



How to Give Notice Efficiently and Professionally

So you have made the decision to leave your current employer and take the next step in your career. You have reviewed the offer letter, signed and agreed on the start date and all you need to do is resign. For many candidates the resignation process is a time of great distress as they dread having to tell their current employer that they have decided to jump ship. For others this seems like the opportunity to lay it all on the line as they have long dreamed of doing.

Handling the Resignation Process

How does one give notice appropriately while keeping focused on the new career choice? Many people approach this critical career juncture flying by the seat of their pants and mimicking what they have seen others do incorrectly. Never use the resignation process as an opportunity to “get back at” or “let them know” all that is wrong. It just doesn’t matter, and your reference is far too valuable for your future to risk the one-day satisfaction of telling a boss where to go, bringing up all the seeming injustices you suffered in his or her employ.

Giving your notice of resignation should be a simple, thoughtful and carefully planned. This will reduce your stress and cause you to focus on the one and only thing that is really critical: Making the transition of your departure as smooth as possible for the employer. Your only focus should be leaving your old employer in the best position you can while you mentally beginning to focus on your new employer.

What Must Be Considered?

First, remember that giving notice means you are crossing a point of no return. It is almost never a good idea to give notice without a new job first, and, depending on how far up the executive ranks you have gone, you probably shouldn’t give notice until an offer letter has been received, reviewed, signed and given back to your new employer.

When do you give notice? The answer is, immediately, or as soon as possible, after you have tendered an official acceptance of a new offer of employment. Do not give notice on a Friday afternoon, it is ideal to give notice on Monday or Tuesday in the later part of the day. Remember, also, that no matter how close you are to some of your co-workers, peers, or even subordinates, never tell anyone else about your resignation before you tell your boss. It is your boss’s responsibility, and right, to tell the rest of the team or company about your resignation as he or she sees fit. Don’t blow a reference or leave a bad impression by ignoring this rule.

The Letter of Resignation

Your next important issue is a written letter of resignation. When writing a resignation letter it is best to remember that less is more. A simple, four-sentence, two-paragraph letter that offers little in the way of an explanation is generally the most professional. The letter just states the obvious – you are resigning. Below is an example of a simple resignation letter.

Dear Boss,

Please accept this letter as my official notice of resignation. I appreciate the work we have been able to accomplish together at [company name], although I have made a commitment to another organization and will begin with them in [timeline].

Know that it is my intention to work diligently to wrap up as much as possible, in the next [timeline] to ensure this transition goes as smoothly as possible. I would appreciate any suggestions you have on how we can best accomplish that goal, as I am eager to leave on the most positive manner possible.

Sincerely,

Presenting the Resignation Letter

After you have crafted a resignation letter, you must give it to the boss. With few exceptions, you should do this in a face-to-face meeting. Thus it is your responsibility to arrange a meeting, and if you arrange the meeting, it is your responsibility to have an agenda for it. Should the boss want to know what the meeting is about, simply say it is a matter of “personal concern that needs to be addressed confidentially?”

As you walk into the meeting, have your letter of resignation in an envelope. To start the meeting, hand your boss the envelope and say something like: “Boss, I have made a commitment to join another organization and will begin working with them in three weeks. Please accept this as my letter of resignation. I would ask that you take a minute to read my letter before we discuss together how we can make my transition as smooth as possible.” It is beneficial if you have created an agenda which outlines 3-8 items that need to be wrapped up during your notice transition and your plan to get them done.

The singular goal of the meeting is to discuss how you can make the transition go smoothly and not an opportunity for your employer to assess your reasons for making the move.

Additional Tips for the Final Transition

1. Call a significant other and let him or her know you gave notice. It is often beneficial to talk to a welcoming voice after this stressful interaction. Don't talk about your resignation with peers.
2. Make sure you have mailed or emailed a copy of your letter of resignation to your boss's direct supervisor and also to your human resources contact. It gets the ball rolling on wrapping up your employment “officially.” You'd be surprised how often the direct supervisor forgets to take this step.
3. The day that you tender resignation, begin removing your personal items home with you. It is much easier to remove your personal items early in the process, rather than leave this task to the last minute.
4. Make sure that you have ALREADY removed any personal items from your laptop or PC, and have taken home those files in some manner. Also, copies of all your employee reviews, customer letters or testimonials and recommendations. Only take what is rightfully yours.
5. Should you be asked to do an exit interview, be polite and answer the questions in a simple, dutiful manner with short answers that do not delve into anything controversial. Your answers become part of your permanent employee record.
6. Focus on legitimately wrapping up your business and/or transferring your projects or responsibilities to your co-workers, replacement or boss as assigned. Even if your boss doesn't give you much direction, at least write it all up and document your work so that it can easily be understood once you are gone. Make sure that you leave a cell phone number where they can call you should something come up that they just cannot understand. Although one door is closing, the excitement of the new door opening is what you should have your attention on now.