

# How-To Run More Efficient Meetings



Meetings are a powerful tool that can increase the productivity of your workplace. However, many managers fail to organize efficient meetings.

If you are a business professional than you probably have experienced a poorly run meeting. After all, the United States holds 11 million formal business meetings per day and \$37 billion is wasted in meetings per year. If you are a manager that is organizing meetings, it is important to know how to deliver meetings that benefit your company.

The following tips can help you create more effective meetings in the workplace:

## Know the Objective of Your Meeting

A meeting must have a specific goal. Ask yourself these questions:

*“What do I intend to accomplish?”*

*“Are you alerting people to a change in management or a shift in strategy?”*

*“Are you seeking input from others on a problem facing the company?”*

*“Are you looking to arrive at a decision on a particular matter?”*

Before you arrive at the meeting, know your objective and present it clearly to your employees. If your objective is a status update, consider if it can be sent over email.

# Create Written Agenda in Advance

A written agenda is a great method to prevent vague intentions. Provide the written agenda to employees a day in advance. It should include:

- Goal of Meeting
- Topics to be Discussed
- Materials/Documents that Could Give Employees a Better Idea of Meeting Background

Try putting your agenda in a template if you have weekly meetings. Templates can save hours in preparation time.

## Stick to a Time Schedule

Time is money. Stick to a time schedule to ensure that you address each topic in a timely manner. Meetings can easily become careless, unfocused, and filled with “small talk” if you do not create a time schedule.

Your timeline should an outline of your agenda with the certain amount of time for each topic. Remember that you are paying your employees for their time so do not waste your own money.

## Ban Technology

Engaging your employees will probably be one of the most difficult things to accomplish in your meetings. If people are bringing their smartphones or tablets into meetings then they will not be focused on you. They could be checking their emails, sending texts, and even on Facebook. Eliminate the technology to eliminate the distractions.

## Start on Time, End on Time

Time is limited. Your employees will appreciate if you can respect their schedule. Make sure to start and end meetings on time. This way, people will be more respectful of your meetings and make more of an effort to attend.

Tip: Do not schedule meetings longer than an hour. Sixty minutes is generally as

long as people can stay engaged on a topic.

Make sure that you are running efficient meetings. Your employees will appreciate it, and you can increase the productivity that a great company requires.

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## 20 Techniques for Acknowledging Your Employee's Good Work



Acknowledging your employees for a job well-done can have a great reward for your company. Unfortunately, few employers take the time to reinforce their employee's good efforts.

According to Author and Motivational Speaker, Bob Nelson, only 58% of employees receive a "thank-you" at work. This is a very low statistic. There is no excuse to not thank your employees for their work.

The following are a few statistics of employee response to positive reinforcement in the workplace. The figures have been acquired by a survey conducted by Maritz Research:

- 5 times more likely to feel valued
- 7 times more likely to stay with the company
- 6 times more likely to invest in the company
- 11 times more likely to feel committed to the company

Acknowledging your employee's good work can be one of the best things that you do for company culture. If you don't thank your employees than its time that you start. Learn 20 simple methods to thanking your employees for a job well-done.

# How to Thank Your Employees for a Job Well-Done

## 1. Personal Handwritten Notes

Handwritten notes are always more effective than emails. Write a note on a special "Thank-You" card and deliver the card to your employee personally.

## 2. Employee of the Month

Employee of the Month is a common acknowledgement to an outstanding employee. On top of the honor, you may want to display their head shot and reward them with a bonus or special parking spot.

## 3. Treat Them to Lunch

An employee's enjoyment of the job is many times tied to the relationship with their Manager. Use this time to connect one on one with someone who has gone the extra mile. Is an entire team doing an exemplary job? Buy lunch for the entire team to thank them for their efforts.

## 4. Bonus PTO

Who doesn't want extra vacation time? Reward your employee with PTO to give them the long weekend that they deserve.

## 5. Bouquet of Flowers

Flowers are the classic gift that almost everyone can appreciate. Give a special bouquet of lilies, tulips or even a bouquet of cookies.

## 6. Serve Refreshments to Team

End the day with refreshments for your team. This could be beer, wine, or soda on Friday after work.

## 7. Grocery Store Gift Card

Gift cards can make your employees feel valued and appreciated with minimum effort from the employer. Besides, who doesn't need extra cash for the grocery store?

## 8. Amazon Gift Card

Amazon is the online store that has something for everyone! With an

Amazon gift card, you really cannot go wrong.

9. Starbucks Gift Card

Most of us drink a morning cup of coffee! Combine a Starbucks gift card with a handwritten note as a special “thank you”.

10. Recognition in Company Newsletter or Website

If you have a company newsletter, mention your hardworking employee in an article.

11. Year End Cash Bonus

A cash bonus... the “thank you” gift that never gets old!

12. Company Apparel

If you are on a budget, company apparel can be an inexpensive method to rewarding employees.

