



How to Give Notice Without Giving Up the Rapport You've Built

Career advice often focuses on making good first impressions, but last impressions can be even more important. When it is time to leave a job, you need to take great care with the process of giving notice, and with your conduct in your final days at work.

After all, even in a big market, word of any negative conduct can spread through industry circles like wildfire—people find it quite entertaining to share stories of bad behavior. And remember that conduct can be perceived negatively even if it was not meant that way.

The accompanying D3 general guidelines will help you give notice in the most professional and thoughtful manner.

Consider When to Give Notice

In the U.S., the standard practice is to give your employer two weeks' notice before your last intended day of work. However, some situations, such as during a transition in leadership, overlapping vacation schedules, or major projects may make it expedient to give more than two weeks' notice to avoid leaving your employer in the lurch. Your boss may want you to leave sooner—even the day you give notice. But by providing notice that meets or exceeds business standards, you have shown yourself to be a person of integrity.

Timing of your announcement can also be critical. Announcing your departure on the eve of a big deadline, for example, is not likely to leave a favorable impression in anyone's mind. If you can time your departure notice to coincide with the conclusion of a major project, the process may go much more smoothly. Some employment counselors recommend giving notice on a Friday afternoon so that you can feel relaxed over the weekend and your boss has a couple of days to digest the news before taking action on Monday.

Prepare Your Words

If at all possible, it is best to give notice to your boss in person. However, it is also helpful to write out a brief letter of resignation. The process of creating the letter allows you to focus your thoughts so that it will be easier to speak the words during that awkward and potentially rushed meeting with your boss. Handing in a letter along with your resignation speech also gives your boss something to refer back to, because it will include key information such as your last anticipated day on the job.

In both the written statement and your conversation, keep your thoughts positive. Thank your employer for the opportunities you've been given. Convey gratitude for the support you've received and knowledge you've gained. You may choose to mention that you are moving on to a new opportunity or stepping down to pursue other matters, but do not feel compelled to say anything about why you are

leaving. Above all, refrain from saying anything negative about the employer, your co-workers, your clients, or anything associated with the job. You'll have an opportunity to share your feedback in an exit interview, and this is a much more appropriate venue for these types of comments.

Make Your Presentation

With your timing set and your letter ready, set up an appointment to talk to your supervisor. If a meeting in-person is not feasible, try for a video meeting. Do not say anything to co-workers or clients before informing your direct supervisor. The worst possible situation is for your boss to learn about your departure from someone else.

After you've broken the news, ask your employer if it is permissible for you to mention it to clients and teammates or whether they would prefer to handle the matter directly. If you are allowed to inform clients, it leaves a good impression all around if you make contact and let them know when you're leaving. You might be able to take some great connections with you to your next venture. However, before reaching out to clients after you've left, make sure you understand the types of contact that are permissible under any non-competition agreements you signed.