



**WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR A NEW JOB**

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# **HOW TO RESIGN**

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## HOW TO RESIGN

**Resigning is never easy**, especially when you've worked at a position for several years, and have made many connections. Some employers and co-workers take it very personally and may accuse you of abandoning ship. However, handling your resignation as professionally and thoughtfully as you handle your search for a new job can help make your resignation relatively smooth and amicable. This is where an experienced recruiter can really help make the process a lot easier for you.

**MAKE UP YOUR MIND:** Before you submit your resignation, you must be clearly committed to leaving, and **have a written offer in hand from your new employer**. Have you already pursued all avenues for advancement within your firm? If so and you didn't get the response you hoped for, it's time to leave. If you need some help with this step, I can help you with how to approach your manager. Since you may be immediately walked out of the building upon giving notice, make sure you have cleared all personal files from your computer and desk.

**KEEP RESIGNATIONS SHORT, SIMPLE AND POSITIVE:** Leave your employer on a positive note. Moving on does not have to have negative consequences. After all, you have an opportunity to advance in your career for which you owe your employer sincere thanks. Thank your colleagues for their help in preparing you to move onward and upward. When you resign, keep your conversations simple and concise. Avoid lengthy discussions about your new opportunity. Do not justify your personal goals or your decision to leave. If you feel you may be faced with a hostile environment, resign at the end of the day.

**THE ORAL RESIGNATION:** Resigning orally may place you in the compromising position of having to explain your decision on the spot. Words are very powerful. **Choose your words with care**. Your boss may want to probe for factors which led to your decision. You may be asked for specifics as to whom or what your reason for leaving is, or you may be invited to offer suggestions to help make the organization more effective, and told to "answer candidly". **Do not fall for this trap!** Remember, your interrogator is still your boss. Whatever you say will be viewed as biased – and may eventually be used against you. Offer sincere praise for the firm and those with whom you worked. Prepare yourself beforehand by focusing on several positive aspects of your workplace, and mention them liberally when the opportunity arises.

**Example:** "I need to discuss something with you if you have a moment. I've been made an exceptional offer by another firm, and I've decided to accept it. My family and I have given this opportunity a lot of thought. As much as I'd like to advance with this company, we feel the new opportunity is in our best long-term interest. We deeply appreciate all you and the firm have done for us here. I don't think I would have been presented this exceptional opportunity if not for your support and leadership. I want to thank you. I hope I can leave with your good wishes. You've been a friend as well as a boss."

If probed for more information, you may want to claim that there is nothing else to say right now, or that the new company has asked you to keep this confidential for the time being.

**THE WRITTEN RESIGNATION:** A written resignation gives you the time to effectively prepare what you wish to communicate, and gives you greater control over the delivery of your message. **A written resignation also reinforces the fact that you are really leaving** and are not simply threatening in order to re-negotiate your position or salary.

**Example:** “I want to thank you for all you have done for me here at (company). It’s been a pleasure working with you, and representing the company as your (job title). I have accepted an offer with another firm and have decided to tender my resignation as of today, with my last day being (date). This decision has nothing to do with the exceptional opportunity you have provided for me here. You and the company have been more than fair with me, and I genuinely appreciate all of your support. I wish (company) continued success, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your team. I hope you will respect my decision. Please feel free to let me know how I can help to make this a smooth transition.”

**THE COUNTEROFFER:** Be prepared, you may receive a counteroffer. Do not be disappointed if you do not. In fact, it makes the resignation process easier if you do not. I am happy to help you with this stage of the process as well and can help you plan a strategy on how to deal with it.

**LEAVE ON THE RIGHT NOTE:** Before leaving the firm, take time to speak with each of your support staff, peers, executive personnel, and others with whom you have worked. To the extent possible, clear up any unfinished business. Be sensitive to others’ reactions and keep your conversations positive and constructive. Some people may naturally express their own discontentment, and may egg you on to agree with them. Don’t!! Instead, express your appreciation and tell your colleagues you’ll miss them. **Also keep in mind that it is professional courtesy to give your employer ample notice to help them prepare for your departure – typically 2 weeks.** However, you should try to get out as soon as possible avoiding recurring invitations to tell your story, and having to deal with the frustrations and pressures of the job as the firm adjusts to your leaving.

**IF THE SITUATION TURNS SOUR:** In some cases staying the full 2 weeks can become very difficult and hard to tolerate. If you feel you are continually being pressured about details of your new job, or to accept their counter offer, keep in mind that **a 2 week notice is a courtesy YOU are extending to them, not a rule!** Just as the company has the right to walk you to the door as soon as you resign, or fire you with no notice, you have the right to end your time if the situation becomes caustic.

This is another emotionally difficult part of the job change process, but it’s a very important part to get right both for yourself, and for the people you leave behind and may work with again during your career. It’s good to have someone on your side that has helped numerous people through this process, and can be a sounding board for you to express your concerns or ask questions. That’s where I am able to assist you.

**Jeff King**  
Recruiter/President, PPS