



:: Sunanda Poduwal

Karan Sehgal chose to throw caution to the wind and 'typed' his mind in his resignation letter to his first employer, a hospitality giant. He wanted to give an honest opinion on the work culture and the boss. The next resignation letter, to a media and marketing services company, was also an honest one, albeit on the sweet side. "I know I was good at what I did and hence the honesty in my letter to the hotel. But my last stint was great and I didn't feel like slandering anybody," says the 26-year-old who's currently a sales manager with an FMCG giant. And to bid adieu with panache, he mailed a funny and sentimental exit letter to his friends and team members on their official ids. "That's the perfect mix," he believes.

The difference between a resignation and an exit letter is the person(s) you address it to and the level of formality. The former is the official letter you tender to your reporting manager. The witty, sad, funny and/or grateful email to your colleagues – an unsaid rule these days – is exit letter.

Don't Leave a Negative Mark

Experts say the perfect resignation letter should indicate all the positives that an employee experienced. "This is not the forum to vent," says Ronesh Puri, CEO of Executive Access, a headhunting firm. He says almost 40-50% don't take the exit process seriously and say too much in the resignation and exit letter. For the sake of a chance to come back to the organisation at a better position, avoid sending negative signals.

One may have issues with the functioning of the organisation or the team, "how-

Fare Well in Your Farewell Letter

You have decided to move on. But before you join the new job, leave your current company on the right note. Here's how a good-bye letter can help. And how to write one that will make sure you are sorely missed

The bigger challenge is to come up with the perfect good-bye letter for colleagues and friends. Sehgal spent a night writing the 'perfect mix'. Priyanka Arora, a web content analyst, tried to put in all her feelings but ended up writing a single paragraph thanking everyone. "I wrote two pages. But I feared I'd go overboard and decided to write a safe, small one," she says.

In most cases, employees thank the people they worked with in the organisation and provide alternate contact details. But for some, the prospect of making a grand exit with that perfect exit letter is a tempting idea. After all, you would want to show off some of that eloquence or wit.

The Right Goodbye

"Ours is an industry buzzing with creative ideas. Our employees use creative ways to craft letters – a touching note, a poem or a comical take on everyone and everything," says Roopa Badrinath, group head HR, Rediffusion Y&R, an advertising agency. Badrinath says sometimes even resignation letters are written in similar fashion, which makes it difficult for her to comprehend the intent to resign.

A few aspire to go higher on the novelty meter and consequently, higher on the recall meter. "One colleague sent a link of a farewell video talking about his high and low moments with the company. We will always remember that for being so novel," says Shuchi Nijhawan, senior manager, HR at Eka Software Solutions.

A word of caution though. You'd love to put in a dash of humour but the intent should be to make people laugh and not snigger. Don't pick on colleagues or crack personal jokes. Keep the humour bit healthy and don't indulge in excessive wisecracking. "I have come across a couple of sarcastically funny exit mails. It becomes evident that the person is immature. The experienced and sensible employees know that unpleasant experiences are part of the job and they prefer to move on by forgiving and forgetting," says Sudhanshu Pandit, HR director at Symantec India, a cyber security solutions company.

Understandably, exit letters appear like an extremely tricky affair. You might be torn between being honest, diplomatic, sweet or a mix of it all. But the safest way is to follow every HR manager's diktat: exit with utmost grace and dignity. Go as if you might come back; you wouldn't want to burn the bridges. ■

LEAVING ON THE RIGHT NOTE

TO THE BOSS

Don'ts

- Indulge in blame game
- Write too much or too little
- Address it to someone other than your line manager; follow protocol

Dos

- Convey the reason behind quitting
- Put in words about how working with the organisation benefited you
- Say that you'll be a good ambassador and wish the organisation well

TO COLLEAGUES

Don'ts

- Be sarcastic and dry
- Pick on people in the organisation
- Send it to all & sundry; keep it to the people you have interacted with

Dos

- Emphasise what you have learnt
- Keep the tone of the letter light and fluffy
- Take names and how they made your job easier; nothing works like flattery

ever, it is best to have these discussions in person with the human resource department rather than put them down in a mail and leaving a negative remark", says Sangeeta Malkhede, director, (HR), CSS Corp, an information and technology services company. She's also seen bare-minimum resignation letters that, she believes, appear rather cold and callous.

What if a company sees high attrition rates? "Most don't leave the organisation; they leave their managers. We understand from our experience, where the negativity is coming from. There are some who start blaming the system but we don't really make a fuss," says Rajendra Ghag, execu-

tive vice-president, HR and administration, HDFC Life. The insurance company has almost 9,000 frontline officers. Of these, almost 80% leave every year which means Ghag gets an average of 20 resignation letters everyday.

Drafting a resignation letter is a significant challenge if you are unsure of what you want to convey. But if you want the process to be as easy as possible, a discussion with your manager followed by a curt letter is considered enough, though HR managers would love to read more. Add a bit about what you learnt and how you would always be an ambassador of the company. The letter should be like a parting handshake.