13. Gala Guests

Does your company collaborate with a charity? If so, provide your employee and a guest with tickets to the next charity Gala.

14. Impromptu Time Off

On warm summer days, we can often find ourselves staring out our office window. Next time this happens, let your employees leave a few hours early to enjoy the sunny weather.

15. Breakfast Treats

Reward your team with their favorite breakfast treats! Donuts, muffins, and a fruit platter are always a great choice.

16. Work Anniversaries

Celebrate your employee’s work anniversaries. You could choose to celebrate a 10, 20, or 30-year anniversary with a plaque and cash bonus.

17. Point Reward System

A point reward system is a great method for your employees to meet a series of small goals at their own pace. Every point they earn will be an accomplishment toward your bonus system. This is a great way to motivate goal planning.

18. Traveling Trophy

Sometimes, competition can be a good thing! Try utilizing a traveling trophy to influence hard work.

19. Work Party

Celebrate Christmas, summer, or special occasions with a work party. Your employees can socialize and meet each other’s family. You could hold your work parties at the office, a restaurant banquet room, or a park.

## 20. VIP Parking Spot

Maintain a front row, VIP parking spot, for your employee of the month.

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# Interview Tips for a Hiring Manager



There are dozens of articles on the internet on how to prepare job candidates for an interview. On the other hand, conducting an interview is just as important. Hiring managers should be just as prepared with questions, research, and a positive outlook. Doing so, could help hiring managers achieve a better examination of their candidate.

The following techniques are essential to prepare yourself for conducting an interview:

## Lack of Preparation

Be prepared for your interviews. This includes:

1. Knowledge of the candidate's job history.
2. Customized interview questions that are focused on what you need the candidate to be able to accomplish in the first year to be considered successful.
3. Make sure the interview team is on the same page about the expectations of the successful candidate.

You can't always rely on "what you see is what you'll get.", or just "winging it" to attract the best talent. In-person interviews should be at least 45 minutes but ideally 60 minutes. While this may seem long, you are only viewing your candidate on their best behavior. If you research their job history and historical data before interviewing, you may be able to ask more specific questions to understand the qualities of your candidate.

## Arriving Late

Arriving late is one of the worst things that you can do for a job interview. You are not respecting the candidate's time or effort to apply for the job, not to mention that they are using their earned time off from their current employer to come and meet with you. You may also be cutting into the time for the other members of the interview team.

Remember, the candidate is also deciding if they want to work for your company. If you do not show them respect before they even start the position than it is unlikely that they will accept your job offer.

Tardiness does not make you seem more important. It makes you seem rude and unorganized.

## Not Asking Relevant Questions

Cater your questions toward the job that you are hiring for and focused on the main duties you need performed. There is no need to dig into areas that will only be 10% of the job when time is limited, and instead focus on the areas that make up the more relevant aspects. You may want to ask them how they would approach a problem they may deal with on the job to learn their thought process.

### **Consider These Question Methods:**

1. Asking a question according to their previous job history or significant achievements.
2. Ask a question that doesn't tell a story but helps you understand their way of thinking.

3. Ask what motivates them in their work.
4. Problem-solving skills or thought process in evaluating a problem or project.
5. How do they prefer to be managed and their expectations for feedback.

Make sure each interview question is catered toward their potential position.

## **Acting Cold or Impolite**

It is surprisingly common for employers to treat interviews like an interrogation. The employer may think that they become more important when they are intimidating. In reality, acting impolite can prevent your candidate from accepting a position with your company, especially if that candidate is employed and was recruited to consider your opportunity, and if the candidate has other offers, these types of actions can push them to accept the other offer, even if yours is better.

Think of it this way. Do you have friends that are cold and impolite? Probably not. Most of us avoid rude people. If we avoid impolite people in our personal lives then your candidate will most likely also avoid that quality in their professional life.

## **Not Selling the Company**

Candidates with strong experience are in demand and they are interviewing you to see if you are a company/team they would want to join. Sell your company so candidates accept your job offer.

### **Characteristics to Sell:**

1. Interesting or unique products to work on
2. Milestones the company has accomplished and what's next
3. Opportunities for growth and mentoring
4. Supporting continuing education and training
5. Incentive programs and benefits



# Rushing to Conclusions

First impressions can be lasting. Nevertheless, when a hiring manager is performing a job interview, it is important to keep an open mind. It only takes seven seconds to make a first impression. Most of us probably don't even realize that we made the quick judgement, or that any follow up questions tend to be asked in a manner to support our first impression. You should note your first impression, but don't draw a conclusion about the candidate until the end of the interview.

The following are characteristics that influence the candidate's impressions of you:

1. Failing to Smile
2. Strength of Handshake
3. Introduction
4. Clarity of Speech
5. Eye Contact
6. Attire

These tips require some prior thought, but if you do it right you will have a more effective and consistent interview process and help you end up with a superior employee.

