



case study / Employee Transition System

# Exit Thematic Insights

Our analysis draws on over 2,000 qualitative exit responses collected between 2016 and 2026 through the Omnicor Employee Transition System (ETS), spanning five organisations across the education, healthcare, and financial services sectors



# Table of Contents

1. Overview .....	3
2. Why This Matters .....	4
3. Approach .....	5
4. Key Insights .....	6
5. Key Insights: Executive Synthesis .....	12
6. Recommendations for HR and Leadership.....	13
7. Why Omnicor .....	15

# Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: THEMATIC BREAKDOWN OF DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE EXITS .....	6
FIGURE 2: THEMATIC BREAKDOWN OF DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE EXITS PER INDUSTRY .....	8
FIGURE 3: THEMATIC BREAKDOWN OF WHAT NEW ORGANISATION OFFERS .....	9
FIGURE 4: THEMATIC BREAKDOWN OF WHAT NEW ORGANISATIONS OFFER PER INDUSTRY...	11

# 1. Overview

Employee exits are often treated as administrative formalities, but they are among the most strategically revealing moments in the employee lifecycle. When an employee decides to leave, they are pointing out exactly where the organisation's systems, leadership, culture, or value proposition no longer meet their needs.

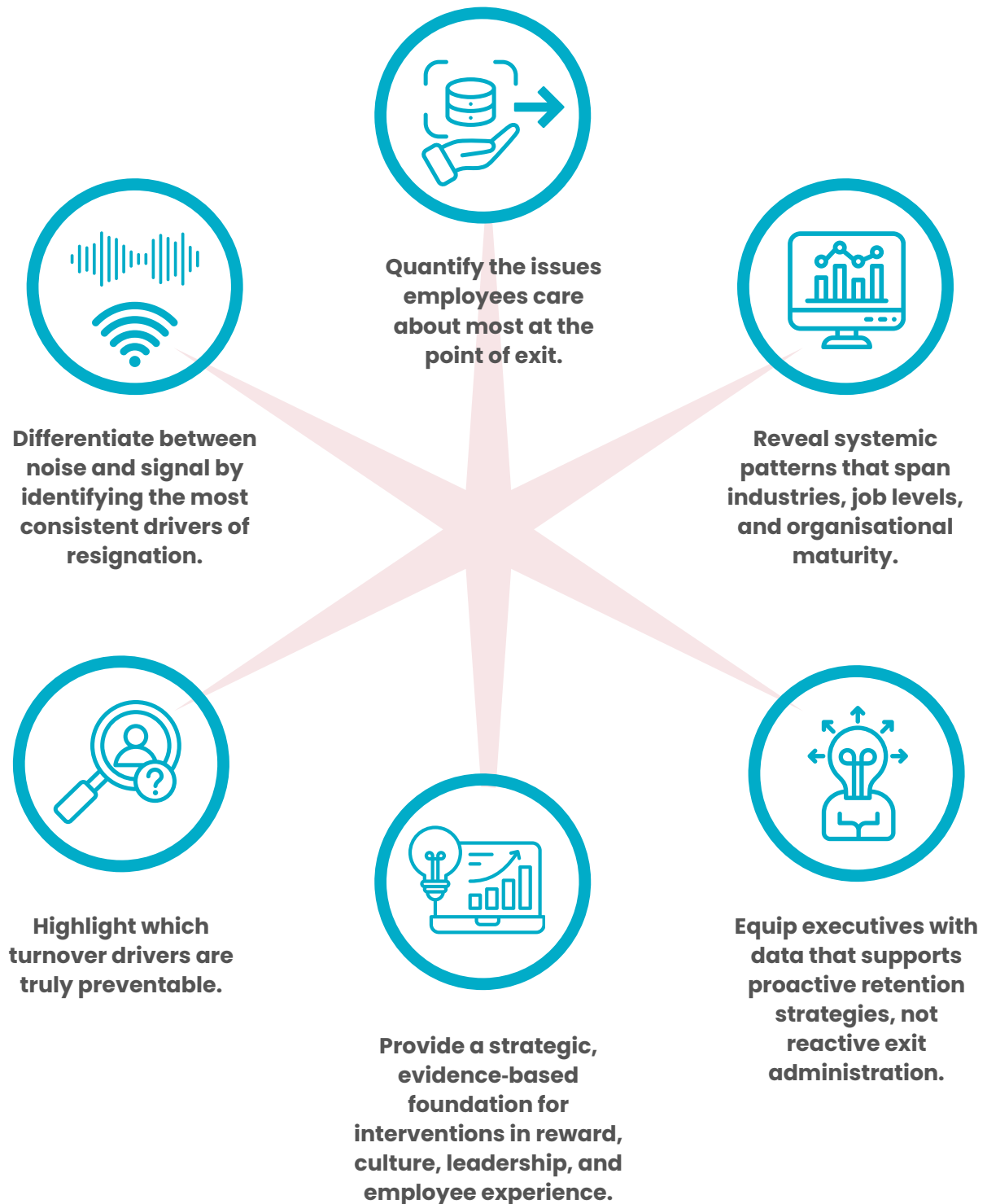
Our analysis draws on over 2,000 qualitative exit responses collected between 2016 and 2026 through the Omnicor Employee Transition System (ETS), spanning five organisations across the education, healthcare, and financial services sectors. These firsthand insights capture why employees leave, highlighting recurring patterns across sectors. Analysed collectively, the data provides HR leaders with a diagnostic lens into preventable turnover, uncovering hidden patterns and revealing the factors top employers use to attract and retain talent.



