

Writing a Resignation Letter

A resignation letter provides notice that you will leave a company. It follows the verbal notice you give your supervisor about quitting your job.

Why should I write a resignation letter?

Resignation letters are professional courtesies that extend your professionalism, even in the last days of current employment. A letter of resignation often secures a favorable letter of recommendation in the future, and it officially documents your departure.

What should I consider before I submit my resignation letter?

- If you choose to leave your current job for an opportunity at another company, be sure that you have a true offer from your prospective employer, such as written acknowledgment of the new job offer. Likewise, be sure to accept the offer formally, preferably through written documentation. Once you understand you have a secure position at the other company, notify your current employer: first verbally and then with your resignation letter.
- Do not discuss your plan to quit your job with co-workers prior to the verbal notice you give your employer about quitting. Such unprofessional behavior will undermine the professionalism of your letter of resignation.

How much notice should I give?

It is standard practice to give at least a two-week notice. If you have a leadership position or a position that requires your specialized skills, it is important that you provide extra notice. Managerial jobs and above may require a month or even a six-week notice. In all cases, it is important to consult employee handbooks or contracts for the specifics on when to give notice.

Who should receive my resignation letter?

You should give your letter of resignation to your immediate supervisor.

How do I format a resignation letter?

A resignation letter is a business letter, so it follows formatting conventions for business letters.

Spacing

- Use single-spacing throughout your resignation letter.
- Align all paragraphs to the left.
- Leave one space between your heading and opening salutation.
- Leave one space between each paragraph.
- Leave three spaces between your closing salutation and signature.

Margins

Use one-inch margins for all sides of the letter.

Model Resignation Letter

Heading

your name and address

Steven Adams
1234 Almaden Expressway
San José, CA 95120

the date

August 1, 2014

name of employer

company name

address

Susan Young
Turner Agency
1234 S Winchester Blvd
San José, CA 95128

Introduction

salutation

statement of resignation,

including position and

effective date

Dear Ms. Young,

I would like to inform you that I am resigning from my position as a key data operator for the Turner Agency, effective August 15.

Body

reason for resigning

This was not an easy decision to make, but I will be unable to meet the fifteen-hour per week work requirement because of personal issues.

expression of thanks

Thank you for the opportunities and experiences you have provided me during my time of employment with the company. I have grown personally and professionally because of this job, and I will miss you and my coworkers, all of whom have made it a pleasure to work here.

Conclusion

offer of help in transition

Please let me know if I can be of any help during this transition.

Signature

Sincerely,

Steven Adams

Activity 1: Professional versus Unprofessional Resignation Letters

Read the two resignation letters from the fictional person Shannon Jackson as if you were her employer. Shannon Jackson's feelings toward her company are not any different, but she expresses herself in different ways. Note the differences in the resignation letters. Record your reactions to each of the letters.

Shannon Jackson
1234 E Capitol Expressway
San José, CA 95121

August 1, 2014

Steve Wilson
Hille-Jackson Law Firm
1234 S Winchester Blvd
San José, CA 95128

Dear Mr. Wilson,

I would like to inform you that I am resigning from my position as Office Services Clerk for the Hille-Jackson Law Firm, effective August 15.

I have made the decision to be a stay-at-home mother while my children are still young.

I wish Hille-Jackson Law Firm well!

Sincerely,

Shannon Jackson

Shannon Jackson
1234 E Capitol Expressway
San José, CA 95121

August 1, 2014

Steve Wilson
Hille-Jackson Law Firm
1234 S Winchester Blvd
San José, CA 95128

Dear Mr. Wilson,

I would like to inform you that I am resigning from my position as Office Services Clerk for the Hille-Jackson Law Firm, effective August 15.

I have made the decision to be a stay-at-home mother while my children are still young. Had this work environment been friendlier, perhaps I would have maintained my position as a part-time employee.

I wish I could thank you for a supportive environment or professional growth, but I would be lying. Furthermore, what kind of role model would I be for my children if I settled for a company that de-emphasized my contributions? Unfortunately, the only thing I learned is that I am able to persevere in a toxic environment like Hille-Jackson Law Firm.

I cannot offer my assistance during this transition period. I would not be the best candidate to train my replacement.

Sincerely,

Shannon Jackson

Activity 2: The “What-ifs” of Resignation Letters

Mark whether you agree or disagree with recommendations in the following scenarios.

1. Raul is a hard worker. He has been at his company for three years, and he has a great relationship with his boss. Raul should take the opportunity to ask for a recommendation letter in his resignation letter.
[Agree] [Disagree]
2. Sharon is not employed, but she does volunteer at a local school since she wants to be a teacher someday. She has been volunteering for a year, and she has been volunteering extensively for the past six months. She is more than a familiar face, and the children expect to see her weekly. Since Sharon is only volunteering, she should not write a resignation letter.
[Agree] [Disagree]
3. Walker rarely sees his supervisor. He should email his supervisor his resignation letter.
[Agree] [Disagree]
4. Patricia has been a member at her local church for three years. The past six months have been difficult for Patricia. The church is under the leadership of a new pastor, and she believes his doctrine to be unsound. She has prayed, and her decision is made – she wants to leave the church. She should submit a resignation letter.
[Agree] [Disagree]

Answer Key for Activity 2

1. Although Raul has a great relationship with his boss, he should submit his resignation letter prior to asking for a recommendation letter. Resignation letters serve one purpose: to state your departure from a company. While resignation letters may make your supervisor more receptive to your request for a recommendation letter, it is not appropriate to state this request in the context of your resignation letter.
2. Sharon is not paid for her time at the school, but she has served an integral role at the site. Sharon should still provide a resignation letter, showing her consideration for her work with the school and the children. Furthermore, Sharon wants to be a teacher, so she should maintain her professionalism even though she is only volunteering.
3. Walker needs to submit his resignation letter in person, even if he has to take the initiative to schedule a time with his supervisor to do so. If Walker and his supervisor cannot schedule a time to meet, arrangements should be made for Walker to deliver his resignation letter to the assistant manager or secretary.
4. Patricia is an official member at her local church, so she should consult the church’s constitution for withdrawing membership. Some churches require a formal written notice, while others may rescind membership after continuous absence for an established period of time.

References

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