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## How To Keep Candidates Warm During the Recruiting Process



Communication is one of the biggest complaints candidates have throughout the recruiting and interviewing process, and is one of the key reasons you may be missing out on some of the best candidates. It is important to use a recruiter who establishes a strong communication system with employers and candidates and keeps both sides informed at each step of the process. This can prevent you from losing valuable candidates.

## **Important Steps to Remember**

Your recruiter should be following up with candidates after an interview and providing you feedback from the candidate's perspective.

Many recruiters tell their clients, "I will let you know when I have news," but that is not good enough. Your candidate should hear from you within 1-2 days to do a debrief of their interview experience. It is respectful to the candidate and keeps them engaged with your position, but also gives you valuable feedback on how your company and interview team are being perceived by candidates. It is also the first chance to identify and clarify any possible "miscommunications" that may have come up during the interviews.

Many recruiters or hiring managers choose to use email to follow up with candidates, and that is certainly a good option and better than no contact with them at all, but you get a much better picture of where things stand by having an actual conversation with the candidate. That is where a good recruiter can use their relationship with the candidate to get honest feedback for you on the interview and also see if they are interviewing elsewhere and if there may be other competitors for this candidate.

If you choose to use an email to follow up with candidates after an interview, here is a template that you can use to follow-up on an interview:

Dear [X],

We would like to thank you for coming in to interview with our team. We are in the process of collecting feedback from all of the interview team members to let you know their decision, and it may take a few more days to hear from everyone, but I didn't want you to think I had forgotten about you.

You may have questions for me, and I hope you'll let me know if that is the case. I will be in touch as soon as the interview team's feedback is complete, but I am always happy to answer your questions in the meantime.

Thanks and have an outstanding day!

Yours,

[X]

This simple email made a positive difference in the candidate's interview experience.

The stronger the candidate, the stronger the expectations. Make sure you are using a recruiter that builds a strong communication system with your candidates.

Jeff King of RQ Focus follows through with each candidate to make sure you know how the he or she feels about your company and opportunity, and helps you prepare an offer for your chosen candidate that is fair and will be accepted. His professional methodologies help ensure that you hire the highest-quality candidate.

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## **How To Evaluate a Job Offer**



Let's assume your employment interview went well, and there's sincere and mutual interest on both sides. You now need to decide two things: first, whether the new position is right for you and, if so, what sort of offer you'd be willing to accept. To help in the decision-making process, take the following test as a way to compare the two positions.

## Position Comparison Guide

**Directions:** Compare the new job with what you already have. For each element of both the current and the new job, give a rating of importance between 1 and 5 (5 being the highest). Then tally up the score at the end to see which job is the better fit for you.

<b>Current job</b>	<b>New job</b>	<b>Element under consideration</b>
		Position title
		Supervisory responsibility
		Project authority
		Decision-making autonomy
		Freedom to implement ideas
		Ability to affect change
		Promotion potential
		Challenge of tasks
		Ability to meet expectations

		Access to professional development
		Professional growth potential
		Company/industry growth
		Company/industry stability
		Starting salary, benefits, perks
		Future compensation
		Commuting distance
		Travel requirements
		Work environment
		Rapport with co-workers
		Rapport with management
		Comfort with corporate culture
		Other considerations (specify)
		<b>Total score: New job vs. current job</b>

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# How to Write a Resume that Gets Attention



## **THE PURPOSE OF YOUR RESUME**

Your resume is your first chance to make an impression on a potential employer. Careful thought should be put into this very important document. Your resume not only informs the employer about your background, but also your communication style, writing (and spelling) ability, organizational skills, and ability to briefly and concisely convey information.

It is also important to be truthful on your resume. Your industry is smaller than you might think and you may run into people with whom you have worked at other companies. They might even be someone with whom you worked on a project and knows your contributions, or knows someone that has worked with you in the past. Either way, if you have lied or exaggerated about your level of contribution, you will be found out and your reputation ruined. Also, with the number of companies doing background and education verification checks, it isn't worth the humiliation of being caught in a lie and ruining your reputation for solid, quality work. Be proud of your accomplishments and state them honestly.

## **SETTING UP YOUR RESUME FOR MORE IMPACT**

Now, about the layout of your resume: I'm sure you have been told that your resume should only be 1 or 2 pages. That is only partially true. If you have 5 years or less of experience, yes, it should only be a 1-2-pager. If you have more experience than that, you may short-change yourself by trying to keep it to 2 pages. It is better to give your potential employer (or Recruiter) a good idea of what you have done, and are capable of doing, than to have a short resume. Under no circumstances should you go over 4 pages. Beyond that and you risk having your resume find the bottom of the pile to be read "when they have time".

The key is to make sure EVERYTHING on your resume sells you to a potential employer, and gives them a clear picture of what you are capable of doing for them.