This case study synthesises these insights into clear themes highlighting the systemic push factors driving employees away, the pull factors attracting them to other opportunities, leadership behaviours that influence retention, and the strategic levers organisations can pull to reduce regrettable loss. This enables HR and leadership teams to identify risk areas earlier, strengthen the employee experience, and align organisational practices with the expectations of the modern workforce.

## 2. Why This Matters

High-quality exit insights are essential for any organisation competing for talent. Our objective with this cross-client case study is to help HR leaders:



# 3. Approach

## 1. Data Sources

Respondents answered open-ended exit questions addressing key reasons for leaving and what their new employers offer that their current organisation does not, revealing critical push and pull factors.

## 2. Methodology

The following structured approach was used in this case study:

<b>1. Data Preparation:</b> All qualitative comments were cleaned and checked for completeness to ensure consistency before analysis.	<b>4. Pattern Identification:</b> Recurring ideas, issues, and sentiments were identified across responses to highlight broader organisational patterns rather than isolated experiences.
<b>2. Coding Approach:</b> Comments were systematically coded using an inductive–deductive method, identifying new ideas emerging from the data while grouping similar concepts.	<b>5. Validation and Refinement:</b> Codes and patterns were reviewed iteratively to ensure they were accurate, non-overlapping, and representative of the full dataset.
<b>3. Question Level Analysis:</b> Each exit-survey question was analysed separately to maintain the integrity of push factors, pull factors, and reflections on leadership or organisational experience.	<b>6. Strategic Interpretation:</b> Findings were viewed through an organisational psychology lens to suggest practical recommendations for HR and leadership.

This approach removes guesswork, giving HR leaders clear insights that separate organisational from managerial issues, enables comparability across multiple industries, and highlights high-impact levers to reduce preventable turnover.

## 4. Key Insights

This section presents the key themes from the qualitative exit data, highlighting the main drivers of employee exits and the opportunities for organisational improvement.

\*The percentage indicates how frequently each theme was mentioned relative to all comments for that question, showing which ideas participants referred to most often

### 4.1 Key reasons why employees are leaving their current organisation

The bar graph below provides a high-level overview of the most frequently occurring themes extracted from employees' responses focusing on why employees chose to leave their organisations. These reasons can be viewed as push-factors.

