

Why you should never take a counter offer



It was a moment in my career that I will never forget. I had accepted a new job at a different company and when I went into my boss's office to quit, with resignation letter in hand, he offered me a higher salary if I would remain in my current job.

Even if you think this would never happen to you, it is best to prepare in advance so you'll feel comfortable with your response, which should always be: "No, thank you." Surprised that I'm telling you to decline your manager's counter offer? Here's why..

If you followed the process I explained in a previous blog (Job Seekers: Consider This – Before You Change Jobs) – to analyze the reasons WHY you want to change jobs – then you'd already have identified the issues that were within your manager's or your ability to control. And you'd already have worked through ways of fixing those issues.

If you felt you were underpaid, you'd have asked your boss for a raise.

If you were bored in your job and wanted more challenging work, you would have discussed this with your manager and asked him or her to assign you to projects or tasks that will broaden and deepen your work experience.

If a lengthy commute was lowering the quality of your life, you'd have negotiated to work from home a few days a week.

Whatever the reasons were for wanting to change jobs, you would have analyzed them and made every attempt to fix the issues that were possible to fix. So what does that leave you? Issues that weren't fixable – the deal-breakers. They were the reasons you went out and found a new job that better fits your career requirements or goals. So why would you suddenly want to stay in your job just because your boss offered you more money?

If you previously couldn't get a raise from your boss when you provided proof that you are underpaid, ask yourself: "Why is my manager offering me a raise now that I'm resigning?" If you weren't valuable enough to be given a raise before, why would your boss be willing to give you more money now? Most likely, it is not because you've suddenly become a more valuable employee. It's because your manager doesn't want to deal with the work disruption your departure could create.

Let me state that one more time to be sure you understand.. it is not because you've suddenly become a more valuable employee. It is because your manager doesn't want to deal with the work disruption your departure could create.

Don't waiver on your decision to change jobs. You took the time to identify your reasons for leaving. You worked to fix all the issues that were within your control. There were issues that weren't fixable and these were your deal-breakers. Because you couldn't change the deal-breakers, you found a new job that was a better match to your career goals and aspirations. Don't let your ego or feeling flattered that you're being offered more money cloud your judgment or cause you to make a bad decision. You already did your homework, so feel secure about the process you went through to seek a different job.

If you begin to second-guess your acceptance of the new job and consider accepting your manager's counter offer, think about what else would change if you stayed (besides receiving more money). Review each of your reasons for wanting to switch jobs and take an honest look at your deal-breaker issues. Will they somehow magically disappear if you accepted the counter offer? Nope. So look your boss in the eyes, smile nicely, and say "No, thank you" to that counter offer.

Lisa Quast, author of award-winning book

