

Career Transition Guide

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Income Comparison

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Your Guide to the Perfect Interview

Most Common Hiring Criteria

The following characteristics are commonly used to evaluate potential employees. Be prepared to describe business situations where you demonstrated these characteristics.

- Leadership
- Self-Motivation/Takes Initiative
- Instrument of Change
- Sets an Example/Enhancing Others Performance
- Goal-Oriented For Self and Team
- Technical Skills/Analytical Skills
- Team Player
- Decision-Making Skills
- Independence
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Confidence
- Business Acumen
- Integrity
- Conflict Resolution
- Discipline
- Proactive vs. Reactive
- Project Management Skills
- Organizing and Prioritizing Skills
- Communications - Oral and Written
- Takes Direction, Willingness to Learn

It's not fair, but it's inevitably true: The best jobs go to the candidates with the best interviewing skills, not necessarily those with the best qualifications. To land the job you want, you need to learn proper interviewing techniques. Only by making the right moves before, during and after your interview can you make an impression that will advance your career. Your performance in a job interview is directly proportional to how much time you spend preparing. Be prepared and you'll increase your chances of getting the job.

Before the Interview

Research the Organization

- Employers respect candidates who do their research.
- Know something about an organization and why you want to work there.
- Check out its website or search through newspaper or periodical archives for any pertinent stories.
- Knowledge breeds confidence. The more you know the better you'll do.

Prepare Your Answers

- Know exactly what you are going to say about your strengths, weaknesses, and goals.
- Unless you're extremely confident in your speaking skills, write out and memorize your answers, then practice reciting them.
- Don't overestimate your ability to ad-lib.

Arrive Early

- Know where the interview is and how long it will take to get there.
- Arrive at least 10 minutes early to find the right office.



Your Guide to the Perfect Interview

Checklist

- Research the Organization ✓
- Prepare Your Answers ✓
- Arrive Early ✓
- Bring Resume & References ✓
- Dress Appropriately ✓

What to Bring

- 2 or 3 extra copies of your up-to-date resume.
- List of references.
- Pen and notepad for taking notes.

Dress Appropriately and Act Appropriately

- Professional and well-groomed appearance is critical.
- Enthusiasm is by far the most important quality in a job interview.
- Express a positive attitude.

During the Interview

Go Alone

- Do not bring a friend, child, etc. Serious applicants don't arrive with an entourage!

Remember Names

- Try to use the names of the people you meet in conversation.
- Interviewers are like anyone else: they like to hear their own names.

Pay Attention to Body Language

- Smile.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Make frequent eye contact.
- Sit up straight.
- Interviewers assume that the way you handle yourself in the interview is the way you'll handle yourself in the job. Your goal is to come across as interested, alert, and eager.



Your Guide to the Perfect Interview

Check List

- Go Alone ✓
- Remember Names ✓
- Be Aware of Body Language ✓
- Be Confident ✓
- Listen Carefully ✓
- Speak Positively ✓
- Respond to the Interviewer ✓
- Give Brief Answers ✓
- Ask Questions ✓

Be Confident

- A job interview is not a time for modesty.
- Your job is to sell yourself.
- Don't be shy about your skills or accomplishments, but stop short of boasting.
- Confidence is impressive, but arrogance is annoying.

Listen Carefully

- Concentrate your attention on what the interviewer is saying.
- Avoid asking questions about topics that already have been addressed.
- Be able to identify those points that can help you make the right impression.

Speak Positively

- Don't knock past or current employers.
- A negative attitude will always hurt you in a job interview.
- Speak clearly. Do not mumble your words; it portrays a lack of confidence.

Respond to Your Interviewer

- If he makes a joke, smile to acknowledge that he made one, even if it was not funny.

Give Brief Answers

- Answer promptly and intelligently. However, when asked yes or no questions, elaborate.

Ask the Interviewer Questions

- Even if he does not ask you "Do you have any questions," ask him anyway.



