

**Dice Tech Careers**

## **What To Do When You Resign and Your Boss Wants You to Stay**

**Leslie Stevens-Huffman**

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With a little forethought and planning, submitting your notice of resignation should be a fairly simple and straightforward process.

After all, most employees today are at-will, which means they have the right to leave whenever they want. But what happens when you resign—and your boss puts up a fight to keep you?

For example, what if your boss refuses to accept your resignation and offers you additional pay or a promotion to convince you to stay? Should you accept their new offer and withdraw your resignation, or stick to your original plan and move on?

Here's a look at the best ways to respond when you attempt to resign and your boss makes a counteroffer?

## **Stick to the Script**

To keep your boss from taking things personally or challenging your rationale for wanting change, try to avoid divulging too many specifics about your reasons for leaving the company. Instead, keep your explanation concise and focused on the positive aspects of the new opportunity, not any unresolved issues with your soon-to-be-former employer.

“Your boss may respond poorly not only because he is caught off-guard but because the act of resigning shifts the balance of power to you as the employee,” explained career coach James Pratt.

To reduce the likelihood of pushback or an argument, Pratt suggests that you come prepared with three high-level bullet points explaining your intention to leave. Examples might include the opportunity to maximize your growth and development, receive higher pay and benefits, work in a culture that supports risk-taking, or even something personal like the desire to spend more time with family. Avoiding unnecessary details can prevent nitpicking.

**If your boss persists in using a full-court press, try to diffuse the situation by expressing appreciation for his attempt to retain you, then reiterate your decision to move on while remaining professional and respectful, noted Amber Rosenberg, a San Francisco-based executive coach.**

**Remember why you’re leaving in the first place, Rosenberg said. It’s unlikely that anything your boss can say or offer you will address things like a poor culture, unreasonable workloads or difficult teammates, but its best to slow down and listen so you don’t burn a bridge.**

“Ideally you’d like to offboard with the same level of energy and professionalism that you exhibited when when you onboarded,” advised Andrew MacAskill, CCO of Fraser Dove International, a life science talent consultancy.

## **Hear Your Boss Out**

To maintain a positive relationship, give your boss the chance to explain why she wants you to stay, then ask for a day or two to consider her proposal. Just keep in mind that numerous studies show that up to 80 percent of people who accept a counteroffer end up leaving or being terminated within six to 18 months.

Usually money alone won’t fix the reasons why you want to leave, MacAskill said.

That's why he recommends using a weighted scorecard to compare the key components of any counteroffer you receive against the offer for your new job.

To remove the emotion and guesswork from the decision process, assign different levels of importance (weights) to the criteria that are most relevant to your needs in key areas such as:

- Cash/ total compensation
- The purpose of the role and its alignment with your values, interests and ethics
- The opportunity for career progression
- The strength and nature of your relationship with your direct manager

"As yourself, why did it come to this?" said Jessica Winder, senior VP of People for CoLab Software. If your boss truly values your work and thinks that you are worth more money, why didn't he tell you that before, and/or give you a raise before you were forced to resign?

Other questions you should consider:

- Do you trust your manager?
- Are they just throwing you a bone while they search for your replacement?
- Can you learn from them?

A positive relationship with your boss is a significant factor in deciding whether to remain at a job or leave. If you have a good relationship with your boss, you may be able to have a frank and honest discussion about these types of issues; if you don't, just stick to the script.

"The possibility of new information coming to light or things going on the background that you may have been unaware *could* be a reason to reconsider your decision to leave," Winder conceded.

For example, maybe your boss has nominated you for a promotion, but the decision won't be made until the new fiscal year. Or maybe senior leadership is considering a significant change in the structure of the company, which might open the door to new career paths and opportunities. Basically, the new information needs to be a game-changer.

If nothing has changed and your mind is made up, it's best to move forward with your current plan.

## **Come Prepared with a Transition Plan**

One of the best ways to keep your anxious boss from overreacting to the news is to come to the meeting with a well-prepared transition plan. It should include the name or names of possible successors and a detailed outline to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise from you to someone taking over. Also, take the liberty of determining which tasks need immediate attention and which can wait.

Shifting the conversation from your resignation to a series of steps to actively address the issue at hand can help your boss deal with the unexpected change and help you leave on a positive note.

Just keep in mind that, despite your best efforts, sometimes the bridge will be burned, Winder said. If the best decision for you is to leave, your boss will just have to be upset... and that's okay.