handle some tough questions and concerns from employees. Preparing a cheat sheet of resources and responses for common employee concerns over topics such as pay, or benefits can help ease a manager who may not be as comfortable addressing concerns (Finnegan, 2018b).

Appendix H.
Stay Conversation Questions Library

Here we present the Question Library organized by tiers and the length of service.

Table of Contents

Tier 1: Build Connection 50

Tier 2: Basic Job Conversation..... 50

Tier 3: Career Oriented and Organizational Excellence 50

 1. All Employee..... 50

 1.1 Mental Health 50

 1.2 Promotion Potential..... 51

 1.3 Employee Development 52

 1.4 Engagement 52

 1.5 Organizational Culture 53

 1.6 External Factors 53

 1.7 Diversity and Inclusion..... 54

 1.8 Relationships..... 54

 2. First Year 54

 2.1 Mental Health 54

 2.2 Promotion Potential..... 55

 2.3 Employee Development 55

 2.4 Engagement 55

 2.5 Organizational Culture 55

 2.6 External Factors 55

 2.7 Diversity and Inclusion..... 55

 2.8 Relationships..... 55

3. Early Career	55
3.1 Mental Health	55
3.2 Promotion Potential.....	56
3.3 Employee Development	56
3.4 Engagement	56
3.5 Organizational Culture	56
3.6 External Factors	57
3.7 Diversity and Inclusion.....	57
3.8 Relationships.....	57
4. Mid-Career	57
4.1 Mental Health	57
4.2 Promotion Potential.....	57
4.3 Employee Development	57
4.4 Engagement	57
4.5 Organizational Culture	57
4.6 External Factors	58
4.7 Diversity and Inclusion.....	58
4.8 Relationships.....	58
5. 15+ Years	58
5.1 Mental Health	58
5.2 Promotion Potential.....	58
5.3 Employee Development	58
5.4 Engagement	58
5.5 Organizational Culture	58
5.6 External Factors	58

5.7 Diversity and Inclusion.....	58
5.8 Relationships.....	59

Tier 1: Build Connection

- How was your weekend?
- How is your morning (afternoon/day) going so far?
- What are you currently reading or watching?
- Do you miss going to campus at all?

Tier 2: Basic Job Conversation

- Are you working on any interesting projects right now?
- What would you say the highlight of your week has been so far?
- Have you had any challenges this week that I might be able to help you with?
- What is the mood of the division (TC/workgroup/art unit)?
- What was the best experience you had with an applicant/employee over the past couple of weeks?
- What was the worst experience you had with an applicant/employee over the past couple of weeks?
- Have you worked on anything in the past couple of weeks that you were surprised wasn't acknowledged more?
- Was there anything you did over the past couple of weeks that you didn't think was that big of a deal, but someone really appreciated it?
- Did you see any blogs, articles, or social media mentions about USPTO recently that made you curious about something?
- What was it and were you able to get your questions answered?
- Have you seen any USPTO job announcements or detail opportunities that interested you recently?
 - If so, is there anything I can do to help?
- What do you look forward to when you come to work?
- What do you look forward to when you start your day?

Tier 3: Career Oriented and Organizational Excellence

1. All Employee

1.1 Mental Health

- How would you describe your current work-life balance?
- How would you describe your level of interaction with others? Too little; Just right; Too much?

- If you could change anything about the environment you work in to address this, what would that be?
- Are you able to unwind from work or take the time off you need to recharge?
- Are there particular things about that job that seem to cause you the most stress?
- When you need to get through a particularly tough patch, where do you find that motivation, or what inspires you?
- Do you practice any strategies to relieve burnout and stress that the USPTO could encourage or support better?
- Is there a colleague that you think has it all figured out?
 - What do they do that you admire, or try to emulate?
- Do you ever put your mental or physical well-being at risk for the sake of the job?
 - What could have been done or what should be done to assist you in those situations?
- Do you feel like you have a good work-life balance?
- Do you feel as though your social connections improve your mental health?
- Do you feel pressured to save leave and not use it when it is necessary?
- Have you ever compromised your mental or physical health for the job?
- Where do you find the motivation to come to work every day?
 - What about the job makes you unmotivated?
- Is there anything specific at work that stresses you out?
 - If so, is there anything we (USPTO) can do to help you?
- Do you feel the work is repetitive?
 - If so, would you like to try a different type of work here?
 - If so, is there anything we (USPTO) can do to help you?
- How often do you think that you'd like to be doing something different than examining patents on a day-to-day basis?
 - Are there practices that you recommend we (USPTO) should start looking into?

