**Counteroffer – Should I Entertain a counteroffer?**

**What do you do if your employer beats a new job offer?**

You have just accepted a position with another company and are in the process of turning in your notice. It was a difficult decision, and you thought long and hard about what path you would take. But you have decided to leave. In your resignation meeting, you tell your employer you have decided to leave the company to go to another opportunity. Your employer interrupts you by saying, “I can’t believe that today is the day you are telling us you are leaving. What a coincidence. Tomorrow we were going to promote you, and the next week we were going to give you a top-secret bonus. Why don’t we just give you those things today and forget about you leaving? What sort of offer did they make you? We’ll match it.” That was easy, you think to yourself. Now you have received the raise that you didn’t get before and a promotion to go along with it. Companies try to keep their staff as long as they can, and when a desirable employee turns in his or her notice, many times a well-intentioned manager will try to talk the employee out of it with a financial incentive to stay. But before you accept that counteroffer, consider the following reasons why that last-minute decision could be one of the last decisions that you make with this company:

1. Your employer will no longer consider you part of that “inner circle” of his trusted confidants. If you have been flirting with other companies, then the trust is always going to be weakened. Your employer might say he’ll forget about the whole thing, but every visit to the dentist will be viewed with suspicion.
2. Your manager’s effectiveness is judged by how well he keeps his staff happy and by how long he keeps his staff. He could be afraid that his competence as a leader will now be in question, which could damage his own chances for advancement.
3. It’s easier to keep you with a counteroffer than replace you. The cost of recruiting and placing a qualified candidate can be significant.
4. If you have to turn in your notice to a company just to get a raise and a promotion, then is that the type of company you really want to work for? The promotion and raise your employer is giving you is not based upon your merit. If that was the case, then you would have already received it. Instead, because of the timing of this advancement, the reason is to keep you. Once the crisis has quelled and the status quo is back in place, then the odds are very high that this raise and increased remuneration could be revoked. Why should a company keep someone who didn’t deserve a promotion and instead received it in reaction to a fear of departure? When the crisis is over, so will be the incentive to keep you.
5. They won’t respect you. They know that they are the ones who really call the shots in your career, not you. Well-managed companies rarely offer counteroffers to their staff. Instead, they treat them with the dignity and respect of an individual who has thought long and hard enough to take his career into his own hands. The healthy companies will tell you, “Thank you for your service, and we hope that you have become a better person by working here. Consider us if you ever want to come back. We’d love to have you here again.” Leaving a company is something that happens to everyone in the world of work. Minimize the potential career damage and your anxiety in this transition by having the confidence to stick with your decisions.

**The Right Perspective**

A counteroffer is an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you’ve announced your intention to take another job. It doesn’t include instances when you receive an offer but don’t tell your boss, or when you tell your employer about an offer you never intended to take in a classic “they-want-me-but-I’m- staying-with-you” ploy.

These are merely positioning tactics that can reinforce your worth by letting your boss know you have other options. Mention of a true counteroffer, however, carries an actual threat to quit. Interviews with employers who make counteroffers, and employees who accept them, have show that accepting a counteroffer – tempting as it may be – is tantamount to career suicide. Consider the problem in its proper perspective.

**What really goes through a boss’s mind when someone quits?**

“This couldn’t be happening at a worse time.” “He’s one of my best people. If I let him quit now, it’ll wreak havoc on the morale of the department.” “I’ve already got one opening in my department. I don’t need another right now.” “This will probably screw up the entire vacation schedule.” “I’m working as hard as I can and I don’t need to do his work too.” “If I lose another good employee, the company might decide to “lose” me too.” “My review is coming up and this will make me look bad.” “Maybe I can keep him on until I find a suitable replacement.” “My word, we’re working with a skeleton crew already. If I lose this one, we’ll all be working around the clock just to stay even.”

**What will the boss say to keep you in the nest?**

These comments are common:

* “I’m already shocked. I thought you were as happy with us as we are with you. Let’s discuss it before you make your final decision.”
* “Aw gee, I’ve been meaning to tell you about the great plans we have for you, but it’s been confidential until now.
* “The V.P. has you in mind for some exciting and expanding responsibilities.”
* “Your raise was scheduled to go into effect next quarter, but we’ll make it effective immediately.”
* “You’re going to work for whom?”
* “How can you do this in the middle of a major project? We were really counting on you.” (They’re always in the middle of one.)

**Just a Stall Tactic**

Let’s face it. When someone quits, it’s a direct reflection on the boss. Unless, you’re really incompetent or a destructive thorn in his side, the boss might look bad for allowing you to go: It’s an implied insult to his management skills. His gut reaction is to do what has to be done to keep you from leaving until he’s ready. That’s human nature.

Unfortunately, it’s also human nature to want to stay – unless your work life is an abject misery. Career change, like all ventures into the unknown, is tough. That’s why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons. Before you succumb to a tempting counteroffer, consider these universal truths:

Any situation is suspect if an employee must receive an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion or better working conditions.

No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, you’ll always be a fidelity risk. Having once demonstrated your lack of loyalty (for whatever reason), you will lose your status as a team player and your place in the inner circle.

Counteroffers are usually nothing more that stall devices to give your employer time to replace you. Your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. They’ll just be slightly more tolerable in the short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you.

**Counteroffers**

Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit every time you deserve better working conditions.

By accepting a counteroffer, you have committed the unprofessional and unethical sin of breaking your commitment to the prospective employer making the offer.

Decent and well-managed companies don’t make counteroffers. . .EVER! Their policies are fair and equitable. They will never be subjected to counteroffer coercion, which they perceive as blackmail.