

Resignation and Giving Notice – Advice and Coaching

As mentioned, we provide this transition advice about the resignation process and employer counteroffers in the hope it will assist you. Some of what is covered below may seem basic, but even senior executives have commented to us that they felt it was a good review.

Strategy for Resignation:

You have effectively been through an evaluation process and made your decision, which you have determined is in the best interests of your career. Next is to prepare for handling the resignation process. As a solid performer, your organization may exhibit a strong negative reaction to your leaving. You may already be aware of what typically happens in your company when someone resigns – but whatever it is, it will “spring into action” when you give your notice. Accordingly, it is essential to anticipate that and be prepared, recognizing that you will have formally accepted the offer and given your commitment.

Before Resigning:

- Have a clear understanding and the ability to articulate the reasons **(to yourself)** for leaving the organization.
- Think about the key person to whom you will make your resignation.
- Before the meeting, have the resignation date in mind, and critical that the date not be too far in the future.

Resignation Meeting:

- It is our recommended practice not reveal to whom you are going at the time of the resignation. We have found it best to keep the conversation focused on the career reasons for leaving.
- We also suggest not disclosing the terms of your offer.
- Be willing to discuss any issues with your firm in a positive light.
- Keep the focus on the resignation and that you have already made your decision and given a commitment. It seems best that your mindset should be “I am informing you of a decision I have made”, rather than “wanting to initiate a discussion”.
- If asked, “Where are you going?”, it is reasonable to respond, “I am in discussions with them, and of course, I will let you know.”
- If you feel the need to do so, you can advise your firm where you are going on your last day.

After the Resignation:

- As mentioned, whatever the resignation procedure is in your group, it will kick off following your notice. In other organizations, that can range from “escorting you off the premises” (back when everyone was in an office), to “locking you out of IT access immediately”, to “let’s have a going-away party for you.” So, just be prepared.
- Please feel free to give me a call at any time.
- If your company is making a counteroffer to you to entice you to remain, please call me, and we can discuss, and can also set up any further calls/meetings if needed with your new soon-to-be manager, just to help keep your focus on the future, and the roles/plans that they have for you, etc.
- You may expect continued contact from me during this time, as for some, we have found that it is a significant transition, and many just like having someone else to speak with. You seem to have things well under control, rationalized, etc.

Other Advice:

Many employees are attentively listening for other opportunities that may be out there. Consequently, some companies are suffering uncomfortable employee losses, and are reacting with more aggressive efforts to retain top talent intent on resigning. As with most reactions, this can be an inefficient response and perhaps not entirely genuine; if retention were truly a goal, it would not have become an issue. Questions of efficiency aside, reactive retention efforts can work if the resigning employee (such as yourself) is surprised by a sudden showering of positive attention. Never mind that most end up leaving the company within a year anyway.

- Please know that resignation can be harder than you expect, but at the same time, let's not make the event seem more dramatic than it needs to be. As you know, as in most companies, several of your colleagues may have come and gone on to seek new opportunities, too. It happens from time to time, at your company, and in every company – people change (those above you, beside you, below you, too) as situations change and people move on, and forward.
- With a little preparation, you'll have a happy ending and a fresh start. The best result is the most anticlimactic: you leave on good terms, don't burn any bridges, cut ties cleanly, and will move into your new position without any baggage.

Another advice article for Resignation Coaching: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140728132225-4217978-the-proper-way-to-quit-a-job>

Here are some excerpts, beginning with a suggested template for a resignation letter:

A Resignation Letter Template:

(Date):

Dear (Manager's Name):

This is to inform you that today I am submitting my resignation from employment, which will become effective as of (Last Day of Employment).

I appreciate all that (Company Name) has afforded me, but after careful consideration, I have made an irreversible decision to accept a new position. I am confident that this move is in my best interest, as well as that of my family and my career. I know that you will respect my decision.

I wish all the best for (Company Name) in the future. I will use the remainder of my time with the company to have all my work in order by my last day of employment.

Sincerely,

(Type and Sign Your Name)

Giving Notice:

The best time to give notice is on a Friday afternoon. That gives your boss less time to react, ask questions, or argue, and gives everyone the weekend to calm down, absorb, and accept the news. If you use the resignation letter template shown above, address it to your immediate supervisor, sign it, and make a copy for your records. Also, prepare a list of projects and activities that you are currently working on, and their status. Hand (or these days email) the letter to your boss and tell him/her that you are submitting your resignation effective on the date indicated (typically 2 weeks from the day you give notice) and that you have prepared a list of your projects and activities and their status. Say that when they feel it is appropriate, you are prepared to discuss what you can complete in your final 2 weeks and to whom you should hand off certain projects, etc. Your objective will be to make the transition as smooth as possible.

