TRX SEARCH CANDIDATE RESOURCE | CAREER TRANSITION

After You Accept

Resigning well, navigating counteroffers and starting your new role with intention.

The purpose of this guide

Accepting an offer is a major decision, but it is not the end of the transition. The period between saying yes and settling into a new organization can involve resignation, unexpected employer reactions, counteroffers, benefits and compensation questions, administrative details, uncertainty and a completely new environment. This guide is designed to help you think ahead, reduce avoidable surprises and move through that transition deliberately.

You cannot control every reaction. You can prepare for more of them.

1. Confirm the offer before making an irreversible move
2. Be prepared for your notice period to become your last day
3. Resign professionally and finish well
4. Evaluate counteroffers against the reasons you were looking
5. Close the financial, benefits and administrative loops
6. Stay connected between acceptance and Day One
7. Prepare for onboarding before you arrive
8. Use the first day and first week to learn before you diagnose

Make sure the decision you are acting on is the decision you think you made.

Before giving notice, confirm that the new opportunity is sufficiently complete and understood. Acceptance and resignation can happen close together, but they are not automatically the same step.

Confirm the basics in writing

- Your title, base compensation and any variable compensation you were told to expect.
- Your start date, work location and expected travel or schedule.
- Who you report to and any material scope or responsibility that was central to your decision.
- Any sign-on, relocation, equity, vehicle, allowance or other material component of the package.
- Any documents, policies or agreements referenced in the offer that materially affect the decision.

Understand what is still contingent

Background checks, drug screens, references, formal approvals, credential verification, relocation steps or other contingencies may still be open. If something material remains unresolved, clarify the timing and implications before making an irreversible move with your current employer.

> **Do not resign based on assumptions.**
> If an important part of the offer is unclear, ask. A complete decision is easier to stand behind than one built around information you expected to receive later.

Go back to why you chose this move

Pull out your Career Move Worksheet or the criteria you used during the search. Remind yourself what you were trying to gain, what you were trying to change and why this opportunity made sense before the resignation conversation adds a new layer of emotion.

Your two-week notice may become your last day.

Some employers will want a full transition period. Others may end active employment immediately, especially when the new role involves a competitor, sensitive information, customer relationships or systems access. Be prepared for both versions of the conversation.

> **Prepare for both versions**
>
> Version A: “Thank you for telling us. Let’s work through the transition.”
>
> Version B: “Thank you for telling us. Today will be your last day.”
>
> You should be ready to handle either response professionally.

Before you resign, be ready to leave

- Have personal belongings you would want to take with you reasonably organized.
- Keep personal copies of employment records you are legitimately entitled to retain, such as paystubs, tax forms, benefit information, retirement-plan contacts and your own employment agreements.
- Think through anything in daily life that depends on company property: vehicle, phone, phone number, laptop, email, expense card or home-office equipment.
- Know how you would get home and how you would handle immediate loss of access if the company ends your active employment that day.

> **Do not take company information with you.**
>
> Customer lists, pricing, employee information, internal emails, company presentations, proprietary files, databases and other company information belong to the organization. Do not forward, download or copy material simply because you may lose access after resigning.

If today becomes your last day

Questions worth asking before you leave

- ☐ What happens to the planned notice period and final pay?
- ☐ When does current medical coverage end, and how will continuation information be provided?
- ☐ How is unused PTO handled, if applicable?
- ☐ How should outstanding expenses or reimbursements be submitted?
- ☐ What company property needs to be returned, and how?
- ☐ Who should I contact later for payroll, tax, benefits or retirement questions?

Be clear, brief and professional.

You do not need to build a case against your current employer in order to leave. You have made a career decision. Communicate it directly, show respect for the relationship and focus on the transition.

Tell the appropriate leader first

In most situations, your direct manager should hear the news from you before a broad announcement. If company policy or a particular reporting structure requires something different, follow that process.

> **A simple resignation can be enough**
>
> "I wanted to let you know that I have accepted another opportunity and have decided to move forward with it. This was a thoughtful decision, and I am grateful for my time here. I want to handle the transition professionally. Based on my planned notice, my final day would be [date]."

You do not need to litigate the past

- Be truthful without turning the conversation into an inventory of every frustration.
- Do not make promises about staying if you have already decided to leave.
- Do not use the resignation conversation to force a negotiation unless you are genuinely open to remaining.
- Expect emotion. A manager can be disappointed and still respect the decision.
- If asked why you are leaving, explain the career decision at the level of detail you are comfortable sharing.

Finish well if you are given the opportunity

Document important work, communicate status, transfer knowledge, return company property and remain engaged through the actual departure. The last two weeks are part of your professional reputation too.

> **Leaving well does not require apologizing for leaving.**
>
> You can be grateful for an organization, care about the people and still decide that another opportunity is the right next move.

Go back to the decision before reacting.

A counteroffer is not automatically good or bad. It is new information. Evaluate it with the same discipline you used to evaluate the opportunity you already accepted.

