



Dealing with the Dreaded **COUNTEROFFER**



When bowing to flattery will, almost certainly, get you no where.

What is a counteroffer?

A Counteroffer is what happens when you finally screw up the courage to present your resignation, and your boss won't accept it – promising instead a raft of changes, sweeteners and wonderful sounding promises if only you will stay on board.

A Counteroffer is a **PANIC REACTION**, no matter how calmly it seems to be given. What is going through your bosses head most likely is along the lines of:

- “Oh no.....i'll be left to do his work...and I am working too hard as it his!”
- “Oh no.....another resignation – I am going to look like I don't know how to manage and motivate my staff!”
- “Oh no.....I hate recruiting...it's time consuming and expensive – there goes my budget!”
- “Oh no!! How can he / she does this to us now? – the timing is awful!”

Of course none of this will actually be spoken out loud. What is usually said is

“Oh but Dave, you are such a key part of what we are doing here...I saw you as having the right stuff for that next promotion/ payrise / Corner office / Training course.” This will generally then be followed by an in-depth inquiry (accompanied by a lot of hurt looking puppy dog eyes) to find out:

“WHY ARE YOU SO UNHAPPY THAT YOU WANT TO LEAVE OUR FAMILY??”

What happens now?

Your boss' first reaction will be to get you to change your mind to make his life easier – and he will do that by promising to make your life easier – but only if you do change your mind.

Promises made in a situation of fear and panic are rarely followed through on. It's a bit like torturing someone and then expecting them to tell you the whole truth – it's human nature to do, or at least say, **whatever** it takes to make the pain go away.

A counteroffer only appears to be for your benefit – it is really only for theirs.

Important Questions to ask yourself at this stage:

- If they care enough to make all the changes now why didn't they listen to you before you made the radical step of resigning?
- Why did they wait until you resigned, to offer you what you're really worth to them?
- Can you trust them to follow through on their promises, given that they are acting under duress?

The Reality?

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 changes, like all ventures into the unknown, are tough. That's why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons.

Once you have announced you intend to resign:

- You may not be as trusted as you were before
- You may no longer be part of the company 'circle of trust' the inner sanctum that separates 'us' from 'them' in the mind of your boss.
- You will often find that the promised benefits are slow to arrive (or non-existent).
- You may suddenly notice that your company seems to be talking to a lot of recruiters, and a role that looks suspiciously like yours will appear on a job board.

Basicallyyou will be on the way out.

Summary:

Historically over 75% of people who accept a counteroffer will leave their company within 12 months, often much more unhappy than they were before the resignation situation, and quite commonly into a role that is less attractive than the one they knocked back due to the counteroffer.

It is time to be strong, and resign with grace and composure – sure of a brighter future. You should present to your employers as grateful for the time you have spent with them, but firmly committed to pursuing the next stage of your career by moving on to an opportunity you chose with great care.

“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.” (Georgia Association of Personnel Professionals 1987)