

12 Steps to a Smooth Resignation

Taking on a new role encourages people to look ahead-planning the next months and years of their lives. So with a new job offer in hand, it's not surprising that some people put little time or effort into making sure they resign from their previous job on a good note. Here are our tips.

Prepare: Think of resignation as you would a job interview. Put time and thought into it. Prepare what you are going to say, in what order, and to whom. You can do serious damage to working relationships if you tell the wrong people first (even in confidence) and somebody influential finds out second hand.

Be honest: Don't withhold the truth from your employers and colleagues. Tell them up front that you are leaving.

Be succinct: Whether telling your boss in person or in writing, get straight to the point. Explain why you are leaving, but try to avoid expressing negative feelings.

Be flexible: If you can, negotiate a finishing date that suits your employer as well as you. Cooperate fully in handing over the files, documents, projects and clients you are working with prior to leaving.

Be realistic: If your resignation is coming "out of the blue," expect a reaction from your employer. Allow time for the reaction to your news. If your manager becomes aggressive, confrontational or upset, don't respond with similar behavior. Revert to your prepared comments.

Be diplomatic: If you think it is important to express your negative experiences, do it face to face. Don't do it in writing. Again, use your prepared comments rather than doing this off the cuff.

Be appreciative: Thank your employers for past training and other opportunities. Thank your colleagues for what you have learned from them. Accentuate the positives-find something good to say.

Follow up in writing: Always send a letter of resignation to confirm-in writing-when you are leaving the organization.

Don't burn your bridges: You might need to rely on your previous employer for references, advice or even a job! You also never know where people from your current place of work may end up in five or ten years' time.

Look after number one: Make sure you know what you are entitled to when you leave, such as unused vacation or sick time. Get someone senior in the company to give you a reference.

Keep in touch: Be proactive about keeping in touch with the valuable contacts and friends you have developed in this role.

Dealing with a counter-offer: If you receive a counter-offer, take time to consider it. Has anything really changed? Is this what you really want? Think about the reasons you decided to take the new position in the first place. Given that you have already resigned, will it be easy for you to continue working in the same company? If you are seriously considering accepting the counter-offer, think about the impact it may have on your relationship with your new employers-you may deal with them again in the future.