If you are someone who has done a number of publications or presentations, you can simply state on your resume: “Extensive publication and presentations experience. A detailed list is available upon request”, and place it under a heading of “Publications and Presentations”.

Most hiring managers and recruiters focus on your most recent 3-5 years of experience. For positions held within that time period, you should make sure to put your most relevant bullet points to describe what you’ve done. For position beyond the 5 year mark, try to pick the most important 3-5 bullet points to list. This will help keep your resume more concise without filling it with information that is not as relevant to the reader.

Also try to eliminate any date gaps in your resume. If you have taken an extended leave, or have been unemployed for more than 6 months, you may need to list this time gap on your resume. Many employers become suspicious of big time gaps and may wonder what you are hiding. If they are wondering about these gaps, they are not concentrating on your accomplishments. If what they remember about your resume is that it had “curious” time gaps, you may not fare too well against your competition.

I have collected thousands of resumes during my Recruiting career. Some layouts are very difficult to follow and read, and leave the reader confused about what the job candidate has done, or can do. A chronological resume layout is easier to follow as it uses bullet points to highlight accomplishments and responsibilities. This is the format used by a majority of the people in the market, and is very good, but there are options to help you stand out as well.

A key component to any effective resume is having a “Skills Summary” or “Significant Accomplishments” section at the very top of the first page. This is your chance to shine and get your reader’s attention right off the bat. Most people write their resumes like a job description; listing how they spent time during their days. Employers don’t hire people to come in and spend time, they hire them to get things done and accomplish something. That’s what your resume needs to list.

Anything you can list that had a big impact on your group or company should be

listed in your Skills Summary or Significant Accomplishments section. If you streamlined a process, completed a project ahead of schedule, or got a submission in and approved quickly, those are the kind of things a hiring manager wants to know about. You may be uncomfortable bragging about your accomplishments, but if you don't brag a little, the reader of your resume will never know how good you are.

## A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT RESUME

Using the same chronological layout, you can take it one step further to really give your resume some impact. This extra step is the information we can use as recruiters to really get the attention of the hiring manager, and will set you way ahead of other resumes/job candidates they are considering.

This is a step using the PPR approach. PPR stands for Project, Participation, and Results. The Projects portion is simply facts about significant projects you've worked on. This part should be pretty easy since that is what resumes are made up of anyway. The Participation portion lists significant, measurable results you personally achieved on these projects in your previous positions, and the Results portion specifies what this project achieved for the company, and let's the potential employer know what you think you can do for them if they hire you, based on what you've done in the past. Here's an example of how that might look.

*2007-2010*

### **Senior Manager, Regulatory/Clinical Affairs, 123 Surgical, San Jose, CA**

Provide leadership for regulatory policy and strategy through example, guidance, internal communication, follow-up and verification for corporate operations and operations of corporate partners. Formulate global clinical development plans, monitor clinical trials and manage the Clinical Research Department.

*Project*

*My Role*

*Results*

Develop content for regulatory filings, ensuring quality of content, approving minor or routine submissions and meeting predetermined timelines for



all submissions.

Consistently met all deadlines

*Project*

*My Role*

*Results*

## Manage Clinical Trials

Responsible for all facets of development including discovery, development and clinical trials

CTrial approved by the FDA on the first pass, including 25 sites in the US and 5 in Europe; enrollment completed 9 months ahead of schedule.

By doing this you are answering the basic question of the hiring manager that is at the core of the entire interviewing process: What's in it for me? The potential employer is looking at your resume to decide what's in it for them to bring you on board. The hiring manager is trying to fill a position to solve a problem they have, and they are looking at your background and capabilities to see if you are someone that can help them accomplish the goals they have for their department. That's what's in it for them.

As the process continues, and you learn more about the opportunity, you can determine what's in it for you. Once you get in the door to interview, you can learn a lot more about the company, culture, and people you would be working with. This information can turn a pretty good opportunity into a great one, or let you know it might not be quite right for you. But unless you can get in the door to interview, and eventually get an offer, you will never know what's in it for you.

As Recruiters, it is our job to present you in the best possible light, and to do a first stage screening to make sure you have the background the employer is looking for. That is a service we provide our client companies, and they have come to expect from us. Your resume is still a very key component. We can give our contacts within the company a lot of detailed information about you to entice them to look further at your background, but resumes get passed internally to other members of the interviewing team to see if it's worth bringing you in. Since we are not part of these conversations, your resume needs to stand on its own.

One last note. You should also review your social media accounts to make sure there is nothing on them that a potential employer may see and get a negative impression of you. You can either delete the material that may give a bad impression, or change your settings as to who has access to view your account. Employers are increasingly checking social media pages of job applicants to get a better idea of the individual.

We hope this information and the following sample resume is helpful in giving you the best resume possible to help you advance in your career. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

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## **How-To Make Your Search a Top Priority For Your Recruiter**



Since Recruiters are paid strictly on a commission basis, we are constantly evaluating our workload to determine where we should be focusing our efforts. We do this for two reasons: 1) to ensure our client company's needs are being met, and 2) to ensure a placement is made, and a commission is earned.

