



**STELFOX**  
IT Recruitment

## Resignation Tips

Your resignation letter will be the final document in your personnel file. This means it will be the first document seen when a future employer calls for a reference or if you reapply at your company.

Resign correctly and leave the windows of opportunity open for future jobs. The goodwill you build now could help you network with colleagues later. Resigning incorrectly by "burning your bridges" may haunt you in the future. Your inappropriate reaction might even be considered a serious character flaw.

### **Your Character...More Valuable than Gold**

Your personal and professional reputation is on the line here. Your employer and co-workers will remember you by how you handle this important last impression. And why should you care? Because the world is much smaller than you can foresee. Chances are very good that you will meet these same people in social and professional circumstances in the future.

The people you leave behind may affect (or afflict) your future life. Treat them accordingly. You may be angry and you may have been treated unfairly, but keep a cool head and show that you are a person of composure and style. Settling scores by venting has no place in a letter of resignation.

### **Resignation Considerations**

Before you resign, consider the following:

#### **1. The Company Resignation Policy**

Find out how your company treats resigning employees before you hand in your resignation letter. You may give two weeks' notice but two minutes after your boss receives your resignation letter you may find yourself standing in the parking lot without your personal belongings.

Some companies consider the day you announce your resignation your last day of employment. If you are unsure, ask a few trusted fellow employees whether they know company policies and how previous resignations have been handled. Don't give your employer excessive advance notice when you may be dismissed immediately.

## **2. Your Legal Rights**

By resigning, you may forfeit severance pay, unemployment benefits, stock options, and other forms of compensation. Make sure you carefully examine any employment contracts or other agreements that you signed. If you are considering leaving the company for reasons of harassment or discrimination, consult an attorney before signing any documents or submitting a resignation. Your letter of resignation may be used in a lawsuit or other legal action. Never put in writing what you may regret later.

## **3. Preparation**

If your company's exit policy requires you to vacate as soon as you give notice, make sure you have "cleaned up" before you submit your resignation. Gather all of your personal files from your computer and office and any other personal belongings that you will want to take with you. Many employers will not allow an employee access to computer equipment, the network, or their work space once they have announced their intention to leave. If your home budget, e-mail, resume, or other personal files are on your computer, you may not see them for a period of time, if ever. Back them up on a CD-R before you announce your resignation if you do not already have copies at home. Any questionable material in your work space or on your computer may be used by a disgruntled employer as leverage to withhold compensation or to create other problems for you. Make sure that you are prepared for an immediate exit if this were to happen.

## **4. Counter Offers**

Letters of resignation should never be used to solicit a counteroffer. This tactic is not a professional way to negotiate a better salary.

If you are a valuable employee, your employer may make a counteroffer, but before you jump at the chance to stay for a few extra euro (or a lot of non-binding verbal promises), consider the following:

- Although you may be given a counteroffer, your loyalty to the company may now be in question. You tried to leave once; will you do it again as soon as you receive a better offer?
- Is the counteroffer a temporary way of keeping you until business slows down or a replacement is found?
- If you had to resign to get a raise or promotion, is this really the right company for you?
- Is the counteroffer giving you a pay boost that you would have received at an annual review anyway?

- If you have already accepted an offer from another employer, retracting your acceptance will not be looked on favourably and might damage your future chances for employment with that company.
- Consider carefully your initial reasons for resigning. Will the promised changes resolve the issues that led to your decision?

## **5. Reality Check**

The National Employment Association claims that over 75% of employees that accept counteroffers are no longer with that company six months later, either through voluntarily leaving or dismissal. Still, there may be circumstances in which a sincere counteroffer is extended, evaluated, and accepted.

With the above cautions in mind, you can be prepared to make a wise decision. If you have thought through your decision carefully, stick to it and move on.

### **Writing the Letter**

Much of the advice that you will find on web pages suggests that a resignation should be short and concise, offering little additional information. In some cases this may be okay, but we suggest a better way—a way to let your resignation letter sell you in future job opportunities. This is what we call "*Resigning Your Way to Success*."

A well-written resignation letter provides enough information to make the employer feel good about the person resigning. An expression of gratitude and sincerity goes a long way.

Here is a basic resignation letter format that takes a positive approach to resigning with the intention of securing a positive future reference.

Sections:

- The purpose of the letter (resignation)
- Your regret in leaving
- Positive things about the company, your co-workers, and your experience
- Highlight your accomplishments at the company (what noticeable contributions you made while you were there)
- Express gratitude for your opportunity to work at the company as well as for skills and knowledge gained

### **Tips for Leaving**

When you have made the decision to move on, keep the following in mind:

- Work up until you leave. Remain focused. Finish projects that you have been working on if time permits before your departure.

- Make sure your files are in order and you have accurate and clear "to do" lists for your replacement. Create documents explaining what you were doing, where you left off, and what you were planning to do. Make it easy for your replacement to continue where you left off.
- Leave on good terms with you co-workers. Try to settle outstanding problems with others.
- If your company permits, get a list of your co-workers names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. This list may help you network with colleagues for future jobs.
- Keep a positive attitude and be careful not to gloat about your next job. Be positive about the company you are leaving, your supervisors and co-workers. Be a class act. People will remember you for it.
- Provide thank you letters and your new contact information to supervisors and co-workers when appropriate after your departure.
- Avoid making personal attacks or giving constructive criticism in your exit interview. You want the Human Relations person to remember you as a positive, contributing employee. If there were problems, state them briefly, but always end on a positive note and explain what you enjoyed about your job and the company. You want to leave others with the impression that you are a team player with effective interpersonal skills.

## **Sample Resignation Letter**

August 19, 2002

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Direct Supervisor  
Direct Supervisor Title  
Company Address Information

Your Name  
Your Current Position  
Your Address

Dear Direct Supervisor's First Name,

I am writing you to announce that I have decided to resign my employment from (enter your company's name) effective (last date of employment - you should give a two - four (2 - 4) week notice). I appreciate the opportunity that you and (company's name) have given me to develop my professional skills and my career.

My decision to resign is based upon an opportunity that I believe is consistent with my career goals, and therefore, is final.

I will make every effort to leave on the best of terms by completing my assignments and making smooth transitions for those whom will be taking over my responsibilities.

I look forward to having an exit interview discussion if you feel it is appropriate.

Respectfully,

Your Name