



## How to Resign and Leave on Good Terms

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Now that you've found your dream job, it's time to wrap things up at your current place of employment. Leaving on good terms helps ensure that you will get a good reference from your employer in the future and also keeps your networking channels open.

The timing of your resignation is important. Two weeks notice is considered professional, so time your resignation to coincide with the start date at your new employer. If your new job doesn't start for two months, still give only two weeks notice. Otherwise, you're at risk for being let go early. Another downside is that your co-workers may be envious that you are leaving, while others may consider you to be a lame-duck employee.

For some sensitive positions, especially in information technology security and certain financial positions, once you announce that you are leaving, your present employer will literally escort you to the door that day. This situation is not personal, it's merely a matter of protecting the company's interests and not allowing you any extra time to potentially copy proprietary information that could benefit your new employer.

When announcing your resignation, it is important to be the first one to tell your boss. Don't let it become office gossip. The best timing is typically on a Friday afternoon. Ask your boss if you can speak to him or her privately. When you tell your boss that you are leaving, also hand them your letter of resignation that contains the date of the last day you intend to work (based on two weeks notice). Your Forrer recruiter will be happy to provide you a sample resignation template.

One of the best ways to break the news is to briefly and calmly state the facts about your decision, such as: you found a great opportunity, the job parameters are exactly what you are looking for, it's a new challenge. Also note that you made your decision carefully – weighing all factors – and would not entertain a counter-offer. This saves face for both of you. Thank your boss for the opportunity to have worked at the company and offer to do whatever you can in the next two weeks to make your departure easier for all involved. This might include training your replacement, and delegating tasks or finishing specific projects, especially those that would be more difficult for your successor to complete.

When you first tell your employer that you are leaving, be prepared for a range of reactions, which may include:

- Your boss is speechless and can't believe that you would leave the company when you are so vital to getting the job done.

The implication is that you're irreplaceable – it feels good to hear, but unfortunately it's a tactic to make you think twice about leaving. The reality is that there are many people to do many jobs. This isn't art, music or movies where an individual's unique abilities really make the product; it's accounting, finance and related fields. And, yes, you are a highly accomplished individual, which is exactly why you were offered a new job at a new company.

- Expect probing: Where are you going? How much will you make? What will your job title be?

You can answer as much or as little as you want, but be prepared for some negative comments about your new employer or the new work situation, which are designed to make you rethink whether you should leave.

- A counter-offer is made to entice you to stay with your current employer rather than leaving the company.

Some of the reasons that a company presents a counter-offer have more to do with keeping things stable at the company than they do with rewarding you as a valued employee. When an employee leaves, a company has to deal with some new realities. Typically, morale suffers because there are often other employees considering a move and your departure may be just the wake-up call they need to find another job. Also, it means one less employee to do the work, so your job responsibility often is shifted among the remaining workers. Replacing workers is costly. Often, there's a recruiter fee to hire someone new, the cost of training to bring the new worker up to speed, and a lapse in completing projects.

The counter-offer often comes with strings attached – of the emotional variety – which may produce guilt or uncertainty on your part. Don't be surprised if you hear one or more of the following reactions from your current employer:

- “How can you leave when we've given you so much opportunity?”
- “The rest of your department will be burdened by your departure. Do you really want to do this to your co-workers?”
- “We were planning to tell you this later, but since you announced that you're leaving we've speeded up our decision. If you choose to stay, we'll promote you.”
- “Are you sure you want to leave when raises have just been approved?”

While these comments, at first blush, often make a candidate reconsider whether or not they should leave, it helps to objectively analyze the situation. Refer to the Forrer &

Associates “Five Star Assessment,” which details the reasons you wanted a new position and zeroes in on what is best for you and your career. Since the assessment reveals that salary and benefits are not the primary reason to stick with a job, you’ll realize the offer of a salary increase won’t change the non-salary items you dislike about your current situation.

If you do stay at your place of employment – lured by the counter-offer – your loyalty becomes questionable and you may even be considered “a player” – someone who tries to jockey for the best workplace situation without considering the consequences to yourself or others. These perceptions can linger for years, damaging your reputation and diminishing further career advances at your present company as well as prospective employers.

The transitional phase begins when you accept a new job offer and lasts until you’ve been at your new position for three months. Your Forrer & Associates recruiter will contact you the day before you begin your new position and 90 days from your start date. The transition phase may be like a dream come true or very unsettling – it can even be a combination of the two due to a myriad of feelings, such as:

- Glory - a feeling that “the world is your oyster” from the moment you awake, which energizes you to do well in the workplace
- Anxiety and concern over whether you’ll be able to produce good results at your new job
- Stress – yes, even good changes are stressful. Learn to relax, breathe deeply, eat well, get enough rest and exercise to help minimize stress.

During your first three months at your new employer, focus on getting organized, prioritizing, communicating well and learning all you can about what’s expected of you. As long as you fulfill the obligations detailed in your job description – whether they were in writing or simply discussed – you should be well on your way to a successful transition and long-term success. If the initial phase is too difficult to handle on your own, ask your boss for clarification about the systems and the team that are integral to completing your projects and tasks. Realize that it takes time to master a job, and you won’t be expected to do things perfectly from day one.

If you need help adjusting to the change, call your Forrer & Associates recruiter to discuss your concerns. You may be surprised to find out that about 95 percent of people who change jobs have the same concerns. Change is difficult – especially when doing new things or thinking about them in a new way. Keep some consistency in your life, so it won’t feel like everything is new to you. Before too long you’ll be wondering why you ever stayed so long at your old job ... because your new position is working out better than you could have ever imagined.