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Why Counteroffers Are Lose-Lose Propositions

By R.Gaines Baty

Before accepting a counteroffer from your employer, consider whether you'll be the winner or the loser in this employment maneuver.

Although no statistics are available, many employees who give notice are receiving counteroffers from their current companies to encourage them to stay. These proposals can include one or more of the following:

- A pay increase.
- A promotion and/or added responsibility.
- A promise of a future raise, promotion or other incentive.
- The creation of a new, more appealing reporting structure or organization.

An employer may accompany its offer with an added motivator, such as a special call or visit from the vice president or CEO and other flattering gestures. Or it may try to manipulate a departing employee by heaping on a sense of false guilt.

The Prevailing View

Before you succumb to a tempting counter-offer, consider these universal truths:

- Any situation in which an employee is forced to get an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion or better working conditions, is suspect.
- No matter what the company says when making it's making a counter-offer, you will always be considered 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.
- Counter-offers are usually nothing more than stall devices to give your employer time to replace you.
- Your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. Conditions are just made a bit more tolerable in the short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you.
- Counter-offers are only made in response to a threat to quit every time you deserve better working conditions?
- Decent and well-managed companies don't make counter-offers ... EVER! Their policies are fair and equitable. They will not be subjected to "counter-offer coercion" or what they perceive as blackmail.

If the urge to accept a counter-offer hits you, keep on cleaning out your desk as you count your blessings.