

# Resignation Guide

## RESIGNATION

Sooner or later, most of us face a resignation. Resigning is never easy, especially when you've worked at a position for several years and have become part of a team. Some employers and coworkers take it personally and 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 this step relatively smooth and amicable.

### KEEP RESIGNATIONS SHORT, SIMPLE AND POSITIVE

Leave your employer on a positive note. Your moving on does not have to be a time for long faces. After all, you have just won an opportunity to advance, an opportunity for which you owe your employer sincere thanks. Thank your colleagues, too, for their help in preparing you to move onward and upward.

If you have given your best to the job, you will be missed - especially by those inconvenienced by your leaving! Let them know that you intend to assist them in whatever ways you can. By showing your boss and firm due respect, you encourage future support you may someday need. When you resign, keep your conversations simple and concise. The more you say, the more questions you may have to answer. Avoid lengthy discussion about your new opportunity with your old employer. Typically, your resignation creates extra work for others.

Chances are, your boss will be caught off-guard by your resignation, and will not be able to listen clearly to your explanations due to concerns about the sudden challenge your leaving presents. Because your boss is losing a valued employee and your leaving may create more work for him, he or she may express negative opinions about your new firm or position. This will only confuse you. You may find yourself having to justify your personal goals and decisions or absorb the personal frustrations of others. If you're dealing with volatile or vindictive personalities, it may be best to avoid revealing where you will be going.

If you feel you may face a hostile atmosphere, resign at the end of your workday so that you are no longer on company time and are in control of your schedule. Try to schedule any discussions for the following morning when everyone can face your departure after time to absorb and reflect on the news. If you have to defend yourself at this first meeting, or if things begin to get out of control, ask to re-schedule the meeting for a more appropriate time.

Rehearse your resignation, so that when you give it, you sound firm and unflinching. Stand firm on your resolve to leave; remind yourself why you made the decision to leave, and what the new job is offering you. Know that your boss is programmed to instantly counteroffer you, or to try and guilt you into staying. Rehearsing will help you to overcome the guilt and gracefully decline the counteroffer.

Time your resignation wisely. The best time to resign is at the end of the day, and on a Monday or Tuesday. The end of the day timing is for your benefit. Resigning at 5:00 p.m. allows you to have your resignation meeting, and then allow you to distance yourself from the potential discomfort by leaving the office. If you resign in the morning, you have to

look your boss all day. But, by resigning at the day's end, you can then leave, and the night provides a cooling off period. Also, it gives you all day for final preparations, in the event that your boss decides to ask you to leave upon resignation (some will appreciate the two-week notice but may ask you to leave anyway).

Resigning on Monday or Tuesday is for your boss' benefit. Resigning on Friday may deflate his/her weekend. Also, your boss will be in a better business frame of mind on Monday and will be able to use the whole week to begin making plans for handling your business.

## **THE ORAL RESIGNATION**

Resigning orally may place you in the compromising position of having to explain your decision on the spot. Words are powerfully charged when you reveal a decision, which has such an impact on your organization. Choose your words with care. Your boss may want to probe for factors, which led to your decision. You may be asked who or what is the reason for your leaving or may be invited to offer suggestions to help make the organization more effective. If you have had a close relationship with your boss, you may feel obliged to answer candidly.

Don't fall for this trap! Use your head and discuss personal, heartfelt matters outside the office. Remember that your interrogator is still your boss. Whatever you say will be viewed as biased - after all, you have severed your relationship with your organization - and may eventually be used against you. At this point you are no longer considered a team player, nor viewed as having the company's best interest at heart.

Too often, resigning employees come to regret their comments when they are misinterpreted or exaggerated in the re-telling. Constructive criticism is no longer your responsibility and carries a high cost which could jeopardize your good references.

Instead, 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. Even if favorite aspects were, say, the great lunches, or humorous stories told over coffee, better to mention such things than to harp on disappointments or shortcomings. (These, you are addressing by moving on to greener pastures.) You want to be perceived as a positive, constructive individual in forward motion. People will remember your last impression. Make it your best performance. You may want to tell your boss something like:

"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 wife and I have given this opportunity a lot of thought. As much as I'd like to advance within this company, we feel the new opportunity is in our best long-term interest.

We deeply appreciate all that you and the firm have done for me here. I don't think I would have been presented with 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. Simply communicate that you are leaving a good opportunity for an even better one, which suits your aspirations.

## THE WRITTEN RESIGNATION

Written resignations give you the time to effectively prepare what you wish to communicate and give you greater control over your delivery of the message. You can't be thrown off-track by an unexpected remark as can happen during a confrontational conversation. A written resignation also reinforces the fact that you are really leaving and are not simply threatening in order to re-negotiate your position. Also, there is something permanent about the written word, which often circumvents interrogation.

Under no circumstance should you state any dissatisfaction with the firm or individuals. Not only is it good manners to stress the positive when leaving, but items in your personnel file may long outlast the individuals and circumstances responsible for your dissatisfaction. You never know when your path will cross those of your former colleagues. To keep your resignation short, simple, and positive, you may want to write something like:

"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. 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 your support.

I wish [Company] continued success, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your team. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of further assistance in helping with a smooth transition."

Letters get filed and passed around to explain what happened, reducing the call for endless orations on the same subject. They also dispel any perceived ambivalence in your behavior during this delicate time.

What do you do if you cannot give a two-week notice? Resigning with little or no notice is not the best way to leave. There are, however, times when it is unavoidable, such as when the new company has a training class that starts in a few days and missing it would mean months before the next training would be available. If you are faced with resigning on Friday to start a new job on Monday, the following is recommended:

"Boss, I am very sorry about not being able to give a proper, two-week notice. But the position I accepted requires that I be in Chicago for training on Monday, and they didn't offer me this position until last night. If you need my help in the transition, I will be back from training in two weeks. I would be more than happy to close out my business over the weekend. If you need additional information, call me – I'll check my voice mail from Chicago and can try to squeeze in an evening call to you to help."

**(SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER)**

(Your Name)  
(Address)  
(City, State and ZIP)

(Direct supervisor)  
(Company name)  
(Address)  
(City, State and Zip)

Date

RE: Notice of Resignation

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As of this date, I wish to formally tender my notice of resignation. I have accepted a position with another firm and have given my personal and professional commitment to begin work with that organization on or before (two weeks from notice).

During my tenure at (Current Company) I enjoyed the opportunity to work with you and others within the company, however, I feel it is in the best interest of my career to make this change at this time.

Please understand that I am not in a position to consider an alternative offer from (Current Company) since my decision to resign is final.

I wish you the very best in your career and hope our paths will cross again in the future.

Sincerely,

cc: Branch Manager  
Personnel Director

**(ALTERNATIVE RESIGNATION LETTER)**

(Your Name)  
(Address)  
(City, State and ZIP)

(Direct supervisor)  
(Company name)  
(Address)  
(City, State and Zip)

RE: Notice of Resignation

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Please accept this letter as my official notice of resignation. I appreciate the professional experiences we have had together at "Company name". However, I have now made a commitment to another organization and will be starting with them in two weeks.

It is my intention to work as much as possible over the next two weeks to make my resignation as smooth as possible. I want to leave on a positive note and ensure that my current business is transitioned to you.

Please do not take my departure personally. An opportunity is in front of me that I am excited about, and I have already given them my commitment. My decision is made, and I hope that you can be happy for me. I wish you the very best in your career and hope our paths will cross again in the future.

Sincerely,