

How to resign?

These articles appeared on the Reed website; a really great company with adverts that are a bit like Marmite and by that we don't mean the scrapings of the acting barrel lightly spread on a medium for the G.B.P to enjoy on a daily basis.

You've got the job

Now it's time to hand in your notice. But before you rush to tell your boss, make sure you know how to handle what can be an awkward situation.

It's vital that you consider all the different facets of the process, from the initial conversation and written resignation, through to your notice period and your last day.

Etiquette

As with any difficult situation, it's always important to approach the subject with the right etiquette.

- Be gracious - tell them how much you've enjoyed working with them and that you've learned a lot (if it hasn't and you haven't, be gracious anyway)



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- Be cooperative - let them know you'll do all you can to make sure the handover is dealt with smoothly
- Don't burn your bridges - make sure the company knows that if the right opportunity comes along, you would always consider working for them again

Put it in writing

Once you've let your boss know verbally, the next step is to put your resignation in writing.

- At the very least, your letter should include the position you're resigning from and the date you intend to leave
- Although not essential, you might want to thank your employer for the opportunities you've been given and offer your willingness to ensure a smooth handover etc
- Whilst constructive criticism is acceptable, don't get personal or you'll risk your reference and your reputation

The counter offer

If you're a loyal employee and you've done a good job, the chances are your boss won't want to see you go. The most likely way an employer will try and make you stay is by offering you a pay rise either equal to or above what you've been offered in your new job.

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Make sure you understand the counter offer and avoid making a knee jerk decision. While the promise of promotion, increased responsibility and extra money may sound tempting, will it really make you want to stay for the next few years? Think carefully about what's been offered, but don't forget that you'll be working in the same organisation, with the same people and probably under the same boss.

Don't be persuaded into staying simply because you're scared of change. It can be tempting to accept the counter offer because you're comfortable where you are. But is this a good enough reason for you to stay?

Your notice period

Whatever the length of your notice period, you're legally obliged to work it, unless your employer's willing to waive it. You should find details of your notice period in your contract, otherwise, you should normally allow between two weeks and a month.

When seeing out your notice, make sure you stay alert. Whilst it's easy to imagine your last few weeks as a time to relax and stop making an effort, this is seldom the case. What's more, being seen to make the effort right up until your last day will ensure your reputation as a professional and reliable employee remains intact.

Finally, make sure you allow time to say goodbye to everyone and swap contact details with as many colleagues as you can. Moving jobs is a great way to extend your network and you may find you see some of your



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colleagues again sooner than you think.

'Gardening leave'

Depending on your role and the sector you work in, you may be asked by your employer to take 'gardening leave'. This is where an employee has to stay away from work during their notice period, preventing them from gathering potentially sensitive commercial information, especially if they're leaving to join a competitor.

Employees on gardening leave continue to receive their normal pay and are covered by other normal contractual obligations until their leave ends.

Feel good

Last of all, don't feel guilty about resigning. Feel good. Working is a business arrangement and moving jobs is part and parcel of that.

Whilst others may think you're resigning from a perfectly good job, you're the one in control of your career and only you can decide which direction it should take. If resigning from your job will bring you closer to meeting your career goals, it's a step worth taking.

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Big Gulp; it's time to resign!

WARNING: we have found out that actually drinking a Big Gulp and then going in to resign generally doesn't go down too well.

You either start talking very quickly about the meaning of your dreams or bringing up episodes in your past that should ideal have stayed there..in a box, in a box in a soaring marble library in your mind OR you feel completely invincible and tell everyone exactly what you think of them with facial expressions and hand gestures last seen in the Miss Yorkshire Gurning Semi Final knockout round and so with the help of our good friends at Reed, the spiritual Home of Recruitment we have this which is much more sensible:

Whatever your reasons for leaving a job, there is a right way and a wrong way to resign.

Leaving with the right level of grace and decorum not only speaks volumes about your character, it also shows potential employers how you can handle sensitive situations professionally. And, in certain industries, news really does travel fast.

If you're thinking of moving on, make sure you've properly considered all the possibilities before you consider how to resign. If, however, you've made your mind up already, you will most likely have had a detailed conversation about

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your intentions with your boss.

The only thing left to do is put your resignation in writing:

What to include

Even if you want to keep it brief, there are some essential pieces of information you need to include:

- Your name
- The date
- The position you're resigning from
- Addressed to the appropriate person (line manager, supervisor, manager etc.)
- When your resignation will take effect
- Your signature

Reasoning

You are not obligated to include your reasons when resigning, although you should include this if you feel it will be constructive. However, always be sure to put a positive spin on it if you do explain your reasoning.

Possible reasons could include: 'I am moving on to a new position', 'I am seeking a new challenge' or 'there are limited opportunities for progression'.

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Remember: Under no circumstances should your resignation letter become a tirade against your employer. Whatever your feelings, you must remain as professional and as objective as possible. Getting personal will only risk your reputation (even if it seems like a good idea at the time).

Tone

If your relationship with your previous employer deteriorated by the end of your time at the company, you might be tempted to be blunt when handing in your notice. As with reasoning, above, this should be approached with some amount of caution. Being gracious and polite will allow you to leave with your head held high.

It's not a necessity, but you might want to thank your employer for the opportunities you've been given and offer them your best wishes for the future.

Something as simple as: 'I would like to thank you and the company for the opportunities given to me over the last two years, and wish you all the best for the future' will send the right message, without compromising your integrity if you're leaving for personal reasons.

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Handover

Aside from the formal aspect of the resignation letter, you should also use it as an outlet to tie up any loose ends. For example, if you're leaving in the middle of a specific project or piece of work, you should clearly outline the point you have reached, where the completed work so far is saved, and any other information which may be pertinent to the person taking over.

Ensuring a smooth handover shows your continued commitment to the business, and practically demonstrates your professionalism and dedication to the role. If you're leaving on good terms, providing your contact information for future enquiries should things go wrong can soften the blow (a nice touch if your work is especially cryptic or difficult to understand).

Formatting

Your resignation letter should be typed and conform to all of the conventions of a standard letter. This means addressing it to the correct person, including the date, and using paragraphs correctly to outline each individual point.

When it comes to length, this is generally up to you. Remember, your resignation letter does not need to be an essay. Just make sure you've included the basics, and you've made it abundantly clear that you intend to leave (and when you intend to leave).

As a rough guide, always try to keep it to one page or less. You may have pages and pages worth of reasons to leave, but just keep it as simple as

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possible. If you have that many grievances about your period of employment, it may be best to speak to someone in the organisation's Human Resources department.

Final thoughts

Before writing your letter, always check your employer's resignation policy to ensure you're aware of your notice period. Similarly, it's important to note that whatever the organisation's policy on notice period, they are well within their rights to ask you to leave on the day you resign. In other words, if you don't have another position guaranteed to move on to, think seriously before handing it in.

Finally, when writing your resignation letter, always avoid using slang terminology or anything that could be considered rude or inappropriate, however appealing it may seem. You may be leaving your position, but recruitment can be a very small world. All it takes is for one person to call your employer for a reference and you may miss out on the perfect job in the future simply down to a lack of tact.

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