

FUTURE @ WORK

THE RULES



HOW TO... LEAVE A JOB GRACEFULLY

- ▶ **Be certain** – Before handing in your notice, make sure you are 100% positive that you want to resign. It's unlikely you'll be welcomed back with open arms should you change your mind
- ▶ **Tell them in time** – Your notice period should be in your contract of employment – aim to tell your employer you are leaving well within this limit (anything from a day to six months)
- ▶ **Don't rant** – Resist the temptation to badmouth your company or manager when explaining why you are leaving, but don't be afraid to bring up the general issues that have made you want to leave – promotion prospects, pay, culture
- ▶ **Get it in writing** – Prepare a short resignation letter outlining your formal resignation, your period of notice and leaving date as agreed with your manager
- ▶ **Consider counter offers** – If your employer offers to address issues like location, pay or training, consider them seriously. However, if you are leaving because of more general dissatisfaction, it's unlikely that any counter offers made by your employer will change your mind
- ▶ **Don't burn bridges** – Leaving in a blaze of glory after telling everyone exactly what you think of them may be satisfying, but could damage your career in the long run. Be polite, helpful and aid a smooth handover



A shifting and uneven future

With the job for life long gone, many consumer and organisational models have failed to keep pace with change. **Robert Terry** asks how they can adapt



Author William Gibson once wrote that the future was already here, but unevenly distributed. Not just a clever remark, but an astute one. In a world where jobs for life have disappeared, and we're transient in most of our working lives, many industries – not just pensions, but insurance, mortgages and many more – are yet to catch up.

Increased dependence on technology and computerisation can set processes in the digital equivalent of stone. Our relationship with technology deserves sterner scrutiny. Cloud computing tends to impose standardisation as part of its economic model: easily distributed online applications are cheaper and quicker to purchase and roll out where they don't offer limitless scope for customisation. They may be flexible in their own terms (host anywhere, access on the move), but not necessarily in ours. When something is announced as 'flexible', we should always ask 'for whom?'

FLEETING TIES

As work becomes more short-term and serial than long-term and monogamous, our individual relationships to organisations change in other ways.

Take mobile phones. A Top10.com survey suggests 55% of us could save money on another tariff and 46% are confused by tariffs generally. It's tempting to say that the answer is already at hand: pay-as-you-go. Mobile telephony epitomises a problem and a solution of our age: contracts may bring benefits (security, special deals), but a high-use tariff is obsolete if our employment becomes unexpectedly 'flexible'. Pay-as-you-go may not provide guaranteed income for the telco, but it's a truly flexible option for the customer.

Yet 'pay-as-you-go' isn't always an option in other contractual relationships. As one set of organisations lock us into buying, the organisations we work for are looking to lock us out of being paid for indefinitely. While human lives seek narratives, working lives seek something more episodic.

Organisations need to shake off the remnants of the industrial age. As we become more nomadic, it's not just housing, mortgages, transport and urban planning that must adjust. In a world where we will 'roam' more, our favoured destinations will not be deserts but oases. There's no reason this won't impact on work as much as consumption. Setting us free to work for

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many organisations over time – although we may phrase it less positively – means we will choose where we work. If they abolish a guarantee of the quantity or duration of work, employers may need to keep a more watchful eye on quality.

Organisations and the broader public work in a complex dance, where neither truly leads. Our patterns of working practice change as organisations adopt new processes or models. But our preferences and patterns of availability as 'labour' – as well as our patterns of purchasing – change in response.

Markets and their influences move and shift continuously like sand dunes, so the structures we build on top need to be designed for moving ground.

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