Your Guide to the Perfect Interview

Check List

- Reiterate why your background matches their needs ✓
- Tell the interviewer you want the job ✓
- Accept an offer only if you are ready ✓
- Don't be discouraged ✓
- Address remaining concerns ✓
- Thank the interviewer ✓

Closing the Interview

- Restate the position's requirements and responsibilities as you understand them and ask the interviewer if your conclusions are correct. If so, tell the interviewer that you will be able to solve the critical challenges of the position. Reiterate the reasons why this is true and show how your background and attributes match their needs perfectly.
- Tell the interviewer that you want the job! If you are interested in the position, ask for it or ask for the next interview if the situation demands. You must show enthusiasm for the position to receive an offer. It is common for a company to miss out on the best candidate for their opening because of a perceived lack of interest on the candidate's part.
- If you are made an offer, accept it only if you are ready. You don't have to accept the offer on the spot.
- Don't be discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary is discussed. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with CFS first or interview more applicants before making a decision.
- Ask the interviewer if you can address any of their remaining concerns.
- Thank the interviewer for his time and consideration of you.



After the Interview: Send a Thank You Letter

Sample Thank You Letter

Send your interviewer a
thank you letter within
the next 24 hours.

(Date)

(Interviewer Name)
(Title)
(Company Name)
(Address)
(City, State, Zip)

Dear (Interviewer):

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you. Our discussion about the position and (Company Name) confirmed my desire for employment with your firm. I was impressed with (Company Name) and the opportunity we discussed, as well as everyone to whom I spoke.

I believe my skills and experience will be an asset to your firm. Furthermore, I feel my work ethic and dedication will allow me to excel in any position for which you feel I am qualified.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me and allowing me the chance to learn more about (Company name). I would welcome the opportunity to work for your firm. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Name)



7 General Interview Reminders

Interview Don'ts:

It may be obvious to some that most of the things you should not do are the opposite of what you should. However, some people need reinforcing.

Be Dishonest

If an employer asks "Do you know about?" and you do not, admit it. If you say yes, the next question is almost always "Tell me about it."

Chew Gum

It's tacky and inappropriate. We would recommend that you do not before the interview either. You may forget to remove it.

Smoke

Do not smoke, even if the interviewer does and offers you a cigarette.

Refuse a Job Offer in the Interview

Don't ever refuse a job offer until you have had the time to think about it. It may be the only one you get.

Ramble

Make sure your answers are short and to the point.

1. Be enthusiastic.
2. Prepare questions prior to the interview (research the company).
3. Concentrate on non-verbal cues (sit forward, smile, firm handshake, maintain eye contact, stand up to greet the interviewer, etc.).
4. Listen intently and speak clearly. Avoid acronyms and language specific to your current employer.
5. Appear flexible and open to opportunities presented.
6. Dress professionally and appropriately.
7. Be on time.

Once Again: The best jobs go to the candidates with the best interviewing skills! Qualifications and references are often not enough to land the job you really want. Through research and preparation, you can interview with the best of them.



Interview Questions

Sample Questions

- Why did you select your college/graduate program?
- Why did you join/leave your current and previous employers?
- Describe your current position in detail.
- Describe what you have done on your major projects/audits.
- Describe your favorite/least favorite supervisor.
- What type of position would interest you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you interested in this company/opportunity?
- What are your major accomplishments?
- What are your long-term goals personally/professionally/technically?
- Describe in detail top risks and key technical/business issues on your projects/ audits.
- How have you been evaluated by your superiors, peers, subordinates and clients?
- Describe your favorite/least favorite work assignment.
- Describe a difficult situation that you faced and how you overcame it.
- How are you currently being compensated?
- What are your salary expectations?



Behavior-Based Interview Questions

Many managers are searching for more detailed examples of work performance, leadership skills, and problem solving. Be prepared for behavior-based interview questions.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Leadership:

- Tell me about a time when you accomplished something significant that wouldn't have happened if you had not been there to make it happen.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to step into a situation, take charge, muster support, and achieve good results.
- Describe for me a time when you may have been disappointed in your behavior.
- Tell me about a time when you had to discipline or fire a friend.
- Tell me about a time when you had to develop leaders under you.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Initiative and Follow-Through:

- Give me an example of a situation where you had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives.
- Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working toward.
- Tell me about a time when you won (or lost) an important contract.
- Tell me about a time when you used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
- Tell me about a situation that you had significant impact on because of your follow-through.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Thinking and Problem Solving:

- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
- If you had to do that activity over again, how would you do it differently?
- Describe for me a situation where you may have missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
- Tell me about a time when you surmounted a major

obstacle.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Communication:

- Tell me about a time when you had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do this successfully.
- Tell me about a situation where you had to be persuasive and sell your idea to someone else.
- Describe for me a situation where you persuaded team members to do things your way. What was the effect?
- Tell me about a time when you were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Working Effectively with Others:

- Give me an example that would show how you've been able to develop and maintain productive relations with others who have differing points of view.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to motivate others to get the desired results.
- Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker, and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you played an integral role in getting a team (or work group) back on track.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Work Quality:

- Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was well received. To what do you attribute that?
- Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was not well received. To what do you attribute that?
- Tell me about a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in improvement in a major work area.
- Tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Tell me about a time when you made a lasting, positive impression on a customer.

Behavior-Based Interview Questions

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Creativity & Innovation:

- Tell me about a situation in which you were able to find a new and better way of doing something significant.
- Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
- Describe a time when you were able to come up with new ideas that were key to the success of some activity or project.
- Tell me about a time when you had to bring out the creativity in others.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Priority Setting:

- Tell me about a time when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully.
- Tell me about a time when you had to pick out the most important things in some activity and make sure those got done.
- Tell me about a time that you prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
- Tell me about a time when you got bogged down in the details of a project.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Decision Making:

- Describe for me a time when you had to make an important decision with limited facts.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Describe for me a time when you had to adapt to a difficult situation. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision
- Tell me about a time when you hired (or fired) the wrong person.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around the Ability to Work in Varying Work Conditions (stress, changing deadlines, etc.):

- Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- Tell me about a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
- Tell me about a time when you had to change work mid-stream because of changing organizational

priorities.

- Describe for me what you do to handle stressful situations.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Delegation:

- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Tell me about a time when you did a poor job of delegating.
- Describe for me a time when you had to delegate to a person with a full workload, and how you went about doing it.

If They're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Customer Service:

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.
- Tell me about one or two customer-service related programs that you've done of which you're particularly proud.
- Tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

Lynda Ford, author of this article, is president of The Ford Group, a consulting firm dedicated to improving organizations through their greatest potential resource...people.

Answers to Difficult Interview Questions

How much money do you want?

Only indicate what you are presently earning and that salary is one of several factors you are considering. Emphasize that the opportunity is the most important consideration.

Tell me about yourself.

Emphasis on your recent experience is most important, although briefly covering previous experiences and education can also be useful.

What are some situations in which your work was criticized?

Give only one or two examples and emphasize how you addressed the criticism and how it is now not a problem. Ensure that you show that you are open to constructive criticism.

What do you think of your boss?

Create a positive image, even if this is not the case.

How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our company?

Realistically speaking, experience and the requirements of the job will influence your making a meaningful contribution.

Why haven't you found the right position before now?

Explain that finding the right job is more important than finding just a job. This can be a difficult task as the current economy may be a factor.

Why were you laid off?

Be as positive as possible. Do not discuss interpersonal conflicts, regardless of how sympathetic the interviewer may seem. Discuss economic conditions. Do not go into much detail unless asked.

Why should we hire you? Are you interested in this job?

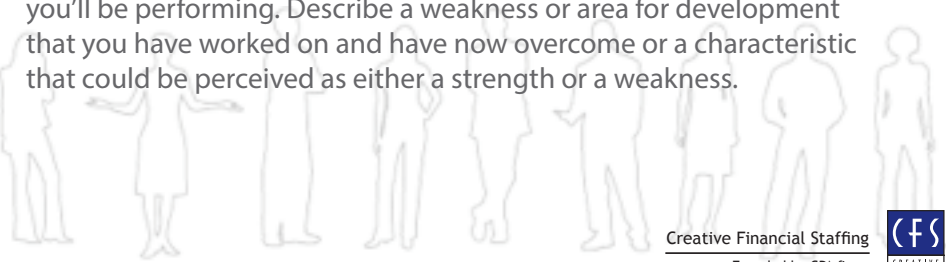
Explain why this is a logical position for you, sum up your work history and re-emphasize your strongest qualities and achievements. Above all, let the interviewer know that you will be an asset to the company.

