

Candidate Chronicles - Resigning Without Regrets

Leaving a job is one of the most exciting things you can do in your career - and also one of the most terrifying. You have decided to leave your current employer because your present position doesn't offer the growth environment you need. Nevertheless, your company has helped you progress professionally, and as a result, you may feel a bit uncomfortable resigning. What then should you expect when you tender your resignation?

One of the first issues that can strain the relationship is how much notice you owe your old employer. There is never a convenient time to leave a job, and you shouldn't let guilt about the work you're leaving behind make you pass up a great opportunity. People quit all the time; somehow the company will survive without you.

Prior to resigning and setting a start date with your new employer, review your company's policies. The standard notice period is two weeks. However, some senior-level executives or project managers may be required to complete an extended notice period, especially those with an employment contract. Even though your new employer may want you to start immediately, it will most likely wait a few weeks for the right person.

If you arbitrarily offer to stay longer than the traditional two weeks, consider life at your old job once you have announced your departure. It may be uncomfortable - you will no longer be considered a member of the team and may be treated accordingly.

Your Sanford Rose Associates consultant can assist you with your resignation letter. Generally, it should be brief and to the point, simply stating the date of your resignation and last day of employment. To further avoid counter-offers, it's important to state that your decision to leave is irrevocable. Additionally, there is no need to advise your ex-employer of the name of your new employer.

Prior to turning in your letter of resignation, make sure your desk and files are in order and your personal items can easily be collected, since you may be asked to leave the premises immediately. This is especially true if you are working for a large company, privy to confidential information or leaving to go to work for a direct competitor.

Schedule a time to meet with your manager and plan what you're going to say and then stick to it. Since you never know if and when your paths may cross in the future, emphasize the positives and avoid the negative aspects of your current position. Inform your supervisor that you will complete any outstanding tasks to the best of your ability and participate in the smooth handover of any unfinished work.

Unless your boss is expecting you to resign, your decision will come as a surprise; be prepared for his or her reaction. Your boss may get emotional or even confrontational. In that case, maintain your composure and professionalism; remember, you're moving on to something better. You may even be made a counter-offer. **See the Candidate Chronicles - The Dangerous Allure of Counter-Offers.**

Once your resignation is made public, take a deep breath, relax and conduct business as usual. Make sure your office and projects are in order and try to clear up unfinished business. If your co-workers ask why you're leaving, make generic statements such as, "It's a career opportunity I just can't pass up." Even if you're leaving on strained or bad circumstances, resist the temptation to criticize your ex-employer or manager.

You are now an outsider, which makes it difficult to show up for the next nine days (but who's counting?). Your best plan includes staying busy, maintaining a low profile and keeping your attitude positive and professional. Focus on your new opportunity and the fact that you'll be out of here soon. Manage your transition well and you will have no regrets.



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