1.2 Promotion Potential

- Where do you see yourself...
 - Next year at this time?
 - In about 3 years?
 - In about 10 years?
- Have you recently tried to get promoted but were unsuccessful in doing so?
 - If so, what were you told, and was the reasoning sufficient?

- Do you feel a promotion is still a realistic possibility?
- Do you feel like promotions are a popularity contest in some way?
- Do you think it is more difficult for you to be promoted than your peers?
- Thinking of your own actions and behaviors, what do think is the biggest barrier to you getting promoted?
- Thinking of others' actions and behaviors, such as management in general, what do you think is the biggest barrier to you getting promoted?
- How do you view the concept of promotions? Are they more of a reward for past achievements, an acknowledgment of future potential, both, or something else?

1.3 Employee Development

- What are some skills that you are interested in developing?
- What other project or department do you wish to learn more about?
- What skills do you have that are being underutilized?
 - If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills?
 - If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing?
- Are there any additional resources that you wish to be provided?
- What is the one skill you think everyone in your position should continually try to develop?
- What skill do you think the USPTO puts way too much emphasis on?
- What about your current role do you dislike and think cannot be changed?
- What about your current role do you dislike and think can be changed?

1.4 Engagement

- Do you feel like you are valued? In what ways are shown that you are valued as an employee?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging in this job?
- What are some ways you are being recognized?
 - If they name some things, ask if they believe them to be adequate.
 - If you don't feel recognized, what kinds of ways do you think the USPTO can recognize good work?
- What are some ways you have received constructive feedback?
 - What do you think the feedback should look like?
 - What would be useful feedback for you?
- In what ways do you find this job meaningful?
 - What are some things that can be changed to make it meaningful?

- What other interests are you currently pursuing?
- What motivates you more? Your own sense of accomplishment (intrinsic motivation) or acknowledgment and recognition by others (extrinsic motivation)?
- Think about the time when you felt you were the most engaged with the USPTO mission. What was the environment around you or what were you experiencing to have that feeling?
- Jump ahead 5 years from now. Hypothetically you are receiving an honor or award from the Department of Commerce. What did you do to receive that recognition?
- Do you feel like your voice is being heard in your current role?

1.5 Organizational Culture

- What is your favorite thing about working for the USPTO?
- What is your least favorite thing about working for the USPTO?
- How effectively do you believe we (the USPTO) communicate with you?
- How effectively do you believe I (as a manager) communicate with you?
- Do you believe that there is enough transparency between the management and its employees?
- What would you like to see changed about the communication between management and employees?
 - Are there any improvements to be made?
- How would you describe our company culture (USPTO)?
- Are you aware of any company cultures or specific practices by other organizations that you'd like to see the USPTO emulate?
- If someone you don't know asks you what the USPTO does or what your job is, what do you tell them?
- How would you describe your role in advancing USPTO's mission?

1.6 External Factors

- What would you say makes your work meaningful?
- How much of an impact do current events have on your job?
- How much do the requirements of your job impact your ability to take care of your family members?
- What are factors in your personal life and lifestyle that you think weigh heavily on your job performance?
- How much of a concern is COVID-19 to you?
 - Is it a factor in your day-to-day life and decision-making?

- Do you feel as though our salaries and benefits are competitive against other organizations?
- What would tempt you to leave?
- Have you considered leaving in the past year?

