



Counteroffers: Accept for right reasons

The counteroffer from your current employer might be great, but now your loyalty's in question.

By Grant Gross

If your company's counteroffer beats the deal from a new company wooing you, think carefully before grabbing the counter. You might make a blot on your future.

As an employee retention technique, tech companies commonly try to one-up a job offer from a potential employer, says Rob Laseak, staffing manager of [Rapid5 Networks](#), a San Jose-based voice/data network provider.

Smart techies will formulate a response to a counteroffer ahead of time based on a clear-eyed appraisal of their company's past performance and their own career goals.

A decade ago, conventional wisdom held that only a fool would accept a counteroffer, says Laseak. Recruiters once believed that employees who take a counteroffer are gone within six months – sometimes by choice, sometimes not.

Today, your response should be less knee-jerk, more based on a realistic assessment of work issues. Before announcing your job switch, you should be "prepared to stick by your decision before the counteroffer," says Laseak.

Negotiate what can be fixed.

"Are the reasons you're changing jobs fixable? Are you running from something, or are you running to something?" asks Laseak. If so, sit down with a superior *before* you start looking for a new job, to see if some issues are negotiable.

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After the counteroffer, you *could* also negotiate working conditions or other issues, Laseak says. But it's better to do so before you announce you're leaving.

"A lot of people who accept counteroffers say, 'Yeah, I got more money, but it's the same old thing,'" Laseak says. "If you think you can fix those things that are bugging you, try to fix them. If you can't get those things corrected, that's your decision on the counteroffer."

Evaluate your options.

[Anne Wolfinger](#), a Montana career coach and author of *The Quick Internet Guide to Career and Education Information* (JIST Works, 2000), recommends another strategy.

Job seekers should make a list of the positives and negatives at each company while weighing a counteroffer. "It's really important to ask yourself, 'Do I really want to stay?'" she says. "Look at the whole work situation, not just the dollar amount."