A counteroffer may not look like “more money”

Compensation Higher base, retention bonus, equity, special incentive or guaranteed payment.	**Scope** A promotion, larger team, new responsibilities or promised advancement.
Reporting A different manager, direct access to leadership or a structural change.	**Flexibility** Remote work, reduced travel, schedule changes or location accommodations.
Future promise “Give us six months.” “The promotion is coming.” “We will fix the structure.”	**Recognition** Sudden attention, praise or urgency that was not present before you resigned.

Ask two questions first

> **What changed - and what did not?**
>
> If compensation was truly the primary reason you were looking and it has materially changed, that matters. If your original reasons involved leadership, scope, advancement, culture, travel, authority or stability, more money may not solve them.

Run the counteroffer through your original criteria

- What is specifically different, and is the change documented, approved and effective?
- Does it solve the reason I became open to another role?
- What new expectations or perceptions come with staying after I resigned?
- Could this be solving the company's transition problem more than my long-term career problem?
- If both options paid exactly the same, which would I choose?

> **A counteroffer can buy the company time, too.**
>
> A counteroffer can be a genuine effort to retain you. It can also give the organization time to transfer knowledge, stabilize the team or find a replacement. You may still be separated later. Once you resign, do not assume the relationship or the perception of your long-term commitment simply resets.
>
> **Do not use an outside offer as a negotiating tactic unless you are prepared to leave.**
>
> An employer may simply accept your resignation. If you stay after using another offer as leverage, trust can change on both sides - including with the organization whose offer you accepted. Use an offer as leverage only if you can live with either outcome.

Know what you may be leaving behind.

A good career move can still have short-term financial consequences. Understand them before resignation so they are part of the decision rather than a surprise after it.

Review the timing of money you may have earned or may be close to earning

- Bonus eligibility and payment dates.
- Commissions already earned or still subject to calculation, collection or employment-status requirements.
- Unvested equity, options, restricted stock or deferred compensation.
- Retirement-plan vesting milestones.
- Unused PTO or other accrued leave.
- Sign-on, tuition, relocation or other payments that could be subject to repayment or clawback provisions.

Plan for the benefits and payroll transition

- When does current health coverage end?
- When does the new employer's coverage begin?
- What continuation options are available if there is a gap?
- What happens to an HSA, FSA or other benefit accounts?
- When will your first paycheck from the new employer actually arrive?
- What retirement-plan information should you retain for later rollover or transfer decisions?

> **Timing matters.**
>
> A person can move directly from one employer to another and still experience a longer-than-usual gap between payroll deposits or a temporary benefits gap. Understand the calendar, not just the annual numbers.

Do not sign unexpected documents under pressure

If your employer presents a separation agreement, release, new restrictive covenant or another material document during the resignation process, you can ask what it is and whether you have time to review it. Significant legal or financial questions may warrant advice from an appropriate professional. TRX Search cannot provide legal, tax or benefits advice.

Stay connected without living in the transition.

Once you have accepted and resigned, there may be a strange period where one role is ending and the next has not yet begun. Use that time to close things responsibly and keep the new relationship warm.

Close other interview processes

If you have decided to move forward, withdraw from other active processes professionally rather than disappearing. Thank people for their time and let them know you accepted another opportunity. You may encounter those people again.

Keep the new employer informed

- Complete paperwork, screenings and requested information promptly.
- Confirm any travel, relocation or equipment details that need lead time.
- Communicate if your availability changes because your current employer releases you early or requests a different transition.
- If a material fact changes on the new-employer side - start date, reporting relationship, acquisition, leadership change or other significant information - ask questions before making assumptions.

Be thoughtful about public announcements

You do not need to update LinkedIn the minute you accept. Get through the resignation, confirm the transition and coordinate with the new employer when appropriate. Be especially careful about contacting customers, vendors or colleagues if contractual, confidentiality or competitive obligations could apply.

Consider a small reset if circumstances allow

After a long tenure or demanding search, even a few days between jobs can be useful for personal appointments, family time, sleep, travel logistics and mentally closing one chapter before starting another. It is not always possible, but it is worth considering before the start date is finalized.

> **The emotional middle is normal.**
> Leaving something known for something unknown can create doubt after the decision becomes real. Discomfort is not the same thing as evidence that the decision was wrong. Revisit the facts and your original criteria. Evaluate genuinely new information - not every wave of transition anxiety.

Onboarding starts before your first morning.

A strong onboarding process begins before Day One, but not every organization has a sophisticated system. You can reduce uncertainty by asking practical questions and preparing for what you already know.

Before you start, you should ideally understand

Arrival Where to go, when to arrive or how to log in, parking/security and who will meet you.	**Schedule** What the first day or first few days generally look like and which meetings are already planned.
Technology Laptop, phone, accounts, systems access, authentication and any equipment being shipped.	**Environment** Dress expectations, plant or jobsite requirements, PPE, travel or other practical norms.
Paperwork Employment forms, benefits enrollment, screening steps and anything still outstanding.	**Preparation** Any organizational material, product information or background the company recommends reviewing in advance.

