

GET THE SCOOP ON...

Why how you leave your old job is as important as how you start the new one ■ The importance of updating your network and keeping it going ■

Practical tips for shutting down “job search central” ■ Ways to transition smoothly into your new role ■ Critical things to do in the first 90 days of your new job

After Landing

Congratulations! Your hard work has paid off, and your search has come to a successful conclusion. (If you’re reading this before landing, don’t worry, it *will* happen!) In the excitement of landing a new position, it’s natural to start looking forward and easy to overlook tying up the loose ends of your job search. Although there may be much to do to get ready for your new job, be sure to take time to put matters in order on your old job (if currently employed), as well as to update your network, organize your job hunting materials, and set the stage for a smooth transition. This chapter covers how to do all that.

Managing how you leave your job

If you’ll be resigning from a current job to go to the new one, be aware that there is actually a strategy for how to leave your job. When thinking about how they will leave a job, most people focus on how much

notice to give and what to say in a resignation letter. There's more to it than that, however, so consider these tips.

Leave your responsibilities in good shape

To the extent possible, don't leave projects and tasks incomplete and files and documents in a mess. Don't have the attitude that it won't be your problem anymore so you don't have to worry about how you leave things. Try to wrap up outstanding projects and situations as much as possible given the time frame you have and offer to come in during your off-hours or to be available by phone to your successor after that.

Tie up loose ends regarding your employment

Meet with a human resources representative at your old employer to go over your health benefits, 401(k) plan, unused vacation time, final paycheck, and anything else that may need to be closed out, rolled over, or for which you could have money coming to you. It's much easier to sort out any discrepancies while you're still in the building than after you've left and are busy on the new job.

Leave with your relationships intact and positive

No gloating! Don't boast about the great salary or impressive title you're getting with the new job. Don't flaunt the fact that you're moving on or up. Be sensitive to the feelings of colleagues who might also want to leave but aren't having any success with their searches or haven't even gotten around to starting to look. You should not leave people feeling like they are breathing your dust. Thank them for being good colleagues and tell them what



Watch Out!

Be careful of promises you might make to recruit your old co-workers after you get to your new employer. Although you might be able to have your friends follow you, don't make promises you can't keep.



Bright Idea

Contact all other employers to whom you applied, letting them know you've landed. Certainly you'll do this with ones you've recently been in active talks with, but do it also with others where you barely got your foot in the door, if at all. It lets them know they can remove you from the candidate pool but also helps you continue to build your network.

you've learned from them. Also be sure to write a cordial resignation letter. Leaving gracefully is not merely a nice thing to do—it's also smart. Your former co-workers and bosses might be valuable members of your network in the future.

Leave with your future career development in mind. Go through your files and collect anything you can put in your portfolio (being careful not to take confidential, proprietary information). Also, while the job is still fresh in your mind, and while you have access to files or reports that you won't be taking with you, make note of your achievements by creating an Assets Log, where you list what you learned on that job and accomplishments you had. You probably already did this when you created your most recent résumé, but make sure that there's nothing you overlooked. Also ask for letters of recommendation from bosses, clients, or co-workers even though you presumably won't need them for a long time to come.

No matter how elated you are to be leaving, don't let it show to anyone but your closest of friends on the old job (and even then, be sensitive to their feelings if they would like to be moving on, too). It's an awfully small world out there, and you never know how these people or the organization as a whole will pop back up in your life in the future. If you manage the leaving of your job with dignity and a sense of responsibility, you'll never have to worry about how and when they do pop up.

Closing the loop with your network

Another critical step after landing a new job is not to forget about the people who helped you get to this point. Whether you

landed your position through networking or some other means, you probably did at least some networking during your search. Even if those encounters with your contacts did not end up leading to a job, you still need to thank everyone with whom you connected. Many people will want to hear how things turned out for you, and certainly those who did help considerably would expect the courtesy of knowing the results and hearing that you appreciated their help.

