

how to handle a

counter offer

diamond
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How to Handle a Counter Offer

You've been offered a position with growth potential and perhaps an increase in salary. You've analysed and agonised over the decision to leave a good (or bad) job for what could be a better one, and have accepted (or decided to accept) the offer. However, upon resigning, your current boss asks you to stay. This is known as a counter offer.

In recent years, counter offers have become quite common. "It's almost like a part of the accepted 'divorce' proceedings. But while counter offers can be tempting, take care not to fall into the trap or be blinded to your own detriment. Career changes are tough enough as it is, and anxieties about leaving a comfortable job, friends and location and having to reprove yourself again in an unknown opportunity can cloud the best of logic. But just because the new position is a little scary doesn't mean it's not a positive move.

There are many reasons for declining a counter offer:

You never want to advance your career through force.

If you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit each time you want to get better treatment from your company, you're probably better off going to an employer who appreciates their staff and rewards them appropriately.

You are perceived as a security risk and disloyal to the company.

After you have demonstrated yourself as disloyal by looking for opportunities outside the company, you will lose your status as a team player, and your motives will always be questioned.

Your employer is merely stalling for time

Usually, by counter offering, your current employer has bought himself or herself some time to look for a replacement or to make a transition on their own timetable.

Statistics show that 90% of people who accept counter offers to stay, leave their employment within six months, either because their employers arrange a replacement in their own time, or because the real reasons for wanting to change your job in the first place, have not gone away.

Since all signs point to trouble by accepting a counter offer, here are some of the ways to avoid a counter offer situation:

If it seems as if you are walking into a counter offer situation you need to take command as soon as you have evidence that the conversation is heading toward a counter offer. Politely interrupt with a statement such as "The last thing that I want to be inferred from my resignation is that I am trying to blackmail the company into keeping me. After doing my own thorough investigation, I've simply found a situation that I can't pass up. I hope you respect that." You may also want to offer any assistance to ensure a smooth transition before your departure.

Many times an experienced manager will try to use emotional tactics to keep an employee from leaving the company. They know how to push the right buttons to try to turn the situation to their advantage. Be wary of the following statements from managers:

"I thought you were happy here. I'm shocked that you would try to leave us before bringing any concerns you have about your position to me."

"We've been planning some things for you, but they have been confidential up to now."

"Your salary increase was set to go in effect next quarter, but we can make it effective sooner if it means you'll stay."

Most of us are easily flattered and the offer of more money coupled with colleagues telling you "the place won't be the same without you" can easily make you forget the reasons why you wanted to leave in the first place. Don't feel guilty and always try to stand your ground. The fact is, that once you have resigned there is rarely a good reason to change your mind and stay where you are. You wanted to leave for good reasons. You thought it through and went through the recruitment process successfully.

As attractive as counter-offers may appear, accepting them may greatly decrease your chances of achieving your career potential.

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