

Media Article



Vocational Guidance Services

SO YOU WANT TO QUIT?

You've made up your mind- you want to leave your job. Maybe you are sick of the boss, the pay, or maybe you have been rational about it- had some career guidance; been made an offer that is the logical next step in your career. No matter what your reasons are, remember resigning is an emotional process and there is a right and wrong way to do it.

The Letter.

Always resign in writing. This allows you to carefully choose words, prepare yourself and control the process. The letter does not need to be long; in fact, it looks more professional to just give your name, your notice period, when it is effective from and perhaps a short note of thanks to your boss for the experience. You don't need to give details of why you are going, where to, for how much etc. In fact, giving such details could prompt a counter-offer, which can get messy.

But if you are leaving on a good note, do use the letter to thank the employer, keeping in mind that a positive letter to them will probably lead to a positive letter of reference from them for you. On the same point, if your letter is negative and you use it to vent, badmouth or let off steam then you can be sure this will return to haunt you in the future. So don't get personal and even if your boss was an uncompromising pain now is not the time to say so! Even if you have had a major fall-out and nasty things have been said, don't commit such thoughts to paper as they will remain in your file and anyway, Kenya is too small for such behavior to go unheard of.

The Meeting.

After you've handed in your letter, chances are the boss will want to talk to you about it (although some have been known to sulk!) If you are a valued employee, they will try to counter-offer. Remember even if you accept a counter-offer the boss may now doubt your 100% commitment to the firm, and anyway have the push/pull factors that lead you to resign really been addressed?

This meeting tends to get emotional, so work out what you are going to say beforehand and stick to it. Don't give away information you don't need or want to. Again, try to keep it light, focus on the positives and stress you will complete hand-over. The boss might get confrontational- you have betrayed them- it is like splitting up a relationship- but resist the temptation to raise your voice in return or answer back. Composure can be hard (I've heard of bosses throwing tantrums and letters of resignation out of windows) but if you maintain your cool you will leave a good impression.

Giving Notice.

There are cases where employees walk out at months end never to return- normally when they hate their job. However, this is against the law, unless you pay for notice to your employer. If you leave without notice, the employer could sue. One month's notice is the norm, but contracts vary and details should be in your letter of appointment. Some organization are now moving to 3 or prohibitive 6 months notice for managers, but if this means you'll miss out on an excellent opportunity I think you have a strong case to negotiate that notice down to one month. You must use this time to hand-over, remaining positive to all staff who will stay behind, emphasizing you have enjoyed working with them and then stay in touch. You never know, they could be your future colleagues or employers. When resigning, keep in mind that if you do it properly it reflects your professionalism and can contribute to your continued career success.

Madeleine Dunford
Managing Director
Career Connections

