

# A GUIDE TO RESIGNING PROFESSIONALLY



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# INTRODUCTION

## HOW TO RESIGN IN A PROFESSIONAL WAY

When you have accepted a new role, the resignation process may seem like a formality. However, learning how to approach the process professionally is a valuable skill especially when you consider the importance of building strong relationships throughout your career.

Ensuring that you retain good relationships with former colleagues and managers and that you take a professional approach to your resignation can have huge advantages for both personal and professional development.

In this guide, we draw on our research and expertise to provide a guide to professionals preparing to leave their current job for a new opportunity, offering advice on how to do so in a way that can offer long term benefits to your career.

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### CONTENTS

1. Informing your employer
2. Completing your notice period
3. How to handle a counter offer
4. Maintaining contact
5. How to impress in your new role

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### ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS

Robert Walters is a specialist professional recruitment consultancy, working with businesses of all sizes as a trusted recruitment partner. With an international network of offices spanning 28 countries, we are perfectly positioned to help you find the very best opportunities. In Canada, we recruit specialists on a permanent basis across accounting & finance.

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# INFORMING YOUR EMPLOYER

Once you have accepted a new job offer, your next task will naturally be to let your current employer know.

Telling your manager in person is always best, so set up a meeting where you can let them know in private. If this isn't feasible then a phone call is still more personal than an email.

Consider what you want to tell them in advance and consider the questions they are likely to have. A majority of Canadian employers require at least two weeks' written notice of resignation.

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## CHECKLIST

1. Schedule a private meeting with your manager
2. Plan what you are going to say. Let them know your intention to leave at the start of the conversation.
3. Ensure that you thank them for the opportunities you have had and provide honest feedback on your motivations for leaving.
4. Be prepared to respond to questions they may have in a professional way.
5. Have a letter prepared to formally give notice of your resignation and provide details on your reasons for taking a new role.
6. Make sure you know what your contractual notice period is so you can discuss your notice period with your manager.



**IN ADDITION, PREPARE A FORMAL LETTER IN ADVANCE WHICH YOU CAN GIVE TO YOUR MANAGER, PROVIDING YOUR REASONS FOR LEAVING IN MORE DETAIL.**

Once you have let them know your intention to leave, send this to provide them with formal notice of your resignation as well as feedback on what your experience with them has been like.



**MARTIN FOX**, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Nederlands Architectuur



54%

OF PROFESSIONALS PLAN  
TO CHANGE JOBS IN THE  
NEXT YEAR

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# COMPLETING YOUR NOTICE PERIOD

It is likely that your employer will want to retain you until the end of your notice period. Ensuring you conduct yourself professionally until you leave is an important part of the resignation process.

Discuss your ongoing projects with your manager to decide how you can hand them over to your colleagues or your replacement.

It may be the case that you wish to leave earlier than your notice period specifies if your new employer wants you to join as quickly as possible. If this is the case then you will need to negotiate with your manager.

Be flexible and take a proactive approach – your employer may be more likely to allow you to leave before your notice period is up if you can suggest a practical plan to complete your remaining work.

- Find solutions for how the team can cover your absence
- Make suggestions as to which of your colleagues may be able to temporarily take over some of your responsibilities
- Determine which critical stages of any ongoing projects need your attention most urgently

If your employer can't accommodate you leaving the business early, then ensure that you accept this in a professional way and continue to perform your role to the best of your ability until you leave.



**IN MANY CASES, YOUR EMPLOYER MAY START LOOKING FOR YOUR REPLACEMENT WHILE YOU COMPLETE YOUR NOTICE PERIOD.**

Offering to assist in the hiring process can make an excellent final impression on your manager. As someone who had been doing the role you will have first hand experience of what skills and traits it requires and your manager may well value your input in choosing your own replacement.



**MARTIN FOX**, MANAGING DIRECTOR



42%

OF PROFESSIONALS WOULD  
BE MOST LIKELY TO CHANGE  
JOBS FOR THE CHANCE TO  
PROGRESS THEIR CAREER



# HOW TO HANDLE A COUNTER OFFER

Minimizing staff turnover is a high priority for many employers and counter offers are a popular strategy for retaining good staff.

Counter offers can include increased pay, a promotion, a transfer to another division/business area, additional management responsibilities or a reiteration of your value to the business.

Whatever your level of seniority, emotional factors will always play a role in your decision to take a new job. It's important to try not to let emotional factors have a disproportionate impact on your decision, whether it's frustration with your current role or flattery at receiving a counter offer. Ultimately, you need to consider what will be best for you, personally and professionally, over the long term.

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## WOULD YOU HAVE RECEIVED A PAY RISE OR PROMOTION IF YOU HADN'T CHOSEN TO LEAVE?

Your employer may be prepared to offer you better terms if you decide to stay, but you should consider why it took the risk of you leaving the business for them to make these changes. It is also worth considering if an immediate, short term increase in your pay could have a negative impact on your relationship with your manager, your annual bonus or other considerations.