What are your strengths?

Provide an example of one or two strengths and how it affected your work in a positive way. Stay away from identifying standard characteristics without examples (i.e. "I'm detail-oriented, I'm a hard worker, etc.").

What are your weaknesses?

Cite a lack of experience in an area largely unnecessary to the job you'll be performing. Describe a weakness or area for development that you have worked on and have now overcome or a characteristic that could be perceived as either a strength or a weakness.



Asking Questions During the Interview

Our experience has proven that most companies consider this phase of the interview to be critical.

Common feedback can be:

“ Ann was qualified to do the job, however she didn't seem very interested in our opportunity. She didn't ask any questions. Our people found that to be negative. ”

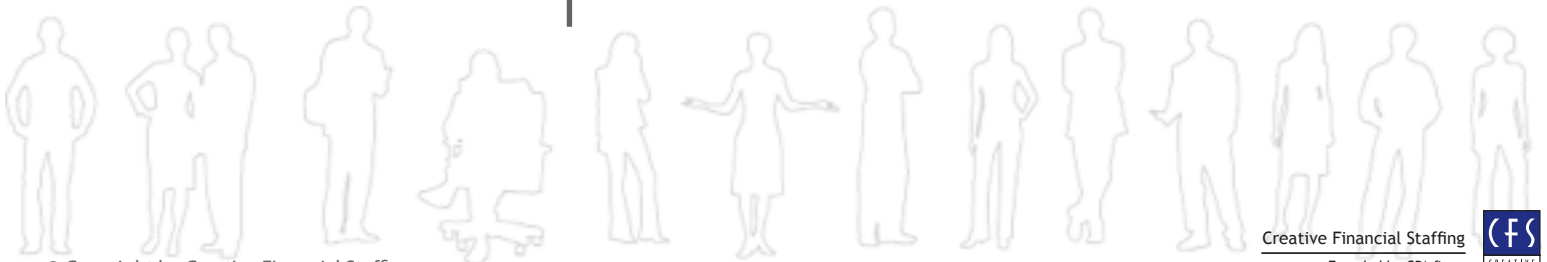
“ Tom was a great candidate. He was well prepared and asked questions which showed he is closely evaluating our role. He appears to be analytical and intuitive. Where else is he interviewing? We'd like to hear his feedback. What is it going to take to get this guy? ”

Being prepared to ask well thought out questions is critical if you expect your interview to go well. Why is this so important? Here are a few good reasons:

- Many of our clients will spend half of their time listening to you describe your experience. They will reserve the second half of their interview for answering your questions. In a 40 minute interview, this amounts to 20 minutes. That is a significant amount of time.
- Most candidates do a good job describing their background, however they fail to ask questions. Doing so helps you stand out.

Things to keep in mind:

- Remember, as you prepare your questions, the obvious ones will be answered throughout initial conversation and their description of the company and position. Don't be trapped with the response, "You've already answered all of my questions."
- Ask good spontaneous questions throughout the interview to show that you are paying attention.



Sample Questions to Ask the Interviewer

About the Interviewer's Background

- Why did you join this company?
- What do you like best about it?
- What was your adjustment like upon joining this company?
- Describe your professional background and your career history within this company.
- Describe some professional challenges you've encountered at this company.

About the Role

(Most Questions You Ask Should Be Focused on the Position and Responsibilities)

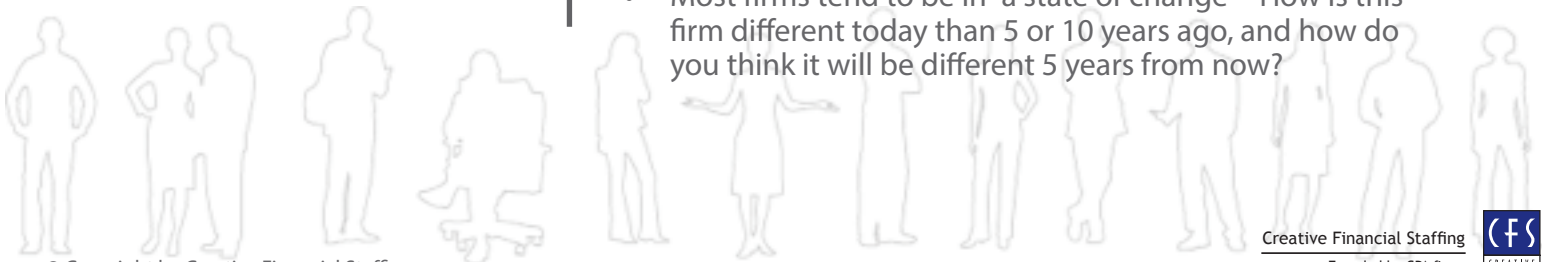
- What are the job's primary responsibilities?
- What qualities have helped a person be successful in this role?
- What do you see as being the greatest challenges?
- What events have caused this position to become available?
- Where have other people moved after proving themselves in this position?

