



Changing jobs can be one of the most stressful events a person can experience, and dealing with the resignation process contributes to a major portion of that stress. You can reduce much of the stress by approaching your resignation in a positive manner and by making plans to exit from your job gracefully.

First of all, plan to give your employer at least two weeks notice regarding your departure. For the majority of information technology professionals, two weeks is adequate, with three weeks being the maximum. If your employer should ask for more, offer instead to make yourself available for telephone consultations after you leave the company. After you've made the decision to change jobs, stick to it and move forward

Another key issue to address is how to approach your boss (always your immediate supervisor) regarding your decision to leave. I suggest starting a conversation by saying "I've accepted another position," then explain the reasons that led to your decision. Keep all statements on the positive side (e.g. better opportunity, excellent prospects for career advancement, the new job will make me happier). Whatever you do, though, do not bring up problems on your present job. Remember, your boss is partially responsible for your well-being and your resignation is often a reflection on his or her managerial style.

Should you put your resignation in writing? Absolutely, you should definitely put your resignation in writing. But keep in mind that the resignation letter is not the place to praise your current employer and organization. If they were so great, you wouldn't have been looking for another job to begin with. The letter should be kept simple and as short as possible, including the date the resignation is effective and a short sentence describing the chance for advancement your new employer is offering. A long "thank you" is not necessary.

And what if your current employer decides to make a counter-offer? Give them the courtesy of listening to their offer. Although promises of more money, opportunities for advancement and new projects on the horizon are very flattering, ask why your resignation motivated such interesting possibilities, and inquire whether you have to resign again in six months to get additional rewards.

You should take a night to think it over and examine recent turnover at the company. Maybe your boss' job is in danger because of high turnover. Possibly, your employer has an urgent need for your technical skills and will dismiss you as soon as a replacement can be found. Yes, it happens.

So remember, place your energies on the expanding horizon. Whatever you do, don't second-guess the decision you've made and don't focus on guilt, friends and conveniences. The key is to be positive in everything you say and do as you plan to make your departure -- even if you don't like or respect your employer. Be assured it will make a big difference in your future.