By the way ... giving 2 weeks' notice is a standard professional courtesy that is not required in many cases. In the United States, most people are employed "at-will" – a legal term that means that an employee can quit at any time for any reason (or no reason at all) with or without giving advanced notice. Of course, the reverse is also true: you can be fired

at any time for any reason (or no reason at all) with or without advanced notice. We've seen cases where a person gave their 2-week notice, only to be locked out of computer access immediately and told to clear out their desk and leave the premises within minutes. While not a very common response by a company, it's not unheard of ... and certainly within the company's rights. The employer would then only have to pay that person up through the last day worked. The much more common responses (especially if you were considered a valued employee) are as follows:

What may happen:

Do not expect your boss to be supportive. It is not in their best interest for you to leave, and they probably don't have a contingency plan for your departure. Be prepared for a wide range of emotions, from anger to remorse. Your boss may try to flatter you for the good job you've done, promise you things to get you to stay ... and when all else fails, try to make you feel guilty (i.e., "We've done so much for you, and this is what we get in return?!") The best thing you can do is talk as little as possible. Let them vent. Don't get drawn into the emotion ... that's how you unintentionally burn bridges. Simply remain calm and stick to your guns. As the resignation letter says, your decision is "irreversible."

The Questions You'll Get:

Your boss will probably ask you a lot of questions in an attempt to gather the information that they can use to cast reasonable doubt on your decision, and possibly get you to change your mind. Remember that your objective is not burn your bridge. Answer the questions professionally but in a general (vague) way, and without sharing any details. The more details you provide, the more likely it is that you will get into a debate. If you win that debate, you will not only have resigned but you will have rubbed their noses in it. Not a good idea! Here are the most typical questions you're likely to get from your boss, and suggestions on how to handle them:

- **Why do you want to leave the company?** The best way to handle it is to say something like: "I appreciate all the opportunities you have afforded me; however, I have accepted an opportunity I cannot turn down and that I feel is good for my career." Do not say anything negative about your current job, the company, or any of the people you worked with there. And this includes comments on Social Media. Do not post negative comments about your boss, your co-workers, or your place of employment on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or anywhere else online. Such venting can potentially do irreparable damage to your reputation — both with your former associates and with your future employers. (Yes, your future boss may also see those comments and wonder what you'll be saying about him/her at some point down the road.) Keep your sour grapes (if any) to yourself. I know that I don't have to mention all that to you, but I include it because I have been surprised in the past by some very senior people who did the unexpected.
- **Where are you going to work?** Again, in our experience, we suggest never telling your current boss where you are going to work. There are many reasons for this rule, but they all boil down to this: nothing good can come from them knowing where you are going ... and without spelling it out, we'll just say that it is conceivable that bad things could happen from them finding out who your new employer will be. The bottom line is that they simply don't need to know. All you have to say is: "While I appreciate your curiosity, I would like to keep where I am going confidential." That may end the questioning. If they continue to ask, just say: "For my remaining time here, I'd like to concentrate on my work and help make the transition as smooth as possible — and I know that if we get into all these side issues, we'll be rehashing this for the remainder of my stay." And, do not post any social media announcements or updates to your profiles about your job change until **after** you've started your new job.
- **How much money did they offer?** Simply say: "I appreciate your asking, but that is a confidential matter between me, my new employer, and my family." Do not allow money to become a bargaining point, or open yourself up to a possible counteroffer. That rarely ends well.
- **How did you find this position?** Whether you found it through answering an ad, through networking, through a recruiter, or however your new firm may have found you ... again, it's none of their business. A good answer, which is truthful but vague, is: "I found it through a personal contact of mine."

- **What can we do to keep you?** This is the biggest trap of a question. Your immediate response should be: “Although I appreciate your asking, there is nothing you can offer. I am committed to my decision.” If you hesitate when asked that question, it might be interpreted as an invitation to convince you to stay. Then they will keep hounding you relentlessly. Assuming that you ultimately turn them down anyway, you will have probably burned your bridge. Conviction is important here. If you’re not sure about your decision, then you shouldn’t resign to begin with.
- The most typical response by any boss who doesn’t want to lose an employee who is quitting is to come up with a counteroffer (more money, a promotion, etc). That is a topic for another blog [“Counteroffers: Just Say No” <<http://michaelspiro.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/counteroffers-just-say-no/>>] ... but suffice it to say, accepting a counteroffer is almost always a bad idea. 80% of all people who accept counteroffers are no longer with their company six months later. It’s best to keep repeating that your decision to move on is final and irreversible. Remain firm, stay confident, and move forward with a positive attitude. Leave in as professional a manner as possible, so as not to burn a bridge. You never know when or where the people from that former company will reappear in your future.

I hope most of this is of assistance to you. Feel free to call me at any time.