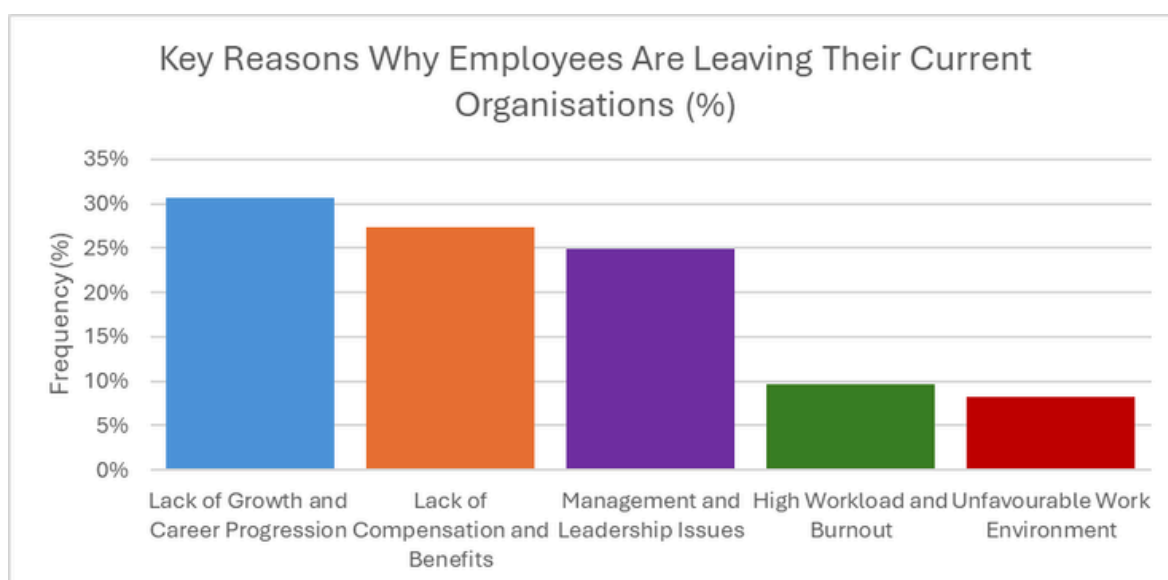


Figure 1: Thematic Breakdown of Drivers of Employee Exits (%)

#### 4.1.1 Lack of Growth or Career Progression

A major reason employees chose to leave was the absence of meaningful growth opportunities (31%). Many felt their roles offered limited advancement, unclear development pathways, or no prospects for promotion. This stagnation created a sense of being unable to progress or build a long-term career within the organisation, prompting individuals to seek environments with clearer development trajectories.

Common experiences included:

- Few or no genuine promotion opportunities
- Unclear or inconsistent advancement criteria
- Perceptions of unfairness or bias in promotion decisions
- Feeling stagnant despite strong performance or expanded responsibilities

### **4.1.2 Lack of Compensation and Benefits**

Compensation-related concerns formed the second-largest cluster of reasons employees chose to leave (27%). A significant portion of employees left due to pay dissatisfaction, often describing salaries as not market-related, insufficient for cost of living, or disproportionate to workload.

Employees noted:

- Long periods without salary increases
- Pay inequity relative to colleagues, roles, or external benchmarks
- Poor benefits (medical aid, pension, leave, bonuses)
- Feeling undervalued despite strong performance

### **4.1.3 Management & Leadership Issues**

25% of employees described poor management practices as a driver of exit decisions. Experiences included:

- Micromanagement or lack of autonomy
- Inconsistent leadership behaviour
- Lack of support
- Poor conflict resolution
- Favouritism or bias
- Failure to address problems raised by staff
- Perceptions of incompetence or lack of empathy

Some referenced severe cases like bullying, victimisation, and hostile behaviour. Employees felt their managers often did not create a safe environment and did not act on concerns, resulting in a breakdown of trust.

### **4.1.4 High Workload and Burnout**

Employees described heavy workloads, unrealistic expectations, and constant pressure that negatively affected their mental and physical health and personal time. Burnout, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion were recurring sentiments.