The elements of a search assignment that we use as a basis of our evaluation are as follows:

- An urgent need to fill the position.
- A well defined and realistic idea of the job candidate you are looking for.
- An open line of communication with the hiring manager.
- A commitment to work as a team to attract and hire top talent.
- Prompt return of phone calls and feedback on job candidates submitted

and interviewed.

- A fair and competitive salary is being offered.
- The company is attractive to potential job candidates.
- A fair fee agreement has been signed.

When we receive a job order, we evaluate these elements to categorize the search into one of three classifications:

**“A” Search** - This classification means the search contains all of these elements. This type of search will get our full attention, meaning we will:

- Conduct a thorough search of our database of current, qualified job candidates.
- Conduct a search of our database of job candidates we know that have the right background, but are not yet qualified job candidates.
- Tap into our networks for referrals to qualified job candidates.
- Cold calling into competitor companies to lure their employees to your opportunity.
- Give weekly updates as the search progresses.

**“B” Search** - This classification means there are some elements missing, but it's still a pretty good search. It will still get our attention, but takes a back seat to the A searches. For this type of search we will:

- Conduct a thorough search of our database of current, qualified job candidates.
- Conduct a search of our database of job candidates we know that have the right background, but are not yet qualified job candidates.
- Keep the position in mind as we recruit for our A client companies.
- Submit job candidates only after our A client companies have had first right of refusal for them.

**“F” Search** - This classification means most or all of the elements are missing. It's not important to the client company, so it's not important to us. For this type of search we will:

- Keep the position in mind as we recruit for our A and B client companies.
- Submit possible job candidates only after the A and B client companies have had first right of refusal.

# **ACTIONS THAT LOWER A CLIENT COMPANY'S CLASSIFICATION**

Let's elaborate on some of the search elements listed above, and how a client company's actions can reduce the attractiveness of a search assignment.

## **Prompt Feedback on Job Candidates**

If it takes more than 2 or 3 days to get some initial feedback on a job candidate, it can kill the momentum and interest the Recruiter has worked so hard to instill in the job candidate. It also tells the Recruiter that filling this position is not urgent. Also, the better job candidates usually have other options. There is ALWAYS a need for top talent and they will most likely choose to go to a place that shows interest in them and appears more organized during the interviewing process.

## **Bottlenecks in Communication**

If a Recruiter is told "you have to direct all communications through HR", in most cases that will drop the search to at least a B level search, if not an F. This is not an insult to HR departments, but is more indicative of the problems with this type of approach. The person in HR is usually a lower level person that may not fully understand what a hiring manager is looking for in a job candidate, and probably also has several other open requisitions on their desk, as well as other duties outside of the recruiting process. Often times these people are overworked and outside of their area of expertise. It's inefficient to ask them to funnel the appropriate job candidates to you when they might not know what that job candidate looks like, or how to select them.

Also, as part of matching a possible job candidate to a company and job, a Recruiter needs to have some contact with the hiring manager to get a feel for personality fits and departmental culture (management style, departmental priorities in the coming months, etc.). HR should certainly be kept in the loop in all communications and activities with the job candidates, but if that is the ONLY communications allowed with a client company, it is extremely rare that that client company will ever get to the "A" priority.

# Too Much Authority in the Wrong Hands

In cases where a lower level HR representative is given the authority to review job candidate resumes, or conduct an initial phone interview, and then make the decision of whether or not the hiring manager will even see the job candidate's resume, we will decline the search 90% of the time. This may seem like a streamlined approach to recruiting, but it often backfires in the following ways:

- VERY few people in the lower levels of HR have a strong enough understanding of the roles of Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality to be able to decide who is a good job candidate and who isn't.
- An HR employee or contract Recruiter intentionally stalling on a Recruiter's job candidate to see if they can find someone stronger by themselves to preserve job security.
- An HR employee showing favoritism for a particular search firm's job candidate because they like that search firm better, or got a nice gift basket from them.

The hiring manager misses out on some very good job candidates and is unaware any of this is going on. The Recruiter can move on to another search assignment, but the client company's job remains open.

## If One Recruiter is Good, Maybe Five Would Be Better

Don't count on it. You may be thinking that you will have more eyes and ears in the market looking for you, however, there is a limited supply of job candidates in the Regulatory, Clinical, and Quality fields, and even fewer that are considered top talent. If several Recruiters are calling the same people, two things will happen; none of which are good for you.

**First** - the qualified pool of job candidates will begin to wonder what's wrong with that company, thinking that they are really desperate needing so many Recruiters because:

1. The opportunity isn't very appealing.
2. The company must be disorganized.

3. The job opening has an overwhelming workload, and no one else wants to step into that situation.
4. The company is looking for just any “warm body” to fill the position.

