



Counter-Offer Acceptance

A raise won't permanently cushion thorns in the nest.

EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER



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Counter-offer Acceptance: Road to Career Ruin

A Raise Won't Permanently Cushion Thorns in the Nest

By Paul Hanson

Mathew Henry, the 17th-century writer said, "Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colors that are but skin deep." The same can be said for counter-offers, those magnetic enticements designed to lure you back into the nest after you've decided it's time to fly away.

The litany of horror stories I have come across in my years as an executive recruiter, consultant and publisher, provided a litmus test that clearly indicates counter-offers should never be accepted... EVER!

I define a counter-offer simply as an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intention to take another job. We're not talking about those instances when you received an offer but don't tell your boss. Nor are we discussing offers that you never intended to take, yet tell your employer about anyway as a "they-want-me-but-I'm-staying-with-you" ploy.

These are merely astute positioning tactics you may choose to use to reinforce your worth by letting your boss know you have other options. Mention of a true counter-offer, however, carries an actual threat to quit.

Interviews with employers who make counter-offers, and employees who accept them, have shown that as tempting as they may be, acceptance may cause career suicide. During the past 20 years, I have seen only isolated incidents in which an accepted counter-offer has benefited the employee. Consider the problem in its proper perspective.



What really goes through a boss's mind when someone quits?

"This couldn't be happening at a worse time."

"This is one of my best people. If I let him quit now, it'll wreak havoc on the morale of the department."

"I've already got one opening in my department. I don't need another right now."

"This will probably screw up the entire vacation schedule."

"I'm working as hard as I can, and I don't need to do his work too."



"If I lose another good employee, the company might decide to lose me too."

"My review is coming up and this will make me look bad."

"Maybe I can keep him on until I find a suitable replacement."

What will the boss say to keep you in the nest? Some of these comments are common.

"I'm really shocked. I thought you were as happy with us as we are with you. Let's discuss it before you make your final decision."

"Aw gee, I've been meaning to tell you about the great plans we have for you, but it's been confidential until now."

"The V.P. has you in mind for some exciting and expanding responsibilities."

"Your raise was scheduled to go into effect next quarter, but we'll make it effective immediately."

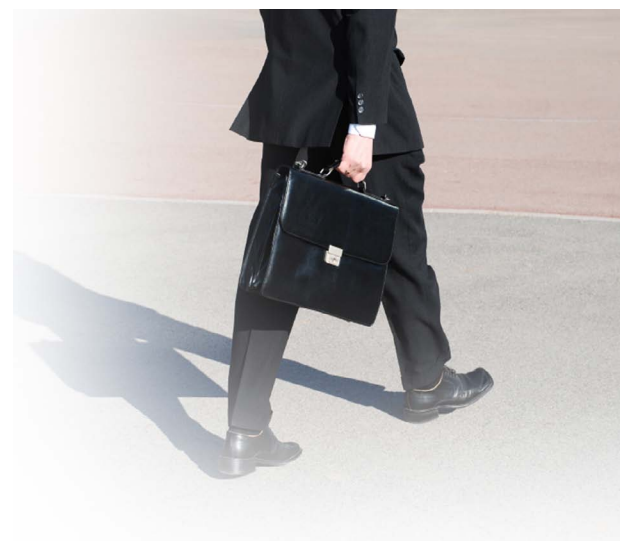
"You're going to work for who?"

Let's face it. When someone quits, it's a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you're really incompetent or a destructive thorn in his side, the boss might look bad by "allowing" you to go. His gut reaction is to do what has to be done to keep you from leaving until he's ready. That's human nature. Unfortunately, it's also human nature to want to stay unless

your work life is abject misery. Career changes, like all ventures into the unknown, are tough. That's why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons. 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 condition, is suspect.
- No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, 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 in.
- Counter-offers are only made in, response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten 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.



ABOUT PATRICK ROPELLA



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Ropella, with 25 years experience, is the leading executive search and consulting firm specializing in the chemical, consumer products, technology and energy industries.

We help many of the world's largest companies find, hire, develop and retain their most important people. We recruit globally in sales, marketing, R&D, and manufacturing, from middle management to the most senior executive levels. At Ropella, not only do we find great leaders, we can also help you build a stronger, more competitive, and more innovative team with our Leadership and Organizational Improvement consulting services.

Nothing is more important to your company's ability to create value than the right blend of talent. Call us today and put our people and our process to work for you.

Having dedicated his career to helping companies across the globe in sourcing, marketing to, assessing, recruiting, on-boarding, retaining, training and transforming top talent, Patrick Ropella has a global perspective on Executive Search and Talent Management.

He has worked across all roles and functions, cascading from the top levels of management to also placing apprentices coming straight out of college. Over the past 20+ years he has seen many individuals he's personally assisted make career transitions, become well trained leaders, join the C-suite at many of the world's largest corporations.

His experience within the global chemical industry as a dominant talent management leader allowed his firm, Ropella Group, to grow to the leading position it now holds with a wide variety of corporate clients with the chemical industry, transition to serving major consumer product companies, energy companies, Nano, Bio and other high technology companies.

Patrick has traveled extensively, meeting with middle level to C-level executives at the top 100 largest chemical and consumer product companies in the world, branding the "Ropella" name globally. He has successfully placed hundreds of senior level executives with top name companies, including but not limited to: DOW, DuPont, Exxon, Georgia Pacific, SONY, Anderson Windows, GE-Silicone, P&G, Clorox, Pfizer, BASF, PPG, Monsanto, Revlon, Baxter Labs, Sealy Mattress, Ciba Geigy, Johnson & Johnson, Shell, Sherwin Williams Paints, New Balance Tennis Shoes, and many more.

Patrick has written for a wide variety of trade publications, newspapers and business journals on subjects related to the topics covered in The Right Hire. His writings have also been published in Germany, Italy, Latin America and Asia.

Patrick and Robbie reside in Milton, FL. with sons Richard and Robert nearby.

AUTHOR OF

- ▶ The Right Hire
- ▶ The Right Fit
- ▶ The Right Team
- ▶ Over 50 published articles



Patrick Ropella's **SMART Talent Management System** focuses on training Human Resource leaders and Hiring Managers based on the core Talent Management topics of:

Sourcing, **M**arketing, **A**ssessing, **R**ecruiting, **R**etention, **T**raining, and **T**ransformation.