1.7 Diversity and Inclusion

- Do you feel as though you are represented fairly in this job?
- Do you feel as though your peers treat you unfairly?
- Do you feel able to express yourself and your culture freely?
- Are adequate resources and accommodations being made available to you?
 - If not, what kinds of sources do you feel you are lacking?
- Do you feel as though nobody in the office shares your same [insert]?
 - Ethnic background?
 - Religious affiliation?
 - Does that make you feel isolated?

1.8 Relationships

- How is your relationship with your coworkers?
- How is your relationship with your supervisors?
- Do you believe that you can be honest with your supervisor? To HR?
- Are there enough outside-of-work groups in the USPTO?
 - Do you have an interest in joining/starting one?
- What is your relationship, if any, with your client?
- What could USPTO leadership do to strengthen your trust in them?

2. First Year

2.1 Mental Health

- Have you ever felt isolated in your job?
 - If so, do you feel that remote work is a cause of this?
 - Would you rather be in-office to feel less isolated?
- Do you find anything about your new job to be both unexpected and a significant challenge for you?
- If you had to reach out for career advice today, who would you choose, and do you feel that person or group would be able to assist you?
- If you just wanted to vent about something related to your job, and not necessarily expect a reaction, who would you reach out to today?
- What perceptions about this job, either positive or negative, do you have that you don't feel are shared by your peers or colleagues?

2.2 Promotion Potential

- Do you see yourself in a higher leadership position?
 - If not, what are you looking for in your position?
 - Is there anything that we (USPTO) can help you with?
- What is your planned or desired career path at the USPTO?
- Have we given you a clear roadmap for how to be promoted?
 - If we haven't, is this something you would be interested in?
 - What can be done to make it well-defined?

2.3 Employee Development

- Are there any aspects of the job that you wish were discussed or given in more detail during the training?
- Are there any development programs that you wish to see?
- Do you think you have received adequate training for this position?
 - Do you want additional training opportunities?

2.4 Engagement

- What motivates you to do your work every day?
 - Is money the only motivating factor?
 - What other things would attract you to work?

2.5 Organizational Culture

- Are the goals of the USPTO communicated to you effectively?
- Do we (the USPTO) offer enough constructive feedback?
 - Is constructive feedback in its current form effective?
 - What is the biggest difference between what you expected the culture of the office to be compared to what you have experienced? What is much better than expected or much worse than expected?

2.6 External Factors

- [Please refer to section 1.6 for questions.](#)

2.7 Diversity and Inclusion

- [Please refer to section 1.7 for questions.](#)

2.8 Relationships

- Could you talk about if anyone has been acting like a mentor to you?
 - If there is no one, are you interested in a mentorship program?

3. Early Career

3.1 Mental Health

- Have you ever felt isolated in your job?

- If so, do you feel that remote work is a cause of this?
- Would you rather be in-office to feel less isolated?
- How has your approach to seeking advice or support related to the job changed since your first year at the agency?
- Has your approach to handling stress changed since joining the agency?
- Is there anything you used to find overwhelming that now comes rather easy to you?
 - How did you overcome that feeling?
- Are you being challenged in the aspects of the job that you want to be challenged in?

3.2 Promotion Potential

- If a more senior position, including management positions, is of interest to you, what can we do in the short term to assist you?
- What is your planned or desired career path at the USPTO?
- Do you believe that promotions happen too infrequently?
- Do you feel that you aren't making any progress towards promotion if that's your current goal?
 - Have we given you a clear roadmap for how to be promoted?
 - If we haven't, is this something you would be interested in?
 - What can be done to make it well-defined?

3.3 Employee Development

- What skills do you have that are being underutilized?
 - If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills?
 - If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing?
- Are there any development programs that you wish to see?

3.4 Engagement

- What motivates you to do your work every day?
 - Is money the only motivating factor?
 - What other things would attract you to work?

3.5 Organizational Culture

- Are the goals of the USPTO communicated to you effectively?
- Do we (the USPTO) offer enough constructive feedback?
 - Is constructive feedback in its current form effective?

3.6 External Factors

- How recently have you looked outside the USPTO for a job?
 - What prompted you to look?

