

Your Old Company's Resignation Reactions

If your intention to make a job change to a new company is sincere, and nothing will change your decision to leave, you should still keep up your guard.

The best way to shield yourself from the inevitable mixture of emotions surrounding the act of submitting your resignation is to remember that employers typically follow a predictable, three-stage reaction pattern when faced with a resignation:

Reaction #1 - Shock:

Your boss will express his shock. "You sure picked a fine time to leave! Who's going to finish the work we started?" they might say.

The implication is that you're irreplaceable. The company might as well ask, "How will we ever live without you?" To respond to this reaction, you can reply, "If I were run over by a truck on my way to work tomorrow, I feel that somehow, this company would survive."

Reaction #2 - Probe:

Your boss will start to probe. "Who's the new company? What sort of position did they offer you? What have they offered you as far as compensation?"

In response to these questions, you should be careful not to disclose too much information, or appear overly enthusiastic. Otherwise, you run the risk of feeding your current employer with ammunition they can use against you later, such as, "I've heard some pretty terrible things about that company" or, "They'll make everything look great until you actually get there. Then you'll see that they have real issues with turnover and moral."

Reaction #3 - Counteroffer:

Your boss will make you a counteroffer to try and keep you from leaving. "You know that raise you and I were talking about a few months back? Well, I forgot to tell you: We were just getting it processed yesterday."

To this you can respond, "Today you seem very concerned about my happiness and well-being. Where were you yesterday, before I announced my resignation?"

It may take several days for these three reactions to run their course, but sooner or later, you'll find yourself engaged in conversations similar to the three outlined above. By understanding the 3 likely responses that come about after your resignation you will be better prepared to diffuse a counteroffer attempt and deal with your old company's reaction to your resignation.