

## Counteroffers: Accept for right reasons

***The counteroffer from your current employer might be great, but now your loyalty's in question.***

**By Grant Gross**

If your company's counteroffer beats the deal from a new company wooing you, think carefully before grabbing the counter. You might make a blot on your future.

As an employee retention technique, tech companies commonly try to one-up a job offer from a potential employer, says Rob Laseak, staffing manager of [Rapid5 Networks](#), a San Jose-based voice/data network provider.

Smart techies will formulate a response to a counteroffer ahead of time based on a clear-eyed appraisal of their company's past performance and their own career goals.

A decade ago, conventional wisdom held that only a fool would accept a counteroffer, says Laseak. Recruiters once believed that employees who take a counteroffer are gone within six months – sometimes by choice, sometimes not.

Today, your response should be less knee-jerk, more based on a realistic assessment of work issues. Before announcing your job switch, you should be "prepared to stick by your decision before the counteroffer," says Laseak.

### **Negotiate what can be fixed.**

"Are the reasons you're changing jobs fixable? Are you running from something, or are you running to something?" asks Laseak. If so, sit down with a superior *before* you start looking for a new job, to see if some issues are negotiable.

### **Only a fool would accept a counteroffer, according to conventional wisdom.**

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After the counteroffer, you *could* also negotiate working conditions or other issues, Laseak says. But it's better to do so before you announce you're leaving.

"A lot of people who accept counteroffers say, 'Yeah, I got more money, but it's the same old thing,' " Laseak says. "If you think you can fix those things that are bugging you, try to fix them. If you can't get those things corrected, that's your decision on the

### **Evaluate your options.**

[Anne Wolfinger](#), a Montana career coach and author of *The Quick Internet Guide to Career and Education Information* (JIST Works, 2000), recommends another strategy.

Job seekers should make a list of the positives and negatives at each company while weighing a counteroffer. "It's really important to ask yourself, 'Do I really want to stay?' " she says. "Look at the whole work situation, not just the dollar amount."