The Compassionate Employee Exit Checklist

5 steps to protect your business, support your team, and treat people with dignity.



HIGH VOLTAGE Leadership

Ending someone's employment is one of the hardest responsibilities you'll face as a founder.

But compassion and accountability aren't opposites.

Use this checklist to help you approach a difficult employee exit **thoughtfully**, **responsibly**, and with **respect** for everyone involved.

01 Make a thoughtful decision

- [ ] Have I clearly identified the performance or conduct concerns?
- [ ] Have expectations been communicated and appropriate support provided?
- [ ] Have I considered whether additional steps, including accommodations where required, are necessary?
- [ ] Have I assessed the impact on the founder, team, clients, and business?
- [ ] Am I making an informed decision rather than reacting out of frustration or avoiding discomfort?

02 Understand your obligations

- [ ] Have I reviewed the employee's contract and relevant documentation?
- [ ] Have I checked the employment laws and requirements in my jurisdiction?
- [ ] Have I considered notice, pay, benefits, and other potential entitlements?
- [ ] Have I identified any circumstances that may create additional legal obligations or risks?
- [ ] Have I obtained qualified HR and employment-law advice where needed?

03 Plan a respectful exit

- [ ] Have I chosen an appropriate time and private setting?
- [ ] Have I prepared the required documents and information?
- [ ] Do I know who should attend the conversation?
- [ ] Have I planned how to handle equipment, systems access, and personal belongings respectfully?
- [ ] Am I prepared to explain the employee's next steps clearly?

04 Prepare for the conversation

- [ ] Have I rehearsed what I need to say?
- [ ] Can I communicate the decision clearly, directly, and compassionately?
- [ ] Am I prepared to acknowledge the employee's contributions without creating confusion?
- [ ] Am I ready to manage my own emotions and allow space for theirs?
- [ ] Have I avoided unnecessary criticism, blame, and promises I cannot keep?

05 Protect trust after the exit

- [ ] Have I planned what to communicate to the remaining team?
- [ ] Will I respect the departing employee's privacy and confidentiality?
- [ ] Have I identified how responsibilities and workloads will be managed?
- [ ] Have I planned any necessary client communications?
- [ ] Am I prepared to address team concerns without sharing private employment details?

Need help navigating a difficult employee decision?

You don't have to figure it all out on your own.

In a **Deep Dive Session,** we'll take a focused look at your employee situation, examine what's happening in your business, and work through a thoughtful path forward.

Whether you're struggling to make a decision or preparing for a difficult conversation, I'll help you approach the situation with greater clarity and confidence.

→ Book a Deep Dive Session

A note about this resource: This checklist provides general leadership and HR planning guidance only. It is not legal advice or a complete termination procedure. Employment requirements vary by jurisdiction and individual circumstances. Seek qualified professional advice before taking action.