Common experiences mentioned:

- Being responsible for multiple roles without support
- Excessive administrative burdens or repetitive tasks
- Long working hours, including evenings/weekends
- Being understaffed in critical teams
- No consideration of work-life balance needs

### 4.1.5 Unfavourable work Environment

Workplace culture played a role in employees' decisions to leave. Participants described environments marked by poor interpersonal dynamics, low psychological safety, and organisational inconsistency. These cultural challenges made employees feel disconnected, unsupported, or unsafe, motivating them to move to organisations with healthier and more values-aligned climates.

Employees reported experiencing or observing:

- Hostile or strained interpersonal relationships
- Discrimination or unfair treatment
- Poor organisational climate and communication
- Lack of psychological safety
- Gossip, bullying, or departmental conflict
- Perceived misalignment between stated and lived organisational values

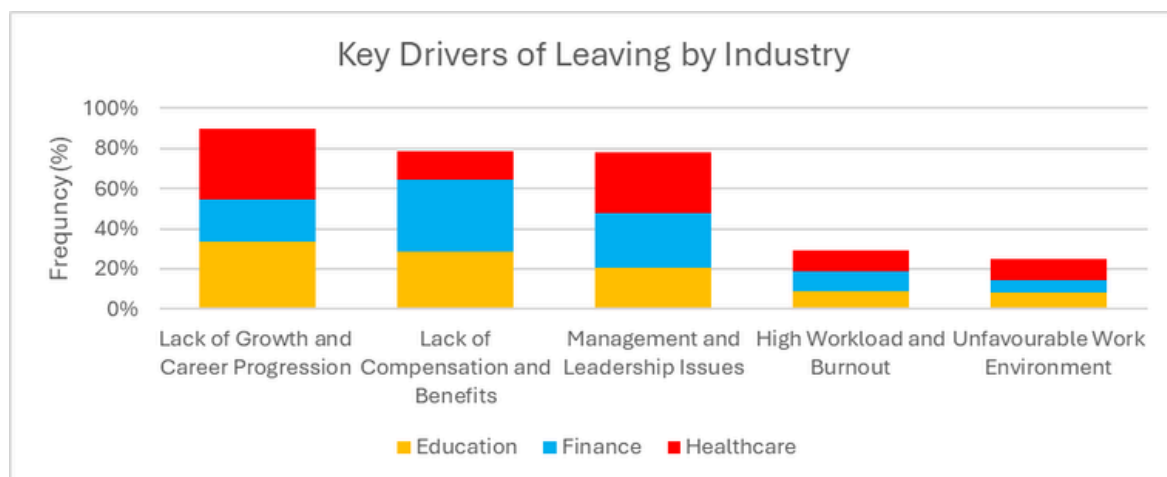


Figure 2: Thematic Breakdown of Drivers of Employee Exits per Industry (%)

Across industries, the qualitative data reveals distinct but overlapping patterns in what drives employees to leave. The education sector shows the broadest range of challenges, with consistent concerns around growth, salary, leadership, workload, and work environment. Employees frequently describe limited progression, inadequate compensation and benefits, and inconsistent leadership as concerns.

In financial services, salary and leadership emerge as the primary drivers of exit, with limited opportunities for growth and career progression also playing a notable role. Remuneration acts as both a key push and pull factor, highlighting the sector's highly competitive nature.

Healthcare reflects a strong combination of growth limitations and leadership concerns, alongside workload and cultural challenges. These patterns point to team strain and the demands of sustained emotional labour.

## 4.2 What their new organisation offers that their current organisations do not

Following the analysis of why employees chose to leave their organisations, this section examines the pull factors, which are the attributes and benefits employees have gained in their new organisations. While the previous data helps us understand underlying push factors, the following question provides insight into what competitors are doing better in the market.

We begin with the overall thematic distribution to illustrate which offerings are most influential in attracting talent. This is followed by an industry-level comparison, showing how these preferences differ across sectors.



Figure 3: Thematic Breakdown of What Exiting Employees' New Organisation Offers (%)

### 4.2.1 Improved Salary & Benefits

The data shows that employees overwhelmingly cite financial improvement as the primary differentiator offered by their new employers. Over half of all responses mentioned better salaries, benefits, or financial packages.

