

# Should you tell your boss you're looking for a new job?

Tread with care. You're job hunting, but should you tell your boss?

For some people telling the boss is absolutely the right thing to do, for others, being open is the very last thing they should do. It will depend on your relationship with your employer and the organisation.

Here's why:

## When you should tell your boss

Steve Shepherd, employment market analyst for Randstad, believes that by being open and transparent and telling the boss you're more likely to leave on good terms. But even he has some reservations. Shepherd's reasons in favour of telling your employer that you're job hunting are:

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- **Internal opportunities.** Supportive bosses will understand your need for new challenges and growth. They may help you look for new opportunities internally within the organisation. "If you are dissatisfied have the conversation with your boss," says Shepherd. "I have worked with so many people who have resigned without having the conversation and ultimately regretted it." Shepherd says in his own career there were times when he was upfront with his boss and received promotions that worked around his aspirations.
- **References.** If your boss is onside you might be able to use him or her to be a referee. When it really is time to move on, says Shepherd he has been able to use his existing boss as a referee.
- **Honesty.** Most human beings value honesty. What's more, your boss won't find out by accident. "A work relationship should be based on honesty and feedback," says Shepherd. Most companies don't want to be left in the lurch, he adds. If you're honest they will respect you for it.

## When you shouldn't tell your boss

Shepherd sits mainly in the honesty camp, but there are times when you just shouldn't tell your boss you're thinking of leaving before you say "I quit". Here are the reasons why you might want to keep your cards close to your chest:

- **Cut of her head.** Difficult bosses will see your job hunting as treason. The risk is that you could get frozen out of your existing role without finding anything new. You could also miss out on opportunities in the meantime. Some bosses will fear that you're about to give away the family silver (AKA corporate secrets) to the competitors. It's only the minority of bosses who behave like this, says Shepherd. But if you work in a toxic environment it may not be a good idea to let your boss know you're leaving.
- **The revolving door.** If you've announced your job hunt, but can't find a suitable position your neck might be the first on the block when the next round of redundancies comes around.
- **Beware the rumour mill can kill.** Even if you inform your boss, be wary of telling colleagues. You don't want the entire office gossiping about your impending departure. You might be cast out by your colleagues. That could prove difficult in your last few weeks or months, or in fact if you decide to stay.

It's a tough decision. So take the time to think through the implications before deciding whether or not to tell your boss.