If your network is large, it's best to give this update by sending out an email message or snail mail letter. If you don't have many people to contact, consider calling each person, although email would be fine, too. No matter what the size of your network, there will invariably be some people you would prefer to call because you know them well or they were more involved in your search than others were. The networking logs you might have maintained during your search should make it easy to remember whom you would need to contact at this point. The following sample shows the format for a "good news" letter you might send out to your network, either as an email or postal letter. If sending through the mail, it's appropriate to print on the letterhead of your new employer (with their permission), or you can just have only your own name and new contact information on the paper. If you have your new business cards already, don't forget to include those, too, or just mention your new contact information in the letter or the letterhead.

As you send out your landing letter, be sure to include everyone who touched your job search in some way. This means not just the people who were obvious networking contacts but also those involved tangentially in your search. That might be headhunters (whether they led you to the job you landed or not), career coaches, administrative support, friends and neighbors who might have helped out, and anyone else who is some way large or small played a role in your successful landing.

Sample Landing Letter Template

Dear xxx:

I am pleased to report that my search has come to a successful conclusion and that I'll be starting work on [give start date—past or future—or refer to a general time frame such as “in two weeks” or “a few weeks ago”] at [Company Name] as a [Position Title]. In this new role, I will be [here give a brief synopsis of what your responsibilities will be]. I'm very excited about this opportunity.

[If the organization you'll be working for is not a household name or not likely to be known to many of the people to whom you're writing, insert a paragraph here that gives a brief overview of the organization. If not necessary, skip to the next section.]

I want to thank you for your valuable assistance during my search. I truly appreciate your time and willingness to put me in touch with some outstanding people in your personal network. [If someone you're writing to didn't give you any actual names of other contacts, substitute that last phrase with whatever is applicable, such as “...willingness to share ideas and support for my search.”] This job search has reminded me how critical professional relationships are, and I am grateful that I was able to call upon you over these past few months [or whatever the time frame was of your search]. I hope you won't hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of any assistance to you.

Thank you again for your support and best wishes to you in your own career.

Sincerely,

[your name]

Closing up your job search shop

When you land a new job, it's tempting to stuff your job search files away in a closet and leave your electronic files scattered in the random recesses of your hard drive, but don't. There's probably a lot of stuff you don't need to keep, so it would be a shame to clutter your physical or virtual storage space unnecessarily, and the things you do need to keep should be put away in good order so they're easy to find and use the next time you need to job hunt.

If you follow the organizing suggestions in the online Bonus Chapter 1 throughout your search, then your materials are probably already in good order. But, if you've let your filing systems fall apart—which is understandable in the heat of a job search—you'll need to do a little extra work at this point. The following tips can make closing up shop quick and painless:

Purge

Go through all your job search files—both hard copy and electronic—and throw out or delete what you don't need to keep. You probably do need to save most of what you've accumulated, particularly the networking and activity logs, contact information, and some company research notes. So, don't do a major purging because you never know when you might need the information again. On the other hand, you've probably collected lots of insignificant (insignificant now that you've landed) notes and miscellaneous pieces of paper or bits of data on your computer. Do clean out what is very unlikely to be needed again or information that will become dated quickly, such as marketplace surveys and company statistics.

Share

Know anyone who's currently going through a job search or might be soon? Offer to give or lend them your materials. You could save somebody a lot of time and trouble by doing so.

Convert

Some of the logs and records you kept could be converted for use as ongoing career management tools. For example, if you kept a log of networking actions (people you spoke to, their contact information, what transpired, notes about them and their interests), you could continue to use this log to track your networking efforts that you WILL continue even after employed in the new job!

Organize

When you've determined what stays and what goes, put it in some semblance of order so that you won't be overwhelmed when you revisit it all on your next search. Make sure that your electronic files are contained within accurately named folders and that all of those folders become subfolders of one overall folder named Job Search[date]. (Name it with the year in which you conducted the search, or if you've done more than one search in a year, then obviously you need to choose some other label that makes sense.) Also be sure to make backups of key documents, such as your résumé and other self-marketing materials, on disk or CD. Go through the same organizing process with your hard copy files, making sure that papers are sorted into the proper file folders and that all folders are clearly labeled.