About the Group

- What are the professional backgrounds of other members in the group?
- With whom will I be interacting? To whom will I be reporting?
- With what other internal/external groups does this position allow me to interact?

About the Company

- Can you give me examples of new products/services you will be offering to your customers/clients in the near future? What prompted this initiative?
- What have been some successful initiatives you have worked on in the last year?
- How do you "grow" your business? How is business development handled?
- What characteristics of the organization/product/services makes you better than the competition/competitors?
- How would you describe the firm culturally?
- Most firms tend to be in "a state of change" - How is this firm different today than 5 or 10 years ago, and how do you think it will be different 5 years from now?



Questions You Should NOT Ask

NOTE:

Many of these questions are appropriate if phrased differently. Be careful how you ask the question.

Do not ask negative questions or questions that should be asked only after an offer is made.

- What is your turnover rate?
- Is this position open because someone left the firm?
- Do you work a lot of overtime here?
- Do you have tuition reimbursement?
- Can you tell me the salary range for this position?
- Why do people leave the firm?
- Can you wear jeans/shorts on casual days?
- When would I become a manager?
- What don't you like about the firm?
- Do you have "flex time"?
- Do you offer part-time work arrangements?
- How much vacation time would I get the first year?



Keep Resignations Short, Simple, and Positive

By Rick Hornberer

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 your resignation relatively smooth and amicable.

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.

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, 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 you and the firm have done for me here. I don't think I would have been presented 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