The new organisations commonly offered:

- higher basic pay
- medical aid or pension contributions
- bonuses
- travel allowances
- performance rewards
- cost-to-company packages that are market aligned

Many noted these benefits directly addressed frustrations they had at their previous employer.

### **4.2.2 Better Growth Opportunities**

Growth opportunities emerge as the second most significant factor, with 13% of exiting staff reporting:

- clearer promotion pathways
- structured development offerings
- roles more aligned to their qualifications

This indicates that the external market is outperforming internal advancement structures.

### **4.2.3 Better Management or Leadership**

Some joined organisations with more empowering, supportive, or structured leadership teams. Others mentioned more autonomy, trust, and less micromanagement.

Note: Although employees have not yet worked at their new organisations, their responses may be based on their interactions during the recruitment process, the organisation's external reputation, and the clarity, transparency, and professionalism demonstrated by hiring managers.

### **4.2.4 Positive Culture**

New organisations offered:

- healthier team environments
- better communication
- values-aligned cultures
- respectful colleagues

### **4.2.5 Work–Life Balance**

While less frequent, some employees highlighted remote work, flexible time, or reduced pressure as key improvements in their new organisations.

# Industry Breakdown: What New Organisations Offer

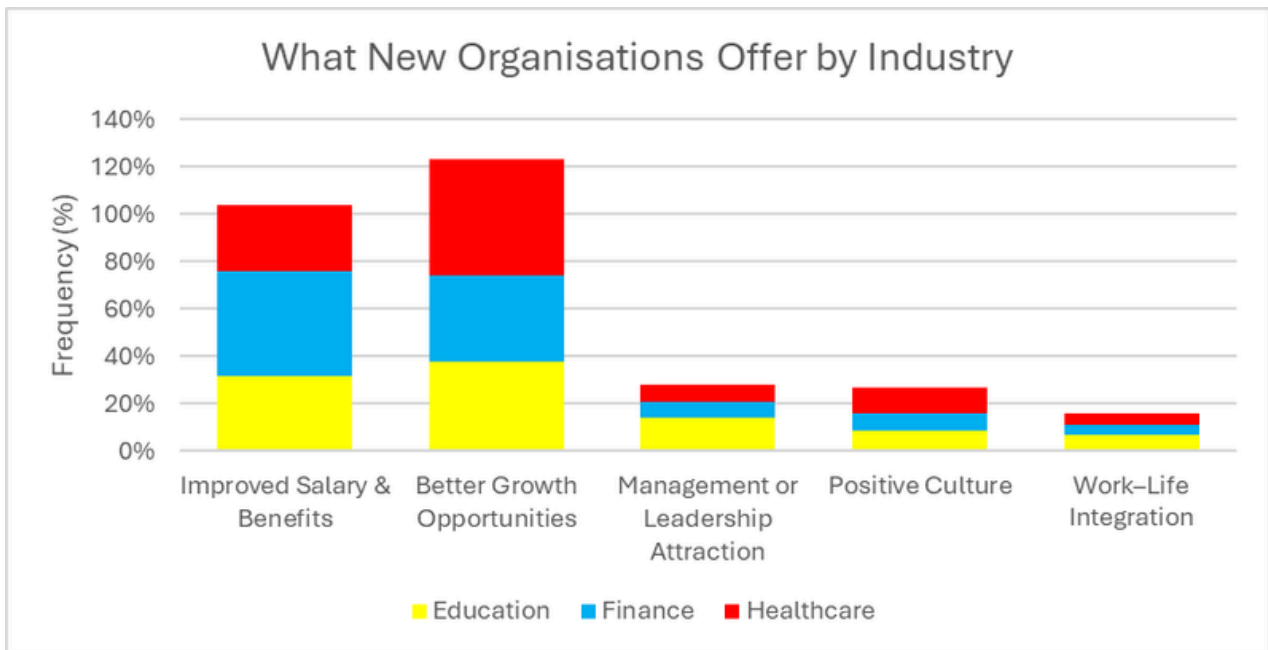


Figure 4: Thematic Breakdown of What New Organisations Offer per Industry (%)

## Industry Insights

A comparison across industries shows that employees are not simply leaving for generic improvements, but for very specific gaps that differ by sector.