Store

Find a place to keep all your hard copy materials and computer disks or CDs, whether that's a file cabinet, file box, closet, or



Bright Idea

If you used outside experts to help create your résumé or other self-marketing materials, make sure that you have all the most up-to-date versions in your possession on your hard drive and backed up on disk or CD. Also find out how long they keep your materials on file in case you lose your copies.

whatever works for you and your space. Try to find a place where the files are reasonably accessible in case you need to refer to them from time to time.

Finally, don't forget that you've left a paper—and digital—trail behind you as you've looked for a job. You might have résumés uploaded to Web sites, messages posted on online bulletin boards, and your name in the hat for temporary work with a staffing agency. Be sure to retrace your steps and see what you need to download, reply to, close out, or otherwise wrap up. You may want to keep some of those connections active, just in case your new job doesn't work out, so don't feel you have to remove your résumé from job sites or cut off ties for contract work. You might want to keep your search going in a quiet, passive way because you never know when you'll be ready to make a move again.

Tips for a smooth transition

Even the most seasoned professionals have a trial period and learning curve when they begin a new job. During that time, they are being judged by people at the new place of work—and they, in turn, are judging the new job and organization. To make that honeymoon period go smoothly, take care of the following:

Put some thought into the start date of your new position

If you have any say in the matter and don't have an urgent need for a paycheck, try to wait at least a week or two before starting the new job. This period of time will give you a chance to decompress from your old job, or from your job search, and will enable you to take care of the tasks suggested in the points that follow.

Tie up all loose ends in your life

You don't need any distractions during the first several weeks on a new job. Your sole focus should be on the job, not the closet that needs cleaning out or garden that needs planting.

Adjust your life accordingly

Make any necessary changes to your daily routine and anticipate any bumps in the road. Depending on what is applicable to your situation, this might include the following:

- Plot out the route for a new commute.
- Get used to a new sleep schedule if the hours will be different.
- Make sure your child care is reliable.
- Assemble an appropriate wardrobe to fit the new position or environment.

Keep your expectations realistic and be patient

Be aware that there will be a learning curve on your new job. You might be overwhelmed at first, or even bored. You might not receive enough training, or you might be smothered by too much supervision. It is normal to have mixed feelings about a new job until you have a chance to settle in. Don't make any final judgments until at least a few months have gone by.

Lay low

Don't get involved in politics or gossip. Don't try to form allegiances with colleagues too quickly until you get to know who's who.

In addition to these general tips, you need to sit down and prepare a plan for specific steps to take within the first 90 days. A roadmap for this is laid out for you in the next section.



Bright Idea

Although not essential, it's a nice gesture to send thank-you notes to everyone at the new organization with whom you interviewed or interacted in some way (such as the hiring manager's assistant or the receptionist who took all your phone messages). It's nice to acknowledge their efforts and helps you start off on good terms.

Your first 90 days on the new job

Whether starting a brand-new job or working at one you've had for years, there are always two things you should be doing: job management and career management. Job management is simply doing your job. It involves making sure that you not only show up and handle your responsibilities well but that you go above and beyond to add value. Job management also means effectively navigating the people and environment that form the context of that job. Career management is a more long-term endeavor, but it's something you should be doing in at least some small way every day. Career management means always having an eye toward where your career is going, where you want it to go, and how you're going to get there. To tackle both job management and career management, use the following suggested plans as a guide.

The first 30 days—job management

Get to know the organization. As quickly as possible learn everything you can about its products and services. Formal training and orientation might take care of most of this, but supplement where needed by reading and talking to people.

Get to know the “unofficial” organization. Observe how things get done and what seems to be the norm for behavior and work habits.

