

THE FIVE REASONS YOU SHOULD NEVER ACCEPT A COUNTEROFFER

Over the past few years, the copier channel has experienced frequent shortages of qualified technical, sales, management, and back office staff. These shortages have created a highly competitive recruitment environment, and industry employers are now having to work harder than ever to attract and retain employees.

One retention strategy that has become increasingly common in this industry is the counteroffer. Faced with losing a valuable employee to a competitor, many employers propose a hefty pay raise in hopes that the employee will stay on board instead of accepting the new job they've been offered. For some employees, accepting the counteroffer seems like a good idea. In reality, however, it's a career killer. Here's why:

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1. Counteroffers are often made in a moment of panic

When you tender your resignation, your employer will suddenly start thinking about all the short-term problems your absence will cause. ("How will we survive without Dave? We need him for that big client meeting next week!") The quickest remedy is to float a counteroffer. But once the initial panic has subsided, you might find the relationship has cooled. You're no longer "Dave, the guy we can't live without". You're "Dave, the guy who threatened to quit just when we needed him most."

2. Counteroffers put your job security in jeopardy

When an employer offers you more money to stay, it's for the employer's convenience, not for your benefit. They may be willing to pay extra to keep you around, but in many cases they're simply buying time until they can find a suitable replacement for you. The rule of thumb among recruiters is that 80 percent of people who accept counteroffers will either leave or be let go within a year.

3. Counteroffers can't change everything

When you started looking for a new job, you did it for a reason—and in most cases, it wasn't for the money alone. Maybe you felt overworked or underappreciated; maybe you didn't get along with your supervisor or you realized your opportunities for advancement were limited. Money is nice. But long after the excitement of your raise wears off, the same old frustrations will still be there.

4. Counteroffers make it harder to secure future raises

To get this raise, you had to take the dramatic step of interviewing for a new job, accepting a competitor's offer, and tendering your resignation. There's no reason to believe your next raise will be any easier. The next time the subject comes up, you may be refused altogether on the grounds that your employer already gave you a huge raise just to keep you on staff.

5. Counteroffers close the door to future opportunity

When you accept a counteroffer from your current employer, it means you're turning down a job offer from a new company—a company that has just gone through a lengthy process of interviews and negotiations, all with the expectation that you would be joining the team. When you refuse the offer because you've decided to stay exactly where you are, it isn't just a waste of their time and money—it's an insult they won't soon forget.

Bottom line? In almost every case we see, counteroffers are nothing more than a temporary solution designed to keep you on staff until your employer is ready to replace you. Are there exceptions to this rule? Of course, and maybe your situation is one of them. But we wouldn't bet on it. And neither should you. -CC

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