**Second** - the Recruiters will hear that these job candidates are getting calls from several other Recruiters for this position, and they will immediately drop them to a B or F level search.

You may think you have 4, 5, or 10 Recruiters out there working for you when in fact you have 4, 5, or 10 Recruiters that have placed your search on the back burner and have moved on to searches that have a better chance of being filled.

## **Cutting the Recruiter Out of the Interview Process**

This is one that really makes no sense and, luckily, doesn't happen too often. The Recruiter submits a job candidate you like and you want to interview them. You decide to handle setting up the interviews and contacting the job candidate yourself, without involving the Recruiter. It sends the message you don't trust the Recruiter. Even more important, you shut yourself off to the inside knowledge the Recruiter has already obtained during their screening process to see if the job candidate is right for your job. For example, we inquire as to whether the job candidate is motivated by salary, title, a new set of responsibilities, etc. Job candidates are less guarded about discussing their concerns with their Recruiter than they would be with a potential employer. If the job candidate gets hired, you still have to pay the Recruiter's fee - why not get the absolute most for your money? Let the trained Recruiter do their job and earn their fee.

## **Deteriorating Facilities**

You may think this is not very relevant to the decision-making process for a job candidate that is considering an offer from a company, but it's actually in the top 3 or 4 factors on their list. A job candidate is not only looking for a good opportunity, with a chance to progress in their career, but also a pleasant place to spend 40+ hours a week of their lives. If the building is run down, dimly lit, and depressing, you are fighting an uphill battle in the war for talent.

When we have a job candidate turn down an offer, and the money, title, and scope of responsibilities are all in line with what they are looking for, the next reasons that come up are either the commute, or the facilities. After a job candidate's first interview, we always ask them if they can picture themselves working for the company. If they say "not without getting a good shrink", you will have a difficult time getting them on board and offering more money probably won't do the trick.

Reverse the roles for a minute and consider this. If a job candidate came in to interview for a job wearing ripped jeans and a tee shirt with their favorite band on the front, and had little life to their personality, chances are you would pass on that job candidate. Even if they have the perfect background for the job, and you also have another really good job candidate (but not quite as good as the sloppier job candidate) that is in contention for the job, who showed up dressed much more professionally, you will most likely choose the one that made the better impression. It's no different for a job candidate considering a new job.

## **Too Many Decision Makers in the Interview Process**

The more people involved in the interviewing process that get to cast a deciding vote, the more likely the job is going to remain open for a very long time, or possibly never get filled. While you will want the job candidate meet with all of the people that are considered critical, and the people they will be working directly with, you should try to limit the number of people that can cast a "deciding" vote to 2 or 3. Any more than that and you significantly decrease your chances of getting a unanimous approval.

If you've had some difficulties getting results from recruiters on past searches, maybe you can look back and see where some of these elements may have contributed to the poor results. Or if a recruiter was doing a good job for you and then stopped producing, call them and ask if anything has changed on your search. Sometimes things are going well with the recruiter and the hiring manager, but they keep running into roadblocks or getting different instructions from HR (or vice versa) causing enough confusion and conflict to lower your search ranking.

Of course, it could also be that you were choosing the wrong recruiter for the job.

But that's a discussion for another article.

If you have comments or a story to share, we would love to hear them. And if you have questions, we would love to hear them too.

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# Counteroffer Acceptance- The Road to Career Ruin



The following article was written by Paul Hawkinson back in the mid 1990's and is still very relevant today. Paul was an HR Executive and Executive Recruiter for many years. His experience of being on both sides of the fence gave him a perspective of what happens when counteroffers are extended and accepted. I hope you find it helpful.

- Jeff King

## Counteroffer Acceptance: Road to Career Ruin

**By: Paul Hawkinson**

Mathew Henry, the 17th-century writer said, "Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colors that are but skin deep." The same can be said for counteroffers, those magnetic enticements designed to lure you back into the nest after you've decided it's time to fly away. The litany of horror stories I have come across in my years as an executive recruiter, consultant and publisher, provides a



litmus test that clearly indicates counteroffers should never be accepted. EVER!

I define a counter offer simply as an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intention to take another job. We're not talking about those instances when you receive an offer but don't tell your boss. Nor are we discussing offers that you never intended to take, yet tell your employer about anyway as a "they-want-me-but- I'm-staying-with you" ploy.

These are merely astute positioning tactics you may choose to use to reinforce your worth by letting your boss know you have other options. Mention of a true counteroffer, however, carries an actual threat to quit.

Interviews with employers who make counteroffers, and employees who accept them, have shown that as tempting as they may be, acceptance may cause career suicide. During the past 20 years, I have seen only isolated incidents in which an accepted counteroffer has benefited the employee. Consider the problem in its proper perspective.

### **What really goes through a boss's mind when someone quits:**

"This couldn't be happening at a worse time."