Define success with your manager. Find out what your manager expects of you and what his or her wish list is for how you'll make a difference in your role. Set specific goals and priorities.

Clarify your manager's operating preferences. Have open discussions with your manager about how he or she wants to communicate with you and how often, what his or her work style is, and anything else that affects your day-to-day relationship.

Identify your deficits. Figure out early on whether there's anything you're going to need to get up to speed on quickly, and speak with your boss about how to best address those developmental needs so that you can do your job effectively.

Start getting to know your colleagues. Take time to talk with your peers, subordinates, customers, and anyone you'll be working with but tread carefully until you get to know them well.

The first 30 days—career management

Start identifying potential internal networks. As you get to know your colleagues, be thinking about who will be your key contacts within the organization, but don't start closing in on relationship-building too soon. Take time to get to know everyone.

Begin an Assets Log. Set up a notebook or computer file where you will dutifully record every new skill and knowledge area you acquire, along with your achievements as they occur.

Maintain your network outside the organization. Follow the guidelines earlier in this chapter for notifying your network of your new position and expressing your desire to stay in contact.

The next 60 days—job management

Hold a progress meeting with your manager. If not already a formal part of the way your boss manages, ask for a meeting to discuss your progress and identify any areas needing work, as well as to see whether goals and priorities for the next couple of months have changed or remain as first defined.

Hold "How am I doing?" meetings with your direct reports. If you have subordinates, meet with them to ask them how you're doing and to see whether they have any needs not being met by your management approach. Also discuss priorities and goals for the near future.

Look for ways to stand out. The first 30 days on the job are likely to be spent focusing on learning the ropes and just keeping your head above water. After that learning period, start to identify ways you can make significant contributions beyond just doing your job.

Start to define relationships with internal colleagues. When you feel you have a good handle on who's who, start to form your own internal network of people whose relationships with you will be key.



Moneysaver

If you hired a professional résumé writer or career coach to help with your search, find out whether any “postlanding” services, such as a résumé update or transition coaching, are included in fees you’ve already paid.

Continue to assimilate. Continue to understand and integrate yourself into the culture, values, and mission of the organization.

The next 60 days—career management

Get more involved. After you feel you have your new role under control, look for ways to get more involved in the organization, such as volunteering for a committee, task force, or an employer-sponsored community service effort.

Update your résumé and/or bio. Add the new employer and position to the professional experience section, along with a job context snapshot and any early achievements. Make any modifications to other sections as needed to reflect new skills and knowledge you might have already acquired.

Keep adding to your asset log. As you acquire new knowledge and skills and have achievements, add those to your log so that you can easily transfer them to your résumé when needed.

Get involved in your professional community. Join or become more active in professional and industry associations that can benefit you in your career and enhance your networking.

Ensuring that the next job search will be easier

When your search comes to an end, you’ll probably be hoping that you won’t have to look for a job again for a *loong* time. Well, unfortunately, the realities of the marketplace are such that you’ll probably be looking again sooner rather than later. All sorts of statistics have been quoted over the past decade or so about how many different careers the average person will have over a lifetime. I don’t like to rely too heavily on those stats

because the numbers are always inconsistent. Some people say you'll have 10 or more careers through your adult life. Others say seven. Still others cite different figures. And, even beyond the discrepancies in the numbers, what about terminology? Do they mean different jobs and employers or actual career changes, say from a marketing specialist to a Web site designer? From the beginning of this book and all throughout it, I've promised you the inside scoop on job hunting. These final pages of the final chapter are no exception, so I'll let you in on a little secret: the people spouting those statistics about how many career changes you'll make usually don't really know what they're talking about. They've just heard them somewhere and take them to heart without knowing the details behind them.

