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job, but you've outgrown the position and want more. After finding a better match elsewhere, it's time for that awkward moment: letting your employer go.

Whether you're a staff auditor or senior director, you should know how to quit a job well, as there's a right and wrong way of going about it. Botch the breakup and you could damage future career prospects.

A graceful resignation, on the other hand, leaves both parties a little sad but with few hard feelings. Even if you're unhappy in your current job and can't imagine ever returning to your firm, there's no need to burn bridges. You might need a reference from your old manager, or you could end up encountering him or her as a hiring manager with a different company you apply to in the future.

Here are nine steps for resigning right:

- 1. Plan your approach.** A good departure takes preparation and care. Write a short speech, and practice the delivery. Some points to cover: You've learned a lot with the firm, enjoyed your working relationships and are excited for your new opportunity.
- 2. Tell your manager first.** As much as you may be tempted to share your exciting news with colleagues, your supervisor should be the first to get the news. Don't run the risk of having your boss hear about your departure [via the office grapevine](#). That would be highly unprofessional and disrespectful.
- 3. Resign in person.** Ask for a face-to-face meeting. If that's not possible, call your manager. Don't resign by email or instant message, and absolutely don't ghost an employer by just not showing up anymore. This is basic professional courtesy.
- 4. Time it right.** Whenever possible, don't leave your current employer in a lurch. If you can, avoid resigning during your firm's peak season or in the middle of a project

in which you play a critical role. Also, try not to break the news right before your

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letter that includes your gratitude for the opportunities provided by the firm and your departure date.

**7. Help with the transition.** During your final weeks, wrap up projects or get them in a state that would be easy to hand off to others. If the firm brings in a temporary professional, train that person. Make sure all your digital and paper files are in good order and easily accessible. Don't forget to let clients know who will be taking over their accounts.

**8. Strengthen connections.** While you won't be working with your manager and colleagues any longer, there's no reason to end your business relationships with them. In fact, do the opposite. Past coworkers also are valuable members of your professional network. Have coffee or lunch with office buddies. Connect on LinkedIn and other social sites. Let them throw you a farewell party if they're so inclined. Go out on a high note, including by making yourself available even after you leave if questions arise that you can help with.

**9. Prepare for a counteroffer discussion — and how to say no.** Your boss might try to entice you to stay with an offer of more money or extra perks, but avoid taking it. Why? Backpedaling on your new job is unprofessional and could put you in the difficult position of breaching a contract. What's more, think about all the reasons you looked for a new job in the first place. A better salary won't fix issues like a lack of upward mobility or unfulfilling work. If you're extended a [counteroffer](#), say thank you — and even mention you're flattered, if you feel that way — but explain that you're excited for your new position and politely decline.

Quitting your job can be awkward, but it's something the majority of professionals face during their lifetime. Get this right and you'll be able to advance your career without bad blood or blemishes on your reputation.

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