

Think twice before you resign

By  Auguste (Gusti) Coetzer, issued by Auguste Coetzer Executive Recruitment

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The labour court gave a watershed ruling in the case between Mr Mohlwaadibona vs Dr JS Moroka Municipality. Case number J718/21 - 18 March 2022.



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Some critical questions in the labour court were what is the effect of resignation on the employment relationship and if the resignation could be unilaterally withdrawn and the employee automatically reinstated.

The ruling found that the contractual relationship between the employee and the employer ended when the employee tendered their resignation. The only way the employee could be reinstated was to enter into a new employment contract.

This leads to the question, why resign in the first place?

There are clear reasons why you should not resign from an employer in the current economic downturn and extremely high inflation, especially if you don't have any savings to cover future living expenses in the short and medium-term.

It would be best if you only left when you have a clear, workable plan for the future. This refers to all levels of employees and executives.

The grass is never greener on the other side and one can expect that companies will experience disruptions during these rough economic times. Think about the psychosocial factors that will impact your quality of life and never resign on the spur of the moment because of an emotional outburst.

One of the primary reasons why you should stick to a challenging working environment is to build a track record on your resume. Being a few months in a position and then leaving will not enhance your professional profile. Sometimes one needs to stick around to build a more compelling skillset. Get the experience you require before resigning.

Research pointed out that most employees resigned for another position to earn more money.

Other popular motivations include:

- Promotion or growth opportunities.
- A role that better fits competencies and interests.
- A better work environment.
- A better work-life balance.
- Better benefits like healthcare for retirement.
- Dissatisfaction with the current role and superior.

When should you resign?

Headhunters survive by replacing executives that have resigned or have to "convince" preferred shortlisted candidates to consider another opportunity.

The most acceptable reason to resign is if you find a new position that fits your passion and work philosophy and your new employer's value system.

Another acceptable reason to resign is to advance your career and your personal development or if you will excel in your job responsibilities. Listen to your gut feelings.

You are asked to execute something unethical. Before you resign, in this instance, explore all reasonable avenues to remain in your position whilst standing up for the truth. It is sometimes better to get fired, but at least you can look yourself in the mirror the following day. Most future employers will emphasise with you in this instance.

Resigning to improve your formal qualifications, i.e. completing a reputable MBA, could stand you in good stead.

Illness, coupled with a complex work environment, are furthermore legitimate motivations to resign. Extensive travelling requirements with little family time could also be an acceptable reason.

You have decided to resign. What now?

Make sure that you do this gracefully and leave on good terms. It is very wise not to alienate your current employer. Avoid closing doors unnecessary as you will require a work-related reference from previous superiors.

When resigning, always emphasise the positives about your tenure within the organisation. Remember to return all company property and tie up all loose ends. Give appropriate notice and, as far as possible, work your notice period. Avoid being overenthusiastic, providing details about why you are resigning.

Good luck. The future is in your hands!

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ABOUT AUGUSTE (GUSTI) COETZER

Operating since 1990, Auguste (Gusti) Coetzer is the doyenne of executive search in the Sub-Saharan Africa recruitment industry and is the founder and CEO of People Power Placements SA (Pty) Ltd, trading as Auguste Coetzer Executive Recruitment.

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