So, don't get hung up on what's normal and what's not when it comes to your own career. Just accept the fact that changing jobs (the actual position you hold) either within your organization or to a new employer is likely to happen to you every few years, and even less if you're in rapidly changing fields like technology. If you stay longer or less time than that, fine. And, accept the fact that there is nothing wrong or particularly unusual about changing your occupation completely. Few things are more rewarding and rejuvenating than venturing into a whole new career field that is more interesting and fulfilling for you. So, forget the statistics and make a move when the time is right for you and market conditions warrant it.

With that said, you need to take care of a few nuts and bolts now and in the near term to make it easier on yourself when the next job search rolls around. Some of these you will have started as part of your 90-day plans on the new job, but be sure to keep them going beyond that.

Keep your assets log up-to-date

Continuously add new skills and knowledge areas you acquire and record your achievements. The more you keep up with this, the easier it will be to update your résumé and craft a new self-marketing sound bite.

**Watch Out!**

The most common lament I've heard from job seekers over the past 20+ years is that they let their networks go stale because they got too wrapped up in their daily job responsibilities and thought they didn't have time to network. Don't let this happen to you!

Continue networking

This one is obvious but bears repeating because it's so important. If during this recent job search you had to endure that awful, awkward feeling of contacting someone you hadn't spoken with in ages, you now how important it is not to let that happen again. Find the time to maintain the relationships you've developed, no matter how busy you are. You'll thank yourself in the future.

Stay involved and visible

In addition to maintaining your professional relationships, make sure to get involved in your professional or personal communities to stay visible and active. When it comes time to call upon your network for help in the future, the ideal situation is to have people already aware of you and coming to you with ideas and opportunities, not your having to chase them down. By keeping your professional association memberships current, participating in meetings, and serving on committees or holding office, you stay visible. Also, if your expertise warrants it, writing articles in trade publications, seeking out publicity by getting quoted in the mass media, and presenting at conferences are additional great ways to get and stay visible.

Keep apprised of industry developments

If you stay visible, you'll know what's going on in your field, but beyond being actively involved, keep doing your homework. (You introverts should love this one!) Remember that networking

is not only about getting out amongst 'em; it's also about being knowledgeable so that people seek you out to connect with you for information and expertise. So, take a look at all the publications you read and Web sites you perused as part of your search and keep up with them even while you're employed.

Talk to headhunters when they call

Don't blow off a recruiter who calls to tell you about an opportunity. First of all, it's his or her job, so be considerate and let the job get done. Beyond that, however, it behooves you to hear them out. Recruiters are a valuable part of your network, and you never know when you might need to call them in the future. It will be a whole lot easier to get their attention if you've established something of a relationship over time through their phone calls, even if you didn't want to pursue the opportunities they were calling about.

I know how easy it is to get caught up in the day-to-day responsibilities of your work, plus try to have a personal or family life on top of it. The next job search seems so remote at this point that it will be easy for you to read this list and say, "Sure, that makes sense; I'll give it a try," only to have your good intentions fizzle out over time as present realities take over. Do the best that you can, though. If you can work these efforts into your daily or weekly routine in small ways, they'll gradually become habit and not chore.

Finally, as you embark on your new job, keep it all in perspective. Finding and keeping a good job is important—the food-on-the-table-and-roof-over-your-head kind of critical importance to most people—but it's not everything. Keep balance in your life by spending time with family and friends, pursuing your hobbies and interests, and just relaxing sometimes. You'll not only be a happier person, you'll probably do your job better, too. Enjoy!

Just the facts

- Manage how you leave your old job as strategically as how you start the new one.
- Before getting busy with your new job, take some time to update your network to let them know where you've landed and to thank them again for their assistance.
- Put away your job hunting materials by culling what you don't need to save and carefully organizing what you'll keep so that you can find them easily for your next job search.
- When you start your new job, lay low when it comes to dealing with office politics and forming allegiances but stand out by making contributions as soon as possible.
- Map out a plan for what to do during the first 90 days on the new job to ensure a smooth transition and practice good long-term career management.
- Put steps in place to make sure that the next job search will be easier than the last and that you won't feel you're starting from scratch.