

Stay ahead while quitting

Some people dream of the day they get to walk into their bosses' office and tell them exactly what they can do with their job.

In some cases this might be very tempting, but believe us, it is rarely a good idea. Any small amount of satisfaction you might feel at the time might come back to bite you in a very big way, somewhere along the line. We all know what karma is...

Be sure

Before you work out how you intend to resign, the first question you need to ask yourself is do you really want to? Are you sure that quitting is your best move?

If you are having issues with your current job, maybe a word in the right ear will fix them. Perhaps your employers don't know you're unhappy because you have never told them so. Bursting in and quitting might be an extreme, and ultimately unnecessary move.

But if you are sure that you want to quit (and ideally you will have your next job lined up before you do), there are some ways to do it, and some ways not to do it.

Do

The first thing you need to do is put it on paper in the form of a professional resignation letter. You will almost always need to resign verbally, but you should have the letter with you when you do. State your reasons for resigning and give notice about when you intend to finish. (Sometimes it pays to be a little flexible about finishing dates. Normally you can agree on one that suits you and your employer). Be polite and gracious, and even if it burns a bit to do it, maybe say thanks for the time you have spent there, and wish them luck for the future.

Remember, the boss you are resigning to today, might end up being your boss somewhere else in the future, particularly if you are staying in the same industry. So remember what we said about karma.

Keep a cool head. Make sure you know in advance exactly why you are leaving and articulate the reasons clearly. Make it known that you wish to leave on good terms.

Make sure that you finish anything you are working on as if you were staying on. It leaves a very nasty taste when people look on your desk after you've gone and find work that should have been finished uncompleted. You are paid until you leave, so you should work until you leave. (In certain situations, confidentiality issues mean that you may be asked to stop work and leave immediately, but if this is not the case, you should keep working diligently).

Be sure that you are aware of any obligations you might have in terms of notice periods, training a replacement, contractual and confidentiality agreements. If you are unsure about any of these issues, consult a union representative if you have one or seek legal advice.

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Also, you need to know exactly what their obligations to you are. Make sure that you are receiving any annual or long service leave that you are entitled to.

Finally, some employers may want you to do an exit interview. By all means do it if you want to, but again, try to be constructive.

Don't

Remember that this is not personal, so don't feel bad about it. You're not breaking up a family, or ending a relationship. You are changing jobs and (hopefully) advancing your career prospects. Everyone has the right to do that without being made to feel guilty.

We've said it before but it's worth repeating. Don't treat your resignation as an opportunity to tee off on the company. If there are things that need to be said that could be of benefit to your soon to be ex-employer, and you can say them in a reasonable, measured way, then say them. But don't burn any bridges that you might need in the future.

And if you are going to criticize in any way, it might help to have a suggestion about how things might be done better. Whatever you say, always make it sound like you are saying it for the good of the company and not just to make yourself feel better.

At the end of the day, ending something on good terms is good for the soul. You don't need all that angst weighing you down. You've got bigger and better things to look forward to!