3.7 Diversity and Inclusion

- [Please refer to section 1.7 for questions.](#)

3.8 Relationships

- Could you talk about if anyone has been acting like a mentor to you?
 - If there is no one, are you interested in a mentorship program?

4. Mid-Career

4.1 Mental Health

- Is there anything you used to find overwhelming that now comes rather easy to you?
 - How did you overcome that feeling?
- Are you being challenged in the aspects of the job that you want to be challenged in?
- At this stage of your career, what are the pain points that you just continue to endure, but if removed, would make you think you could work here until retirement?

4.2 Promotion Potential

- If a more senior position, including management positions, is of interest to you, what can we do in the short term to assist you?
- Do you believe that promotions happen too infrequently?
- Do you feel that you aren't making any progress towards promotion if that's your current goal?
 - If so, are there ways USPTO can assist you in reaching this goal?

4.3 Employee Development

- What skills do you have that are being underutilized?
 - If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills?
 - If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing?

4.4 Engagement

- What motivated you to remain working here?

4.5 Organizational Culture

- If you could create the perfect organizational culture, what would you do first?

4.6 External Factors

- How recently have you looked outside the USPTO for a job?
 - What prompted you to look?
- If you were offered your dream job tomorrow, what would the USPTO have to do to keep you here?

4.7 Diversity and Inclusion

- [Please refer to section 1.7 for questions.](#)

4.8 Relationships

- [Please refer to section 1.8 for questions.](#)

5. 15+ Years

5.1 Mental Health

- If you could give any advice to newer employees about handling the stress of the job, what would it be?
- At this stage of your career, what are the pain points that you just continue to endure, but if removed, would make you think you could work here longer than currently planned?

5.2 Promotion Potential

- Do you believe that promotions happen too infrequently?
- If you are at the highest grade for your position, and aside from you taking a different job, is there anything that you think the office could do that would almost be better than a promotion?

5.3 Employee Development

- [Please refer to section 1.3 for questions.](#)

5.4 Engagement

- What motivated you to remain working here?
- In what ways do you find this job meaningful?
 - What are some things that can be changed to make it meaningful?

5.5 Organizational Culture

- If you could create the perfect organizational culture, what would you do first?

5.6 External Factors

- If you were offered your dream job tomorrow, what would the USPTO have to do to keep you here?

5.7 Diversity and Inclusion

- [Please refer to section 1.7 for questions.](#)

5.8 Relationships

- [Please refer to section 1.8 for questions.](#)

Appendix I. Quick Reference Guides

These Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) were designed in tandem with the Question Library. They are made to be a starting point for USPTO, as it was clear they wish to modify them over time. There are four QRGs, with each one presented below, beginning on the next page.

First-Year Employee

- This sheet is to be used after building a connection with employees through Tier One and Tier Two Questions or other means.
- Please pay special attention to employee responses regarding mental health, engagement, and employee development

Resources:

- If the employee gives a concerning answer, please provide them with (insert necessary info)
-

<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything you used to find overwhelming that now comes rather easy to you? • At this stage of your career, what are the pain points that you just continue to endure, but if removed, would make you think you could work here until retirement? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a more senior position, including management positions, is of interest to you, what can we do in the short term to assist you? • Do you feel that you aren't making any progress towards promotion if that's your current goal?
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates you to do your work every day? • What other interests are you currently pursuing? 	<p style="text-align: center;">External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say makes your work meaningful? • Have you considered leaving in the past year?
<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills do you have that are being underutilized? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills? ○ If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing? • Are there any development programs that you wish to see? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we (the USPTO) offer enough constructive feedback? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is constructive feedback in its current form effective? • Do you believe that there is enough transparency between the management and its employees?
<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity and Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel able to express yourself and your culture freely? • Are adequate resources and accommodations being made available to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, what kinds of sources do you feel you are lacking? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there enough outside-of-work groups in the USPTO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you have an interest in joining/starting one? • How is your relationship with your coworkers? Supervisors?