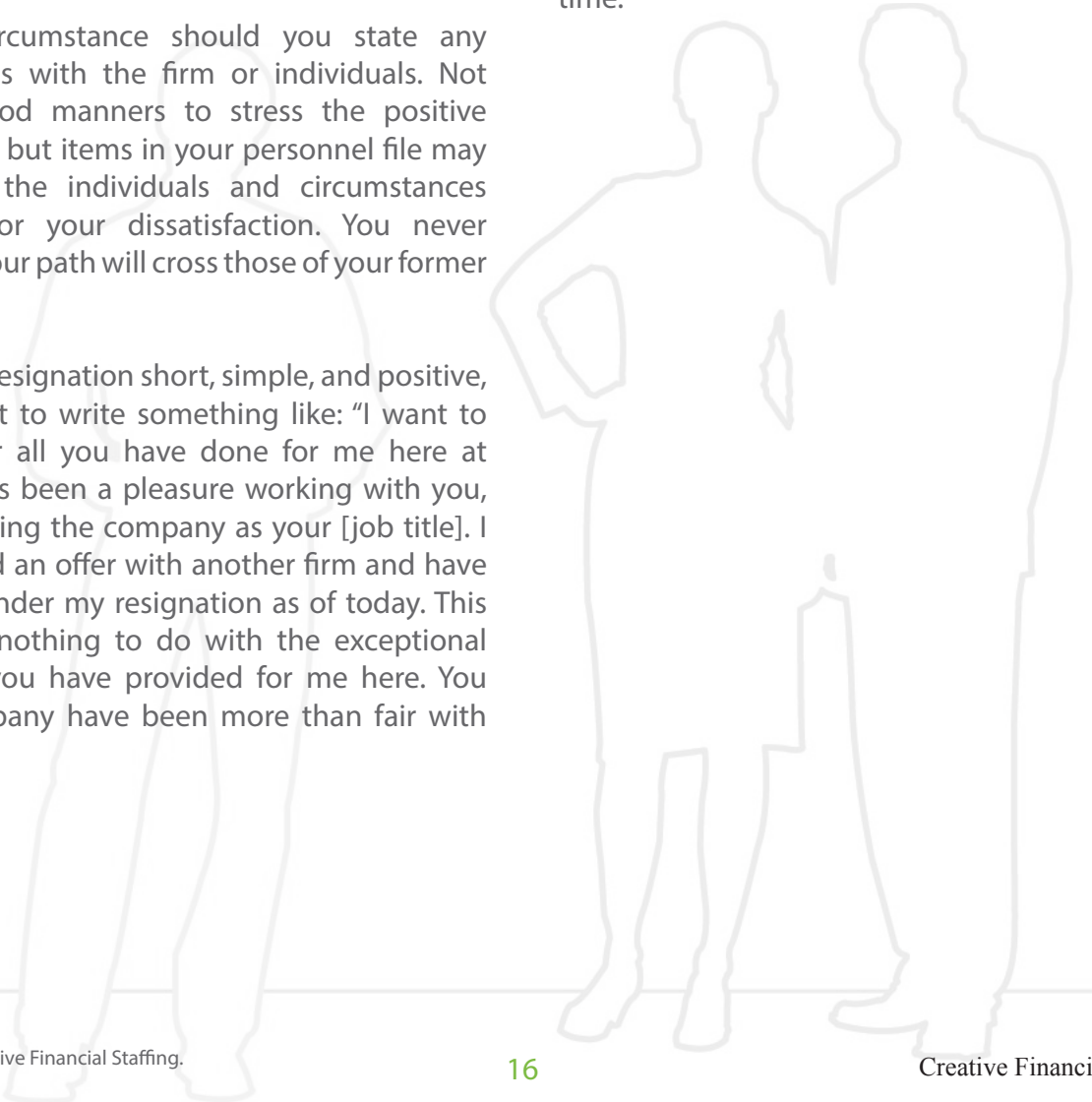
Written resignations give you the time to effectively prepare what you wish to communicate, and give you greater control over your delivery of the message. You can't be thrown off-track by an unexpected remark as can happen during a confrontational conversation. A written resignation also reinforces 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 dissatisfactions 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.



Resignation Letter

Sample Resignation Letter

(Date)

(Company Name)
(Address)
(City, State Zip)

Dear (Employer Name):

This letter is to inform you that I wish to terminate my employment with (Company Name) effective (Date). I have accepted a new position and have decided to move on with my career.

I want to express my gratitude for a rewarding opportunity with (Company Name) and with you personally. My decision to pursue another opportunity was not an easy one, but it is right for me as I work toward fulfilling my goals. I hope you will respect my position in this matter.

My efforts until my end date will be to wrap up my products here and turn over my responsibilities as smoothly as possible.

Sincerely,

(Your name)



The Counter-Offer

10 Reasons for NOT accepting a counter-offer

1. You have now made your employer aware that you are unhappy. From this day on, your loyalty will always be in question.
2. When promotion time comes around, your employer will remember who is loyal and who is not.
3. When times get tough, your employer will begin the cutbacks with you.
4. Accepting a counter-offer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride; you were bought.
5. Where is the money for the counter-offer coming from? All companies have wage and salary guidelines that must be followed. Is it your next raise early?
6. Your company will immediately start looking for a new person at a cheaper price.
7. The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change will repeat themselves in the future, even if you accept a counter-offer.
8. Statistics show that if you accept a counter-offer, the probability of voluntarily leaving in six months or being let go in one year is extremely high.
9. Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your co-workers will never be the same. You will lose the personal satisfaction of peer group acceptance.
10. Do you want to work for a company at which you have to threaten to resign before they will give you what you are worth?

Surveys show that eight out of ten employees who accept counteroffers don't complete the following year with their employer. Why shun counteroffers? Because the factors that caused you to seek or entertain a better offer are likely to remain in force. Beside which, your current employer will probably lose trust in your loyalty. Accepting a counteroffer may permanently damage your reputation with your would-be-employer.