> **A useful pre-start question**
> “Is there anything you would recommend I review or prepare before my first day, and what should I expect that first morning?”

Do not overinterpret imperfect onboarding

A smaller, growing or highly entrepreneurial organization may not have a polished preboarding process. That is information about the environment, but it is not automatically a verdict on the opportunity. Ask the questions you need answered and observe how the organization responds.

Prepare the practical side of the first morning

- Route, parking, arrival time or remote-login instructions.
- Contact information for someone you can reach if something goes wrong.
- Notebook or a reliable way to capture names, systems, acronyms and follow-up questions.
- Any identification, employment documentation, PPE or equipment you were told to bring.

You were already hired. Day One is not another interview.

The instinct to prove yourself immediately is understandable, especially in a senior role. Your first job is to begin understanding the environment well enough that future decisions are based on more than first impressions.

Listen more than you diagnose

You may recognize problems quickly. You do not yet know the history behind them, what has already been tried, which constraints are real or how relationships shape the way work gets done.

> **Different is not automatically wrong.**
>
> Capture observations. Ask why. Learn the context. An inefficient-looking process can have history, constraints or trade-offs you cannot see on Day One.

Use the first day to orient yourself

- Learn names, roles and how the people you meet connect to your work.
- Ask your manager what matters first and what they want you focused on initially.
- Understand the basic communication rhythm: email, Teams/Slack, operating meetings, dashboards, plant meetings or informal check-ins.
- Get practical questions answered: systems access, payroll, expenses, travel, benefits, calendar norms and administrative processes.
- Notice language, acronyms, customer references and recurring issues without feeling pressure to understand everything immediately.

Avoid the comparison reflex

“At my old company we…” may be true and occasionally useful, but overusing it can sound like judgment before you understand the new organization. Bring your experience with you. Do not force the old company’s operating model onto the new one before you know why this one works the way it does.

> **Starting well does not require arriving with all the answers.**
>
> It requires asking useful questions, building credibility and learning enough about the environment that your judgment has context.

Build a map before you start redesigning the terrain.

The first week is less about producing a formal plan and more about understanding the people, business, role and operating rhythm you have joined.

Build four maps

People Who knows what? Who influences decisions? Who will your success depend on? Where are the key cross-functional relationships?	**Business** How does the company make money? What do customers value? Where are the current pressures, constraints and priorities?
Role What were you actually hired to improve, protect, build or change? What is urgent versus merely visible?	**Rhythm** Which meetings, metrics, reports, systems and informal conversations drive decisions and execution?

Questions worth having with your manager

- What do you most want me to understand before I start changing anything?
- What is the most important problem or opportunity you want me focused on first?
- Who are the people and relationships I should prioritize?
- What has already been tried in this area?
- Where do you want me to move quickly, and where should I spend more time learning?
- How do you prefer to communicate, and how should I keep you informed?

Keep a short list of open questions

New employees are exposed to more information than they can absorb at once. Write down what you do not understand and revisit it as context accumulates. The question that seems confusing on Tuesday may make complete sense by Friday.

> **The goal of the first week is not to prove that the company made the right hire.**
> They already made the hire. Your job now is to begin turning the decision into a successful working relationship.

FINAL THOUGHT

Close one chapter well. Enter the next one awake.

Career transitions carry more emotion and logistics than most offer letters reveal. You may feel excitement, relief, guilt, uncertainty, loyalty, fear and momentum at different points - sometimes on the same day.

The objective is not to remove emotion from the transition. It is to keep emotion from replacing evaluation when a decision needs to be made.

> **When something changes, ask: Is this new information - or a new feeling?**
>
> New information deserves evaluation. A materially changed counteroffer, start date, reporting relationship or employment condition may matter. A difficult goodbye, a nervous first morning or the sudden reality of leaving a familiar environment may feel significant without changing the underlying facts.

A few principles worth carrying with you

- Understand the offer before you resign.
- Be prepared for the notice period to end immediately.
- Protect company information and your own professional reputation.
- Evaluate counteroffers against why you were looking - and remember that resignation can change the relationship. Never use an outside offer as leverage unless you are prepared to leave.
- Ask practical questions about pay, benefits, documents and timing before they become emergencies.
- Keep the new employer informed when something material changes.
- Use Day One to orient and the first week to understand before you diagnose.

> **Leaving well does not require apologizing for leaving. Starting well does not require arriving with all the answers.**
>
> A thoughtful transition protects relationships, reduces avoidable surprises and gives you a better chance to begin the new role focused on the work rather than the turbulence of getting there.

Related TRX Search candidate resources

Career Move Worksheet - clarify why you are looking and what the next right role needs to provide.

Offer Decision Worksheet - evaluate the complete opportunity before reacting to the offer.

Interview Preparation Guide and Candidate Toolbox - additional resources for important career conversations.

This guide provides general career-transition information only. Employment law, benefits, compensation, restrictive covenants, taxes and separation requirements vary by employer, agreement and jurisdiction. Seek appropriate legal, tax, financial or benefits advice when a decision requires it.