
Parting Company: How to resign professionally

You have just cleared the hurdles and obstacles of the interview process and have secured the offer that you were hoping for. Just as you breathe a sigh of relief you realize that you will soon have to face what could be the toughest part of the entire process – your resignation. If you truly hate your current job and despise your current boss, resigning should be easy. But, if you are like most of the talented people we work with, you have been with your company for some time and you know and get along with your current boss quite well. And now that the time has come to move forward with that next great opportunity, and perhaps through a sense of loyalty, you may feel guilty or dread having to tell this person you are leaving. However, the first step towards a successful resignation is realizing that these feelings are a natural part of the process and generally felt by all who make good moves to other opportunities. Preparing well in advance for your resignation will almost certainly make the process much easier for you. After all, you don't want to just go in to your boss and blurt it out! Instead, the day you receive your verbal offer, begin to prepare for your resignation. Get your resignation letter written and rehearse what you are going to say. However, **do not tender the resignation until you have your written offer from the new company.** By preparing your resignation ahead of time, you are ready to resign on the day you have your new offer.

To prepare for your resignation, first read the attached article on counteroffers (see below or go online at <http://www.citizen-times.com/cache/article/wncbusiness/52319.shtml>). Then, as you rehearse your resignation, keep the following tips in mind:

- 1) **Do Not Delay** - Waiting to avoid the inevitable only creates more stress for everyone involved. Unless you have a significant commission check (or similar payout) in question, give your "notice of resignation" the *first day* you have made your decision. Once you get it over with you will rest much easier. And, believe it or not, it is usually a lot simpler than you may fear.
- 2) **Keep it Professional** - It is understandable to get attached to certain individuals you work with, but this is not the time to dwell on personal issues. After all, those relationships will always be there if they are really meaningful. Keep your focus on your motivation for moving on to greener pastures and your sights set on your new business opportunity.
- 3) **Keep Your Distance** - Remember the reasons you started to look around to begin with. And that you and your spouse/significant other/family have already been through the painstaking process of making your decision to move on. More importantly, *know that your existing employer does not own you nor do they have the right to know where you are going to be employed next.* That is your business! If you feel the need to share, simply state that you are considering a few options but that your decision to leave is final.
- 4) **Write it Down** - Having a concise, well-written statement makes your point for you. Hand it to the appropriate authority before you start discussing your resignation. (See examples.)

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Here are two sample resignation letters:

Date

Mr. John Boss
ABC Company, Inc.
100 Main Street
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. Boss,

I want to take this time to thank you for the professional relationship and leadership you have provided during my tenure here. I have thoroughly enjoyed the work environment and atmosphere provided by you and the company management.

However, I have accepted a new position with another company. My last day of employment with ABC Company will be Friday, January 15, 2003. My decision to leave ABC Company is final.

I appreciate all that you have done for me in the past, and hope that we can maintain a cordial, professional relationship in the future.

Sincerely,

XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX

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Date

Ms. Jane Boss
XYZ Company, Inc.
100 Main Street
City, State Zip

Dear Ms. Boss

Please accept this letter as my official notice of resignation. I appreciate the professional experiences we have had together at XYZ. However, I have now made a commitment to another organization and will be starting with them in two weeks.

It is my intention to work as much as possible over the next two weeks to make my resignation as smooth as possible. I wish to leave on a positive note and will do all I can to transition my responsibilities to you accordingly. To avoid any embarrassment for either of us, I wish not to be approached with any counteroffers. My decision to leave XYZ was carefully considered and is final.

Please do not take my departure personally. An opportunity lies ahead that I am truly excited about and I hope to continue to maintain a professional relationship with you in the future. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

xxxxxx xxxxxxxxx

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- 5) **Prepare your resignation letter.** We believe the resignation letter needs to be written with a firm tone – it needs to give the reader a sense of finality. (see samples above)
- 6) **Rehearse your resignation** - so that when you give it, you sound firm and unfaltering. Stand firm on your resolve to leave; remind yourself why you made the decision to leave, and what the new job is offering you. Know that your boss is programmed to instantly counter offer you, or to try and guilt you into staying. Rehearsing will help you to overcome the guilt and gracefully decline the counteroffer.
- 7) **Time your resignation wisely** - The best time to resign is at the end of the day, and on a Monday or Tuesday. The end of the day timing is for your benefit. Resigning at 5:00 p.m. allows you to have your resignation meeting, and then allows you to distance yourself from the potential discomfort by leaving the office. If you resign in the morning, you have to look at your boss all day. But, by resigning at the day's end, you can then leave and the night provides a cooling off period. Also, it gives you all day for final preparations in the event that your boss decides to ask you to leave upon resignation (some will appreciate the two week notice, but may ask you to leave, anyway).

Resigning on Monday or Tuesday is for your boss' benefit. Resigning on a Friday may well ruin his/her weekend. Also, your boss will be in a better business frame of mind on Monday and will be able to use the whole week to begin making plans for handling your replacement.

- 8) **Request Confidentiality** - Let this resignation be distributed by its owner - YOU - as much as possible. Inform only those that need to know and your transition will be a lot less hectic.
- 9) **Don't Listen to Counteroffers** - You need to be prepared for the counteroffer before you walk into your resignation meeting. *Any company that makes a*

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counteroffer is just looking for a short-term fix! Counteroffers are NOT made to you in YOUR best interest. Consider the following: where was the “new” money, title, promotion, package, territory, private office, commission, boss, etc., before you gave notice to resign? Secondly, statistics do not lie. Counteroffers rarely work out for the employee resigning. The Wall Street Journal has published several articles on the subject. We have done extensive surveys with candidates who have accepted counteroffers. We have yet to contact someone who accepted a counteroffer and find them happy six months later. The majority of counteroffers accepted have

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resulted in the person still leaving in less than six months and usually at the company's unexpected request. Finally, why go backwards in a world where the only thing you can count on is more opportunity?

Can't give a two-week notice? -Resigning with little or no notice is not the best way to leave. But, there are times when it is unavoidable such as when the new company has a training class that starts in a few days and missing it would mean months before the next training would be available. If you are faced with resigning on Friday to start a new job Monday, we recommend the following letter:

Date

Mr. John Boss
ABC Company, Inc.
100 Main Street
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. Boss,

I am very sorry about not being able to give a proper two week notice. But, the position I accepted requires that I be in Chicago for training on Monday, and they didn't offer me this position until last night. If you need my help in the transition, I will be back from training in two weeks. I would be more than

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happy to close out my business over the weekend. If you need additional information, call me – I'll check my voice mail from Chicago and can try to squeeze in an evening call to you in order to help.

Sincerely,

XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX

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Our departing piece of advice – don't look back! You have made your decision to accept a new job. If things were so perfect in your current job, you would not have been interested in this opportunity to begin with. Look forward with excitement and enthusiasm. You are one of the fortunate few to be given the opportunity to better your professional career. Do not let fear of change hold you down and keep you from bettering your life. Your current boss may get emotional because of the loss they will endure, but deep down he/she most likely wishes the same thing would happen to them. Ask yourself – would they let someone hold them back from a better life? Surely they understand what it would mean to move on to a better opportunity? If you handle your resignation in a manner that provides a clean break for everyone, they will remember you as a great employee and a firm decision maker.

Good luck in your new position!