

The right way to resign from your job

By: Natalie Fraser

There are definitely right and wrong ways to resign. Doing things the wrong way can lead to negative feelings between you and your employer, making your notice period ghastly and often results in a bad reference. Following the correct etiquette in resigning goes a long way to maintaining good relations and assisting you continued professional development success.

Have you considered all your options?

Do you really want to leave? Make a list of your reasons for resigning. Have you carefully considered your opportunities for advancement within your current company? Would you still leave if you were offered a raise or promotion? Talk to your boss or HR person to determine how they feel your career is progressing and to find out what the likelihood of promotion is. Will you be better off in a new job? Consider money, location, career and personal growth. Speak to your family and friends and listen to both your heart and your head.

Resigning in person – the meeting

Prepare what you're going to say before the meeting and stick to it. Your boss is likely to ask questions you may not want to answer at this time. Be polite yet firm and make it clear that you are tendering your resignation. Focus on the positive reasons for your decision, career development, closer to home, and don't dwell on the negatives – you never know when your paths may cross again and there's no point burning your bridges. Expect a reaction, unless your boss suspects your desire to leave this could come as a shock. Be prepared to give a reason, your boss will want to know why you're leaving – remember that he is likely to be emotional or confrontational in shock – remain polite and speak calmly. Always leave the meeting on a positive note - express your thanks for the opportunities given and reassure your boss that you will be very cooperative in handing over your work or training your replacement. People remember the last impression you make almost as much as the first!

Written resignations

A written resignation allows you more time to prepare and also gives you control over the message. A resignation simply needs to include your name, address, date, person to whom it is addressed, notice of termination and the date on which it is effective. If you are leaving on positive terms it may be a good idea to include thanks for the opportunities/experience given (you never know when you'll need your boss to vouch for you in a reference) and if you're leaving under bad circumstances resist the temptation to bad mouth your boss or the company. Never get personal in a resignation letter, whether good or bad these comments shouldn't be committed to paper unless you want them to come back to haunt you – resignation letters remain in your personnel file.

The Counter-Offer

If you are as valuable as you believe then it's likely that your company will tempt you into staying. This is what is commonly known as a counter-offer and could be an increase in salary or promotion. Think very carefully before accepting this offer, will this solve your original reason for resigning? How will accepting affect your standing with company, surely your boss will be doubtful of your commitment? How does your acceptance of the counter-offer affect your integrity with your would-be employers and the recruiter who assisted you? Remember that your paths may cross again and more often than not doors that are closed by you are very rarely re-opened.

Leave on the right note

Give your employer ample notice so that they are able to arrange for a replacement and to give you enough time to hand over your work. Check your contract to see the notice period required, if this is not specified it is usual to give between 2 and 4 weeks notice. Complete all assigned tasks and be cooperative in the hand over process. Inform your colleagues personally and maintain good relations with them – they may be useful in career development in the future. Bring in some cake/biscuits on your last day and make it a positive farewell to be remembered!