



Career Advice

The pitfalls of a counter offer

Don't accept a counter offer because it's not always the best career move.

If you have made the decision to resign and you hand your resignation letter in, you have now made management aware of your intent. If you accept a counter offer thereafter and stay on, you will always be treated with suspicion and your loyalty to the company will always be doubted.

Counter offers are reactive, temporary measures that employers use to buy time while they make arrangements to possibly replace you or to allow them the time to arrange succession planning, and they are never made with the employee's best interests at heart.

There may be many other reasons, other than salary reasons, why a person wants to leave a job and these other reasons won't be addressed through a counter offer. Matters such as unhappy working conditions, long hours, career path, or poor leadership won't go away with an increased pay package. It is very unlikely that a company will change its entire culture and work ethic just to address the concerns of one employee.

You also need to bear in mind that should you have already accepted another job offer, it's very unfair to the other company if you take the counter offer. The other company would have expended a lot of time and energy finding you, meeting with you, interviewing you and eventually offering you the position - a process they will now have to repeat to fill the vacancy you've now declined. It is always a bad idea to close doors in your career and this includes future prospective employers and your current employer, and debating a counter offer very often does that with both parties. Even worse is if you have had a recruitment agency represent you, as your actions would cause the client to be frustrated with the agency which would result in the agency not wanting to market you any further.

A company that places a premium on its employees should not have to worry about retaining them. Research shows that salary is down on the list of top reasons for resignations. Companies should conduct regular exit interviews to determine reasons for staff leaving and then put corrective action into place to retain the top talent. It is also advisable to conduct a market analysis to determine if the company's salaries are market related. It is seldom that companies who pay competitive salaries have to worry about dealing with counter offers.

Test your reasons for wanting to leave and ensure you have engaged with your current employer to see if you can resolve matters prior to entering the job market. Once you enter the job market make sure you are serious about leaving your current employer as this will ensure a counter offer will not be an issue for you.