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## DOES YOUR EMPLOYER HAVE A LONG TERM CAREER PLAN FOR YOU?

If you explain to your employer that career progression is a major factor in your decision to take a new role then they may say that this can be taken into account if you decide to stay. However, if they had not discussed a career plan for you previously, you may question their commitment to developing one now.

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**A COUNTER OFFER CAN BE FLATTERING AND THE APPEAL OF STICKING WITH A FAMILIAR JOB CAN BE STRONG. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER WHETHER ACCEPTING IT WILL BE THE BEST DECISION OVER THE LONG TERM.**



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### **IS YOUR EMPLOYER WILLING TO COMMIT TO THE COUNTER OFFER IN WRITING?**

If your manager is prepared to make you a counter offer, it's acceptable to ask them to confirm the terms of the offer in writing. This will help to clarify how serious they are about taking steps to address the issues that led you to find a new role. If they are unwilling to put down all of these proposed changes on paper, this may be cause to question how serious they are about committing to the new terms.

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### **WILL YOUR WORK RELATIONSHIPS SUFFER IF YOU STAY?**

Once your employer has been made aware of your desire to leave, it is possible that the trust between you and your manager could be damaged if you decide to stay. If you do opt to take a counter offer, it's likely that the dynamic of your relationship with your manager will change, at least over the short to mid-term. It's worth considering if you would prefer a clean start with a new team or if you are prepared to work at rebuilding trust with your employer.

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### **DO THE NEW TERMS ADDRESS YOUR ORIGINAL REASONS FOR LEAVING?**

The offer of a promotion or increased salary is tempting and flattering, but if there were underlying issues regarding the working culture, business area/industry or other factors which are integral to the organization, the counter offer may not address them.



**39%**

**OF PROFESSIONALS WHO  
ACCEPTED A COUNTER OFFER  
BEGAN LOOKING FOR ANOTHER  
JOB WITHIN 6 MONTHS**



**IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO ACCEPT A JOB OFFER THERE IS STILL THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAINTAIN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CONTACT YOU MADE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS.**

Particularly in the case of recruiters, keeping in touch with your consultant and providing feedback as to why you decided not to take the new role can help them understand your motivations and better match you to a role if you do choose to look for a new position in the future.

**MARTIN FOX**, MANAGING DIRECTOR



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# MAINTAINING CONTACT

After resigning, staying in touch with your former employer can be an excellent opportunity for networking, not to mention the importance of maintaining personal relationships with your former colleagues.

In the age of social media, there are ample opportunities to remain in contact with former colleagues through platforms such as LinkedIn. Occasional emails can also help to demonstrate a particular interest in remaining in touch.

When keeping in touch with your former employer or colleagues:

- Maintain professionalism in all communication
- Do not share any sensitive information about your new employer
- Share relevant industry news or details of networking events as an “excuse” to keep in touch
- When speaking to your former colleagues, avoid criticizing your previous employer or comparing conditions at your previous job to your new one



# 61%

**OF PROFESSIONALS WOULD  
BE PREPARED TO LEAVE DUE  
TO A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP  
WITH THEIR BOSS**



“

**STARTING A NEW JOB CAN FEEL INTIMIDATING, SO IT ALWAYS PAYS TO REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU WERE SELECTED BY THE EMPLOYER OUT OF MANY OTHER CANDIDATES AS BEING THE BEST FOR THE ROLE.**

Remind yourself why you chose to move jobs as well, to ensure that any nervousness you might be feeling doesn't overtake the excitement at taking on new challenges and opportunities.

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**MARTIN FOX**, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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# HOW TO IMPRESS IN YOUR NEW ROLE

While securing a new job may be the biggest challenge, making a good first impression when you start in your position is still an essential part of the process. Preparing fully so that you can start your new role with confidence will help you to present your best possible self.

## 1 – DO YOUR RESEARCH

You will have researched the company prior to your interview, but before your first day it is worth refreshing your memory and doing some more detailed research on the team you will be working with, such as their recent projects and achievements.

## 2 – CONTACT YOUR NEW MANAGER AND COLLEAGUES

Email your manager to ask if there is anything they would like to you to do to prepare for your first day. This can cover anything from dress code to having particular work related apps on your phone. In any case, it is likely that it will make a good impression on your manager.

## 3 – TAKE A TOUR

On your first day make use of your lunch break to familiarize yourself with your surroundings. Learn where various departments are, particularly those you will interact with regularly, as well as supply areas for practical items like stationery or backup printers.

## 4 – SAY ‘YES’

Be social with your colleagues and take the opportunity to get to know people from across the business. Building relationships and integrating into the working culture will help to improve your confidence.



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# CONTACT US

To discuss your resignation, your career ambitions or for more advice about starting a new job, please contact your Robert Walters recruitment consultant, email us at [toronto@robertwalters.com](mailto:toronto@robertwalters.com) or get in touch with our office below:

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