In the education and healthcare sectors, the strongest pull is toward organisations that offer clear development pathways and growth opportunities, highlighting how deeply stagnation influences the decision to leave.

In financial services, salary and benefits dominate by a wide margin, reinforcing how competitive pay acts as a decisive pull in high-pressure, performance-driven environments.

Across all three sectors, the insight is the same: employees are not merely escaping poor experiences, they are gravitating toward environments that clearly signal advancement and stability.

## 5. Key Insights: Executive Synthesis

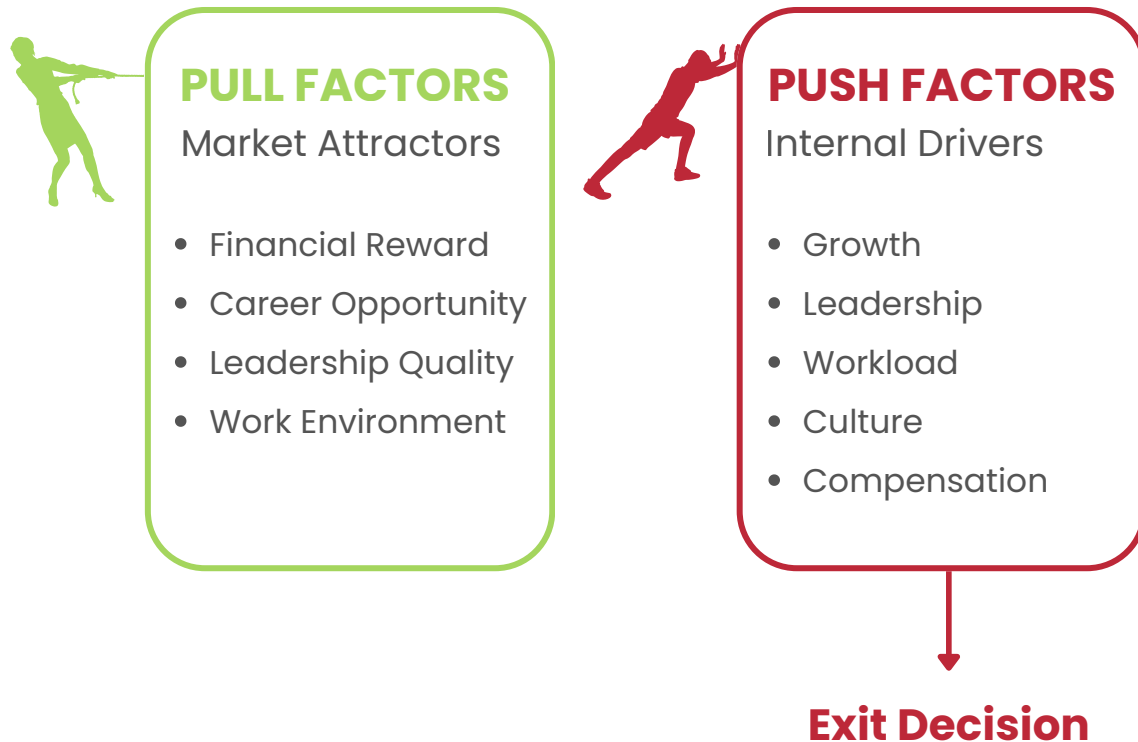
The qualitative findings show a clear push and pull pattern. Employees leave when they consistently encounter internal barriers such as limited growth, uncompetitive pay, and weak leadership . These pressures create a feeling of being stuck, undervalued, or unsupported, and the intensity of these themes differs across industries.

At the same time, employees are attracted to organisations that offer clearer development and better financial prospects. This combination of internal frustration and the prospect of external improvements creates a patterned and predictable movement toward workplaces that promise advancement, stability, and respect.