Early Career Employee

- This sheet is to be used after building a connection with employees through Tier One and Tier Two Questions or other means.
- Please pay special attention to employee responses regarding promotional potential, engagement, and employee development

Resources:

- If the employee gives a concerning answer, please provide them with (insert necessary info)

<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has your approach to seeking advice or support related to the job changed since your first year at the agency? • Has your approach to handling stress changed since joining the agency? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a more senior position, including management positions, is of interest to you, what can we do in the short term to assist you? • Have we given you a clear roadmap for how to be promoted?
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jump ahead 5 years from now. Hypothetically you are receiving a honor or award from the Department of Commerce. What did you do to receive that recognition? • What motivates you to do your work every day? 	<p style="text-align: center;">External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are factors in your personal life and lifestyle that you think weigh heavily on your job performance? • What would tempt you to leave this job?
<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills do you have that are being underutilized? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills? ○ If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing? • Are there any development programs that you wish to see? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe our company culture (USPTO)? • What would you like to see changed about the communication between management and employees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any improvements to be made?
<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity and Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel as though you are represented fairly in this job? • Are adequate resources and accommodations being made available to you? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there enough outside-of-work groups in the USPTO? • Do you believe that you can be honest with your supervisor? HR?

Mid-Career Employee

- This sheet is to be used after building a connection with employees through Tier One and Tier Two Questions or other means.
- Please pay special attention to employee responses regarding employee development, engagement, and promotional potential

Resources:

- If the employee gives a concerning answer, please provide them with (insert necessary info)

<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything you used to find overwhelming that now comes rather easy to you? • At this stage of your career, what are the pain points that you just continue to endure, but if removed, would make you think you could work here until retirement? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a more senior position, including management positions, is of interest to you, what can we do in the short term to assist you? • Do you feel that you aren't making any progress towards promotion if that's your current goal?
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivates you to do your work every day? • What other interests are you currently pursuing? 	<p style="text-align: center;">External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say makes your work meaningful? • Have you considered leaving in the past year?
<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills do you have that are being underutilized? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do, what can we do as an organization to help you use and develop those skills? ○ If you don't have any, what are some skills that you are interested in developing? • Are there any development programs that you wish to see? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we (the USPTO) offer enough constructive feedback? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is constructive feedback in its current form effective? • Do you believe that there is enough transparency between the management and its employees?
<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity and Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel able to express yourself and your culture freely? • Are adequate resources and accommodations being made available to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If not, what kinds of sources do you feel you are lacking? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there enough outside-of-work groups in the USPTO? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you have an interest in joining/starting one? • How is your relationship with your coworkers? Supervisors?

15+ Year Employee

- This sheet is to be used after building a connection with employees through Tier One and Tier Two Questions or other means.
- Please pay special attention to employee responses regarding, engagement, and employee development, and Organizational Culture

Resources:

- If the employee gives a concerning answer, please provide them with (insert necessary info)

<p style="text-align: center;">Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you had to reach out for career advice today, who would you choose and do you feel that person or group would be able to assist you? • What perceptions about this job, either positive or negative, do you have that you don't feel are shared by your peers or colleagues? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Promotion Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are at the highest grade for your position, and aside from you taking a different job, is there anything that you think the office could do that would almost be better than a promotion? • Where do you see yourself... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next year at this time? ○ In about 3 years? ○ In about 10 years?
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What motivated you to remain working here? • In what ways do you find this job meaningful? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are some things that can be changed to make it meaningful? 	<p style="text-align: center;">External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered leaving in the past year? • What are factors in your personal life and lifestyle that you think weigh heavily on your job performance?
<p style="text-align: center;">Employee Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some skills that you are interested in developing? • Is there another project or department that you wish to learn more about? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Organizational Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you could create the perfect organizational culture, what would you do first? • Do you believe that there is enough transparency between the management and its employees?
<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity and Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel able to express yourself and your culture freely? • Do you feel as though you are represented fairly in this job? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe that you can be honest with your supervisor? To HR? • What could USPTO leadership do to strengthen your trust in them?