

Resigning with Style and Dignity

There are right and wrong ways of resigning from your job. Doing it the wrong way can lead to bad feelings between you and your employer, recriminations or even a bad reference. On the other hand, the correct resignation etiquette will contribute to continued success in both your personal and career development. Make sure that you know what you are doing, be prepared, and be positive.

Carefully consider your options before making up your mind

- Are you committed to leaving? Make a list of reasons of why you should resign (or if you need a little encouragement);
- Have you pursued all avenues for advancement within your current firm?
- Would you leave if you were offered more money or a promotion?
- How is your career going? Talk to the boss or your Personnel / HR Manager to assess how they think you're doing;
- Will you be better off in your new job? Consider money, location, career and personal development as the main factors;
- Talk to your family. How do they think you should progress?
- What does your heart say? What does your head say?

The resignation meeting (resigning orally)

- Work out what you're going to say and then stick to it. The boss will try and probe you for more information – details that you may not want to give at this stage. Don't be obstructive but simply make it clear that you are submitting an oral resignation;
- Emphasise the positives: you never know when your career will mean that you cross paths with your former employers so don't dwell on the negative aspects of your time at the firm;
- Expect a reaction: unless your boss is expecting you to quit, your decision may come as a surprise. The boss may get emotional or even confrontational in which case, stick to your prepared comments;
- Retain your composure. The boss may by now no longer see you as a team player and may even feel betrayed. Once again, stick to your pre-prepared comments and try not to rise to the challenge. Speak in measured tones and regulate your breathing;
- Always leave the meeting on a good note and be as co-operative as possible. Stress that you will undertake the handover of any uncompleted work to the best of your ability. People remember both the first and last impression you make on them.

The written resignation

- A written letter of resignation always gives you more time to prepare what you want to say and gives you greater control of your message. Use this opportunity constructively;
- In its simplest form, a resignation letter should only include the following information: name, date, the person it is addressed, notice of termination of employment, when this is effective from and finally, your signature;
- If you're leaving in good circumstances and feel that you want to say a little bit more, again, emphasise the positive – perhaps thank the boss for the opportunities he / she gave you - you never know when you may need your ex-employer to vouch for you or to give you a reference;
- If however, you're leaving in strained or bad circumstances, resist the temptation to badmouth and let off steam. Remember, your letter of resignation may be used as a stick with which to bash you later on;

- Don't get personal. Just because you are now leaving, a written letter of resignation is not the vehicle with which to tell your boss what you really thought of them. It is never polite to include personal remarks in a resignation letter. If you genuinely have differences of opinion with your boss, save the communication of them for another time and place. Never commit these thoughts to paper – your comments will remain in your personnel file and may come back to haunt you.

The counter-offer

- Consider any counter-offers seriously. Are you being offered a higher salary, a move to another location, a step up the career ladder?
- Is this what you really want? Has anything changed? Why did you take the decision to resign in the first place and have these factors been effectively addressed?
- Will you have the same standing within the company? The boss may now be doubtful of your 100% commitment to the firm. In this way, maybe it would be better to move on;
- Having already resigned once, will you be more partial to seeking alternative employment more easily next time?
- How does the acceptance of a counter-offer affect your integrity with your would-be-employers? You never know when you may cross paths with them again.

Leave on the Right note

- Make sure that you've given ample notice to the firm of your intention to leave. Your notice period is usually stated in your contract of employment or in the Company handbook. Where no period of notice is stipulated, you should allow between 2 and 4 weeks for any handover of work to take place;
- Make sure that you've completed any outstanding tasks and participated in the smooth handover of any unfinished work;
- Ensure that your boss knows that you've actively participated in this process and that you have been as co-operative as possible;
- Take time out to speak to all of your colleagues and associates. Give them support and make positive comments about their contribution to your time at the firm. Try and remain in touch because again, you never know when they'll be useful to your personal and career development in the future;
- Negotiate a fair settlement for any outstanding salary, holiday entitlement and commission payments that are due to you.