<b>Push Factors</b>	<b>Pull Factors</b>
Limited career growth	Clear opportunities for development
Uncompetitive pay	Better salary and benefits
Weak or inconsistent leadership	Supportive and capable leadership
Heavy workloads and burnout	Healthier work practices and balanced expectations
Feeling undervalued or overlooked	Feeling respected and recognised
Unsupportive culture	Positive and inclusive culture
Rigid processes and unclear expectations	Better structure and clearer communication

# TALENT MIGRATION MODEL

Understanding Why Employees Move



## 6. Recommendations for HR and Leadership

Addressing employee turnover requires coordinated action across multiple levels of the organisation. The insights from exit data highlight that sustainable retention is not driven by a single intervention, but by aligned leadership behaviour, enabling HR systems, and clear strategic direction.

Theme	Insight	What Leaders / Managers Can Do (Individual Level)	What HR Can Do (System Level)	What EXCO Can Do (Strategic Level)
<b>1. Growth &amp; Career Development</b>	Employees leave when they cannot see a future within the organisation	1.1) Hold structured career conversations at least quarterly 1.2) Identify “ready now” and “ready later” talent and advocate for them 1.3) Create stretch opportunities aligned to career goals 1.4) Provide ongoing feedback and development coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design clear, visible career pathways across all roles</li> <li>• Enable transparent internal mobility processes</li> <li>• Build a learning &amp; development framework with accredited courses</li> <li>• Track and report on internal movement and succession health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritise internal talent mobility as a retention strategy</li> <li>- Invest in future-focused capability development</li> <li>- Build organisational capability strategy aligned to future skills</li> <li>- Hold leaders accountable for developing and progressing talent</li> </ul>
<b>2. Salary, Remuneration &amp; Benefits</b>	Pay drives movement, but perceived fairness drives retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate transparently about pay and constraints</li> <li>• Reinforce value through recognition beyond compensation</li> <li>• Advocate for fair pay adjustments during reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain market-aligned and internally equitable pay structures</li> <li>• Regularly benchmark salaries and benefits</li> <li>• Improve transparency around total reward offerings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and fund a clear, competitive reward philosophy</li> <li>• Monitor and address pay equity at a systemic level</li> <li>• Invest in benefits that strengthen long-term retention (e.g., wellness, pension, medical)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Leadership Quality</b>	Employees don't leave organisations, they leave leadership experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model consistent, fair, and supportive leadership behaviours</li> <li>• Attend leadership development training and apply skills</li> <li>• Build psychological safety within teams</li> <li>• Address issues early and proactively before they escalate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop leadership capability through targeted programmes (coaching, conflict management, feedback skills)</li> <li>• Implement 360° leadership evaluations with follow-up coaching</li> <li>• Create early-intervention protocols for leadership concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the leadership standard and expected behaviours</li> <li>• Hold leaders accountable through measurable KPIs</li> <li>• Build leadership pipelines and invest in succession</li> <li>• Sponsor culture-shifting leadership initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>4. Workload &amp; Burnout</b>	Sustained overload erodes engagement long before resignation occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor team workload weekly and redistribute tasks fairly</li> <li>• Set realistic expectations and deadlines</li> <li>• Protect leave time and encourage recovery periods</li> <li>• Improve workflow efficiency and prioritisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct workload and capacity diagnostics annually</li> <li>• Implement burnout risk assessments and wellness monitoring</li> <li>• Train leaders on burnout prevention and resilience support</li> <li>• Automate admin-heavy tasks where possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve strategic workforce expansion where chronic understaffing exists.</li> <li>• Allocate budget for digital tools that reduce manual workload</li> <li>• Endorse hybrid or flexible work policies that reduce strain</li> <li>• Position wellbeing as a strategic business priority</li> </ul>
<b>5. Work Environment / Culture</b>	Culture is experienced locally but shaped systemically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create inclusive, respectful team environments</li> <li>• Intervene quickly in cases of conflict, bullying, or discrimination</li> <li>• Facilitate open dialogue and team check-ins</li> <li>• Demonstrate consistency between values and behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen policies on unfair treatment, bullying, harassment, and grievance procedures</li> <li>• Ensure timely, transparent investigations and feedback loops.</li> <li>• Run culture diagnostics and pulse surveys quarterly.</li> <li>• Provide diversity, inclusion, and EQ training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make culture a standing EXCO agenda item.</li> <li>• Publicly reinforce behavioural expectations for all leaders</li> <li>• Invest in culture transformation initiatives</li> <li>• Hold leaders accountable for climate metrics within their departments</li> </ul>

