

How to resign

Congratulations, you've finally got a new job! While you might be tempted to slam the door on your way out, it pays to be professional. How you resign could be the last thing people remember about you and could affect your future career. Here's how to get it right.

DO: Tell your boss first

You might be bursting with excitement, but be careful who you share your news with. Your boss should be the one to hear you're leaving first - not the office temp.

You will be asking your manager to write a reference for you and if they hear it from someone else they will be annoyed, so it's best to keep on their good side. Don't forget to put your resignation in writing. A verbal resignation is insufficient to end the contract. Make sure your leaving date is confirmed in writing too. This will be essential to make sure that all of your final salary arrangements are correct.

DO: Be gracious

If you haven't thought about sending a formal leaving communication, now's the time. Agree with your boss a positive leaving statement that can be communicated to colleagues, customers etc. Otherwise people may wonder whether you went voluntarily or were pushed. You should also thank individuals you have worked with and wish them well, even those you may have had difficulty with.

This is especially important if you work in a small sector where everyone knows everyone else, but you'd be amazed at how often professional paths cross.

DO: Prepare a handover

You may be mentally out of the door, but while you're still going into the office, keep your mind focused on the job.

Do the right thing and make sure you hand over projects well, and tie up loose ends as much as you can.

This is especially important if you think that your boss may make it difficult for you to go. Having a handover prepared shows you mean business and removes any excuses the boss may have for keeping you there any longer than you need to be.

DO: Network

You've made some useful contacts during your current job - but what good are their email addresses and phone numbers if they're stored on your email work address that you no longer have access to? Use your final days to gather up all of your important connections related to the job to let them know where you are going, particularly your key customers, stakeholders, suppliers, other business contacts associated with your role.

Many of them could be very good contacts for the future so add them to your LinkedIn connections, get testimonials from them and swap private email addresses.'

While you're pulling contacts from your computer, take the opportunity to remove personal files and emails - which goes for other work-owned devices, like a mobile or laptop too.

DON'T: Bad mouth at your exit interview

Exit interviews can be notoriously difficult to navigate. While you might be tempted to dredge up every past grievance, proceed with caution.

Don't use an exit interview with your manager or HR to have a go at particular individuals you disliked. Try to depersonalise any criticisms so it is less about you having a go at particular individuals and more about the systems, processes or business decisions involved.

This will give your feedback more credibility and retains a constructive relationship with the organisation rather than your exit simply being dismissed as a personality clash.

Be careful what you vent about on Facebook and Twitter too - you never know who's reading.

DON'T: Worry if others react badly

Don't over-react if your colleagues seem hostile or unsupportive when they hear your news. They may be envious or feel threatened because additional work is likely to come their way in your absence. Their reaction is more about them than it is about you.

Equally, take care not to upset those who may be wishing they were in the same position.

You might be excited about your next move, but don't rub colleagues' noses in it.

DON'T: Go off sick

If you're leaving the company on bad terms you may be tempted to do a disappearing act - but this may make matters worse.

Don't go sick rather than working your notice. References usually ask for details of your attendance record and if you start to fall ill, this will not look good to potential employers.

DO: Ask for a reference

Before you leave, ask your manager and important clients to write you a reference - including a LinkedIn recommendation. That way you have the reference as part of your profile which may help next time you're looking for work.

If you're leaving under a cloud, try to get the wording of your reference agreed beforehand. This might be an HR-type letter confirming your dates of work, job title etc. It will be one less thing to worry about when you apply for other jobs.

DON'T: Take anything you shouldn't

Finally, don't take anything from work that doesn't belong to you - whether that's stationery and equipment or sensitive company materials.

The last thing you need is to be accused of theft or unprofessional conduct and leave on bad terms.