

## Counteroffers

How interesting? When I was doing the research for this piece, I read countless articles on counteroffers. The thing I am struck by is, no matter how old or new the information, it is all the same. Only the verbiage has changed over time, but the message is clear. To quote Paul Hawkinson, "Counteroffer Acceptance - Road to Career Ruin."

So you found yourself in a less-than-perfect environment, put yourself on the market and landed the ideal opportunity. It now comes time to turn in your resignation. Be prepared for emotional warfare when seated in your manager's office.

Let's face it. No boss wants to be on the other side of the desk when one of their key players comes in and tells him/her that they're leaving the company. What happens? The boss goes into panic mode and his/her brain immediately starts calculating potential ways to solve the crisis at hand. Thoughts go through his/her mind like, "This person is such a team player, how is this going to affect morale in the rest of the group?" "I'm already overworked and I can't handle her work, too," and "I lost another person two weeks ago, what is my boss going to say about this turnover?" All these frantic thoughts surface within seconds and are processed momentarily. Your boss is in survival mode.

And here it comes...the counteroffer. You will probably hear things like, "Wow, this is really a surprise, let's discuss this further before you make up your mind to leave," "As you know we do our annual increases effective January 1st, but we can make yours effective immediately," and "I had a meeting just the other day in which you were slated for this high-profile project doing the development work you've been asking to do."

Before you get all excited and think that you've finally gotten everything you've been wishing for, stop and rethink the situation. Why did you have to take your time and energy to apply for other positions, coordinate interviews with prospective employers, spend time interviewing and traveling to the appointments, labor over the decision to leave your current company, and ultimately resign to take the new opportunity? Clearly, you would not intentionally waste your own time and look for another job for the fun of doing so.

Now's your chance. It's time to remember all the reasons why you were looking for something else in the first place. Perhaps it was that the work you're doing currently is not challenging enough, maybe you need a shorter commute because you have small children at home that you'd like to see grow up, perhaps you haven't had a pay increase in three years or your pay is nowhere near market value, or maybe your boss is a micro-manager and the team's morale is at an all-time low. There are an infinite number of reasons why people look for new jobs and are unique to each individual. Whatever the reasons were that brought you to the decision to look for a new opportunity; they're most likely not going to change. Sometimes the temptation of a generous counteroffer temporarily blinds us into thinking that everything is going to be just fine; however, you are about to enter the danger zone, Will Robinson. It is a fact that over 90% of those employees who accept counteroffers leave their current organization within six months.

You may ask yourself why that is. Consider these ten points:

- Your employer is now aware of your dissatisfaction with the company. From this point on, your loyalty will always be in question.
- Word travels through the grapevine and once your coworkers become aware of the situation, you will no longer be a part of the inner circle.
- Often one's pride is affected by the decision to accept a counteroffer and feelings of "being bought" surface.
- When layoffs are imminent, you will be at the top of the list to be cut.
- Your acceptance of the counteroffer has given your employer some breathing room to find your replacement. Once identified, your services will no longer be needed.



- Why were you granted the increase in compensation once you threatened to leave when you were told that there was no available money for increases when you asked earlier?
- Statistics don't lie. The probability that you will be with the current company one year after you accepted the counteroffer is extremely low.
- Why did you have to resign to be given what you're worth?
- Every time a promotion is available, your loyalty will be called into question.
- The very same circumstances that caused you to look for a job in the first place will recur in the future.

Feel free to Google the word "counteroffer" and you will be exposed to all the information available on the subject. It all leads in the same direction: if presented with a counteroffer when resigning, just say, "No!"