## 7. Why Omnicor

Organisations don't just need data—they need insight that drives behaviour change. Omnicor combines behavioural science, analytics, and organisational expertise to transform employee feedback into clear, actionable retention strategies. Through the Employee Transition System (ETS), we generate robust insights across the employee lifecycle.

### The Organisational Exit Survey

The exit data is derived from a survey designed to assess employee disengagement across 10 constructs using 30 items. Additionally, custom questions tailored to the client may be included.



#### Career

Career Fulfilment  
Positive Team Experience  
Meaningful Impact



#### Manager

Clear Criteria  
Talented Management/Leadership



#### Working Conditions

Extreme Pressure  
Personal Fulfilment  
Fairness & Integrity  
Recognition & Appreciation  
Autonomy & Freedom

### Reliability and Validity

Our methodology is grounded in statistical rigour and practical applicability:

- Constructs are factor analysed, ensuring they accurately measure underlying dimensions of employee experience
- Reliability is confirmed through Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.70 or higher, indicating consistent measurement
- A mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative data) provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of employee exits

## Integration Across the Employee Lifecycle:

Exit insights do not exist in isolation. They connect directly to onboarding, engagement, performance, and culture. Omnicor's integrated approach enables organisations to move from isolated data points to a cohesive employee experience strategy, where insights translate into system-wide improvements.

## Practical, Leadership-Ready Outputs:

Data only creates value when it drives action. Our outputs are designed for HR practitioners, executive teams, and senior leaders, focused and aligned to business priorities. We provide actionable frameworks, prioritisation tools, and behaviour-aligned recommendations that can be implemented immediately.

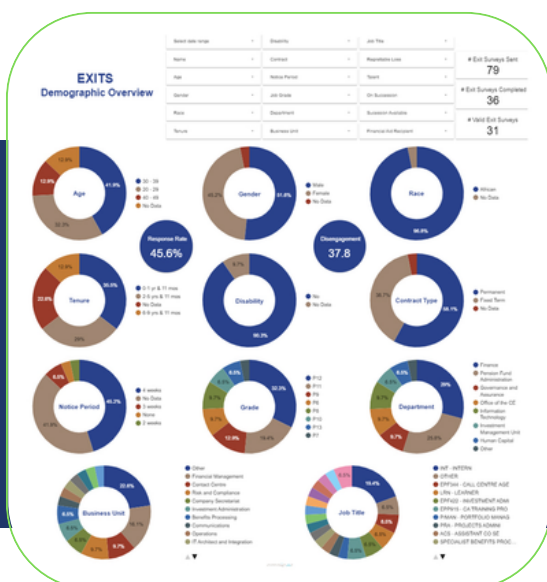
## Partnering for Impact:

At its core, Omnicor's work is about building organisations where people can grow, perform, and thrive. By converting unstructured feedback into targeted interventions, we help reduce regrettable turnover, strengthen culture, and retain high-value talent.

With Omnicor, exit insights become more than a backward-looking reflection; they become a forward-looking strategy for building a stronger, more resilient organisation.

For more information about Omnicor's Employee Transition Surveys, contact [od@omnicor.co.za](mailto:od@omnicor.co.za)

<https://omnicor.co/employee-onboarding-transition-exit-surveys/>



Collecting and aggregating data together is seamless producing insightful reports and dashboards at individual and organisational levels.

