

10 STEPS TO TAKE WHEN AN EMPLOYEE RESIGNS

1. Get written confirmation

In the event of a resignation, the first thing you should ask them to do is put it in writing. Have your employee confirm the details and date of their resignation on paper, as this will settle any disputes that may arise over the start and end date of their notice period. Requesting a written resignation should also ensure they are absolutely certain it's what they want to do.

2. Confirm their notice period

This will normally be agreed in their employment contract, but if not, the minimum statutory notice of one week applies as long as they've been under employment for one month or more. Freelancers, independent contractors or casual workers are the exception to this, as these will only be bound to a notice period if previously agreed.

3. Decide if you want them to work their notice or not

If you feel that keeping your employee on to work their notice period may have a negative effect on morale or client relationships it could be in the company's best interest to pay the employee en lieu for part or all of their notice period. If you choose to go down this route you must either ensure that your contract allows you to do so or have the employee directly agree to it. You'll also need to make sure your team are able to pick up the workload in their absence or until you find a suitable replacement.

4. Plan the staff announcement

Planning how best to announce the news to other members of staff is important. Resignations may be sad for peers, but may also drive team members to question their own role in the company, leading them to wonder if they'd be better off elsewhere, too. The best policy is to keep any resignations confidential until all arrangements have been made and you are sure the departure can be carried out seamlessly. This way you're confidently able to anticipate and address any concerns or questions the rest of your team may have.



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5. Coordinate the handover period

This is vital to a smooth transition. Use the handover period to thoroughly brief whoever is picking up where your resignee is leaving off. Ensure they have enough time to prepare so they can hit the ground running as soon as they assume responsibilities. You will also need to gradually reduce your resignee's client contact during this time and begin to introduce whoever is taking over.

6. Arrange an exit interview

This is a great opportunity to get some honest feedback on the company from the inside. Choose the appropriate person to conduct the interview, perhaps an external HR freelancer or non-executive director, then plan some strong questions. By using an external HR freelancer your resignee may be more willing to share their opinions on the company's faults. Ask about the negatives as well as the positives so you know what areas of the company and practices are in need of improvements.

Good questions include:

- What issues have you encountered?
- Did you feel valued as an employee?
- When did you begin searching for a new job?
- What are the perks of your new role?
- Were you satisfied with the money/opportunities/facilities with us?
- What did you enjoy most/least about working with us?

7. Arrange final payments

Alongside the usual payments and outstanding pay (including overtime and reimbursement for untaken holiday) there may be other payments due. For instance, if your employee chooses to leave during statutory maternity, or if they have a pension with your company. You will need to work with your financial team to coordinate these payments.

8. Provide references

Providing references can often be more complicated legally than you might think. As a past employer your statement must be both valid and accurate. If you provide a biased reference (be it positive or negative) the new employer may hold you liable for your inaccurate description.



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Conversely, if your ex-employee believes they have been unfairly described in your reference they reserve the right to take you to court or tribunal. To avoid either of these scenarios it is advisable to offer a reference containing only the dates the employee worked and number of sick days taken. Additionally, you may like to offer an 'off-the-record' chat to any future employers.

9. Give them a send off

Hosting a goodbye 'do', if appropriate, is a good way to ensure you are parting on good terms. Resentful ex-employees are a fast track to damaging your company's reputation and relationships, so it's worth keeping your employees happy all the way to the door. They might even become a source of referral or even a client at some stage in the future, so it can be worth keeping in touch.

10. Give them a personal goodbye

Taking a few moments to say a personal thank you and goodbye goes a long way. Regardless of your employee's means for departure, their employment will have been beneficial to the growth and functionality of your business. Showing your gratitude will help to ensure there is no departing hostility between either parties.



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