"This is one of my best people. If I let him quit now, it'll wreak havoc on the morale of the department."

"I've already got one opening in my department. I don't need another right now."

"This will probably screw up the entire vacation schedule."

"I'm working as hard as I can, and I don't need to do his work, too."

"If I lose another good employee, the company might decide to "lose" me too."

"My review is coming up and this will make me look bad."

"Maybe I can keep on until I find a suitable replacement."

### **What will the boss say to keep you in the nest?**

Some of these are common:

"I'm really shocked. I thought you were as happy with us as we were with you. Let's discuss it before you make your final decision."

"Aw gee, I've been meaning to tell you about the great plans we have for you, but it's been confidential until now."

"The VP has you in mind for some exciting and expanding responsibilities."

"Your raise was scheduled to go into effect next quarter, but we'll make it

effective immediately.”

“You’re going to work for who?”

Let’s face it. When someone quits, it’s a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you’re really incompetent or a destructive thorn in his side, the boss might look bad by “allowing” you to go. His gut reaction is to do what has to be done to keep you from leaving until he’s ready. That’s human nature.

Unfortunately, it’s also human nature to want to stay unless your work life is abject misery. Career change like all ventures into the unknown, is tough. That’s why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons.

**Before you succumb to a tempting counteroffer, consider these universal truths:**

1. Any situation in which an employee is forced to get an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion or better working conditions, is suspect.
2. No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, you will always be considered a fidelity risk. Having once demonstrated your lack of loyalty (for whatever reason), you will lose your status as a “team player” and your place in the inner circle.
3. Counteroffers are usually nothing more than stall devices to give your employer time to replace you.
4. Your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. Conditions are just made a bit more tolerable short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you.
5. Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit every time you deserve better working conditions?
6. Decent and well-managed companies don’t make counteroffers. EVER! Their policies are fair and equitable. They will not be subjected to “counteroffer coercion” or what they perceive as blackmail.
7. If the urge to accept a counteroffer hits you, keep on cleaning out your desk as you count your blessings.

# Ten Reasons for NOT Accepting a Counter Offer

Where is the money for the Counter Offer coming from? Is it your next raise, early? All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines that must be followed.

You have now made your employer aware that you are unhappy. From this day on, your loyalty will always be in question.

When promotion time comes around, your employer will remember who was loyal and who wasn't.

Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your coworkers will never be the same. You will lose the personal satisfaction of peer-group acceptance.

What type of company do you work for if you have to threaten to resign before they give you what you are worth?

1. Your company will immediately start looking for a new person at a lower starting salary.
2. When times get tough, your employer will begin the cutback with you.
3. Accepting a Counter Offer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride; knowing that you were bought.

The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change will repeat themselves in the future; even if you accept a Counter Offer.

4. Statistics show that if you accept a Counter Offer, the probability of your voluntarily leaving in six months or being let go within one year is extremely high.

**Special Note:** When you do resign from your present employer, be sure to do so in writing, retaining a copy for yourself. This procedure is to protect you in the future because future reference checks could record the separation as mutually beneficial. Include any constructive criticism, if any, in order to solidify your position for leaving.

# **“Beware of the Counter Offer”**

(Your whole career is at stake)

If you have accepted an offer from a new employer and on giving your notice to your present company a Counter Offer is made, you should consider the following:

Ask yourself if you were worth “X” dollars yesterday. Why are they suddenly willing to now pay you “Y” dollars today when you were not anticipating a raise for some time. (Consider the fact that your present employer could be merely “buying time” with this raise until he can locate a suitable replacement).

Suppose you were given an annual raise of \$3,000.00 as a counter offer. When they find a replacement for you in say 60 days, then the actual cost to them is only \$500.00.

Is just more money going to change everything in your present job? Consider the new opportunity you will be giving up that looked so favorable when you accepted it.

The company will probably feel as though they have been “blackmailed” into giving you a raise when you announced your decision to leave.

Realize that you are now a marked man. The possibility of promotion is extremely limited for someone who has “given notice”. The company is vulnerable; they know it and will not risk giving more responsibility to someone who was previously committed to leave.

When economic slow-downs occur, you could be one of the first to go. You indicated your intention to go once before, so it is only natural that your position would be eliminated in a slack period.

You should know that statistics compiled by the National Employment Association confirm the fact that over 80% of those people who elected to accept a Counter Offer and stayed are no longer with their company six months later.

Carefully review in your mind all the reasons you wanted to make a change in the first place. Does the Counter Offer really offset these reasons?

If you intent to seriously consider a Counter Offer, be sure you ask your present

employer to confirm all the details of said offer in writing.

**WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO CAREFULLY THINK ABOUT ALL OF THESE FACTS BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION. IT IS YOUR CAREER, YOUR LIVELIHOOD. ONE IMPRUDENT MISTAKE AT ANY TIME COULD BE VERY COSTLY IN TERMS OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.**

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## How to Resign



Resigning is never easy, especially when you've worked at a position for several years, and have made many connections. Some employers and co-workers take it very personally and may accuse you of abandoning ship. However, handling your resignation as professionally and thoughtfully as you handle your search for a new job can help make your resignation relatively smooth and amicable. This is where an experienced recruiter can really help make the process a lot easier for you.

## **MAKE UP YOUR MIND:**

Before you submit your resignation, you must be clearly committed to leaving, and have a written offer in hand from your new employer. Have you already pursued all avenues for advancement within your firm? If so and you didn't get the response you hoped for, it's time to leave. If you need some help with this step, I can help you with how to approach your manager. Since you may be immediately walked out of the building upon giving notice, make sure you have cleared all personal files from your computer and desk.

# KEEP RESIGNATIONS SHORT, SIMPLE AND POSITIVE:

Leave your employer on a positive note. Moving on does not have to have negative consequences. After all, you have an opportunity to advance in your career for which you owe your employer sincere thanks. Thank your colleagues for their help in preparing you to move onward and upward. When you resign, keep your conversations simple and concise. Avoid lengthy discussions about your new opportunity. Do not justify your personal goals or your decision to leave. If you feel you may be faced with a hostile environment, resign at the end of the day.

## THE ORAL RESIGNATION:

Resigning orally may place you in the compromising position of having to explain your decision on the spot. Words are very powerful. Choose your words with care. Your boss may want to probe for factors which led to your decision. You may be asked for specifics as to whom or what your reason for leaving is, or you may be invited to offer suggestions to help make the organization more effective, and told to “answer candidly”. Do not fall for this trap! Remember, your interrogator is still your boss. Whatever you say will be viewed as biased – and may eventually be used against you. Offer sincere praise for the firm and those with whom you worked. Prepare yourself beforehand by focusing on several positive aspects of your workplace, and mention them liberally when the opportunity arises.

**Example:** “I need to discuss something with you if you have a moment. I’ve been made an exceptional offer by another firm, and I’ve decided to accept it. My family and I have given this opportunity a lot of thought. As much as I’d like to advance with this company, we feel the new opportunity is in our best long-term interest.

We deeply appreciate all you and the firm have done for us here. I don’t think I would have been presented this exceptional opportunity if not for your support and leadership. I want to thank you. I hope I can leave with your good wishes. You’ve been a friend as well as a boss.”

If probed for more information, you may want to claim that there is nothing else

to say right now, or that the new company has asked you to keep this confidential for the time being.

## **THE WRITTEN RESIGNATION:**

A written resignation gives you the time to effectively prepare what you wish to communicate, and gives you greater control over the delivery of your message. A written resignation also reinforces the fact that you are really leaving and are not simply threatening in order to re-negotiate your position or salary.

**Example:** “I want to thank you for all you have done for me here at (company). It’s been a pleasure working with you, and representing the company as your (job title).

I have accepted an offer with another firm and have decided to tender my resignation as of today, with my last day being (date). This decision has nothing to do with the exceptional opportunity you have provided for me here. You and the company have been more than fair with me, and I genuinely appreciate all of your support.

I wish (company) continued success, and I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of your team. I hope you will respect my decision. Please feel free to let me know how I can help to make this a smooth transition.”

## **THE COUNTEROFFER:**

Be prepared, you may receive a counteroffer. Do not be disappointed if you do not. In fact, it makes the resignation process easier if you do not. I am happy to help you with this stage of the process as well and can help you plan a strategy on how to deal with it.

## **LEAVE ON THE RIGHT NOTE:**

Before leaving the firm, take time to speak with each of your support staff, peers, executive personnel, and others with whom you have worked. To the extent possible, clear up any unfinished business. Be sensitive to others’ reactions and keep your conversations positive and constructive. Some people may naturally express their own discontentment, and may egg you on to agree with them. Don’t!! Instead, express your appreciation and tell your colleagues you’ll miss

them. Also keep in mind that it is professional courtesy to give your employer ample notice to help them prepare for your departure - typically 2 weeks. However, you should try to get out as soon as possible avoiding recurring invitations to tell your story, and having to deal with the frustrations and pressures of the job as the firm adjusts to your leaving.

## **IF THE SITUATION TURNS SOUR:**

In some cases staying the full 2 weeks can become very difficult and hard to tolerate. If you feel you are continually being pressured about details of your new job, or to accept their counter offer, keep in mind that a 2 week notice is a courtesy YOU are extending to them, not a rule! Just as the company has the right to walk you to the door as soon as you resign, or fire you with no notice, you have the right to end your time if the situation becomes intolerable.

This is another emotionally difficult part of the job change process, but it's a very important part to get right both for yourself, and for the people you leave behind and may work with again during your career. It's good to have someone on your side that has helped numerous people through this process, and can be a sounding board for you to express your concerns or ask questions. Let me know if I can be that resource for you.