Your prospective new colleagues may conclude that you were merely using them to gain leverage; you weren't in earnest as a candidate. Never underestimate the value of your perceived integrity in this situation. The best response to a counteroffer is to listen politely, perhaps even sleep on it, but decline. If your current firm denied you advancement before you secured an outside offer, it will probably thwart you next time you feel ready to advance. What's more, your firm may start looking to replace you the day you accept the counteroffer. Your plans for leaving may not be forgotten!

Leave On the Right Note

Before leaving the firm, take time to speak with each of your support staff, peers, executive personnel, and others with whom you've worked. To the extent practical, clear up any unfinished business. Be sensitive to others' reactions and keep your conversations positive and constructive. Some people may naturally express their own discontentment, and may egg you on to agree with them. Don't! Instead, express your appreciation and tell your colleagues you'll miss them.

A little time spent nurturing relationships before leaving for your new job will go a long way to build support for your future. Also keep in mind that it is professional courtesy to give your employer ample notice to help them prepare for your departure - typically, 2 weeks. However, you should try to get out as soon as possible to avoid recurring invitations to tell your story, and to avoid having to deal with the frustrations and pressures at the job as the firm adjusts to your leaving.

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When you want to quit and the boss says: 'Stay'

You've landed a new job, composed a discreet resignation letter and broken the news to your boss. He goes into shock.

"I thought you were as happy with us as we are with you," he says. "Let's discuss it before you make your final decision."

Soon, you find yourself being offered a substantial raise, with promises of great things for the future if you stay. It seems the company that had been taking you for granted has suddenly realized it can't get along without you.

How flattering! How tempting! How dangerous!

You have just received a counteroffer: an inducement from your current employer to lure you back into the nest after you've decided it's time to fly away.

It's a delicious moment, and you have every right to savor it. But don't stop cleaning out your desk.

Career-planning experts say that accepting a counteroffer is almost always a bad idea.

"It never works out, not for more than a month or three, so forget it," advises Burton E. Lipman, author of "The Professional Job Search Program."

"Career suicide" is Paul Hawkinson's two-word opinion of counteroffers. In 20 years as an executive recruiter, Hawkinson says he has seen "only isolated incidents in which an accepted counteroffer has benefited the employee.

"Counteroffers are usually nothing more than stall devices to give your employer time to replace you," Hawkinson wrote recently in *National Business Employment Weekly*.

But they've just offered you a raise to make you stay. Why would they want to replace you?

Because, little bird, you are a loyalty risk. By threatening to fly to another company, you have

demonstrated a lack of fidelity. You are not a "team player." You will henceforth be regarded with suspicion.

What kind of future can you expect at a company that doesn't trust you?

Chances are your boss didn't make that counteroffer because he wants to have you around forevermore. He just hasn't got anyone who can fill your shoes at the moment. Once a suitable replacement is found, you'll be *persona non grata*.

The time to leave is when you're ready to go, not when your boss is ready to get rid of you.

But it would be so much easier to stay in the old nest. Like any venture into the unknown, a job change is tough.

That's why," says Hawkinson, "bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons."

Don't tear up that resignation letter.

Ask yourself why you wanted to leave the job in the first place. Chances are, those reasons still exist. The counteroffer only temporarily cushions the thorns in the next.

"Conditions are just made a bit more tolerable in the short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you," Hawkinson says.

"Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit every time you deserve better working conditions?"

Who wants to work for a company where you have to get an outside offer before the boss will come up with a raise or a promotion?

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Income Comparison

Current Job	New Job	Element to Consider
\$ _____	\$ _____	Base Salary
\$ _____	\$ _____	Bonus, Commissions
\$ _____	\$ _____	Car Allowance
\$ _____	\$ _____	Tuition Contribution
\$ _____	\$ _____	Other Perks
\$ _____	\$ _____	Profit Sharing
\$ _____	\$ _____	Stock or Equity
\$ _____	\$ _____	401(k) Contribution
\$ _____	\$ _____	Defined Benefits
\$ _____	\$ _____	Reimbursed Expenses
\$ _____	\$ _____	Cost of Living
\$ _____	\$ _____	Commuting, Parking
\$ _____	\$ _____	Moving Expenses
\$ _____	\$ _____	Travel expenses
\$ _____	\$ _____	Insurance Premiums
\$ _____	\$ _____	Property Taxes
\$ _____	\$ _____	State, Local Taxes
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ Difference (+/-)