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10 things you should not do on your last day at work



Photo: [Nate Brelsford](#)

The last day at any [job](#) can bring up a lot of [feelings](#)—both good and bad—and it is tempting to act out on any revenge fantasies that you may have. Unless you plan on going rogue during the course of your career, there are things you generally do not want to do when you are leaving a job.

1. Don't air your grievances. Even if you are leaving a job that you hate, don't use your last day to [tell](#) everyone who will [listen](#) about how miserable you were—not even during your exit [interview](#). And whatever you do, refrain from a mass broadcast of your ill will.

"I've worked at places where someone took the liberty of sending out an office wide or company wide [e-mail](#) publishing their grievances. That is absolutely the worst thing to do because any reasonable person is going to read the e-mail and think it is more of a reflection on the individual as opposed to the company," said Kevin Murray, Director of Recruiting at [Vistaprint](#). "Try to maintain the same level of professionalism leaving the company as you used getting into the company."

2. Don't have sticky fingers. "Don't try to take confidential information with you or [steal](#) office supplies. It isn't worth the [message](#) this sends," said Sharon Blaivas, Founder of [shakeupmyresume.com](#). "These behaviors will turn even a previously positive impression sour."

3. Don't forget that the business world is a small world. "With [technology](#), the world is a much smaller place today and it's easier for your [reputation](#) to follow you. Also, if you work in a niche industry, you have to keep in mind that you will probably run into your former coworkers in the future," said Rahul D. Yodh, Partner at [Link Legal Search Group](#). "In fact, your new [employer](#) could end up merging or acquiring your old employer and you may end up having to work with your former coworkers again. Most importantly, you may need a reference at some point in the future and it will be harder to attain if you act out on your last day at work."

4. Don't leave messes behind. Clean up your workspace as well as your projects before you leave a company.

5. Don't sabotage the company. Although revenge may be sweet, this psychological sugar rush is only temporary. It's best to leave revenge fantasies in your [dreams](#).

"If you do something to sabotage a company, it shows no class and you'll be remembered for it," said Career Counselor Anne Headley. "The fun you could have in the moment by deleting or shredding files is not worth the damage to your reputation."

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6. Don't blow off your last day at work. Although it may be tempting to pull a [Ferris Bueller](#) on your last day at work, it's more professional to just go to the office to tie up loose ends and say your good-byes to everyone. Not coming in will just leave a bad impression with your colleagues.

7. Don't ruin your reputation. Don't do anything that will follow you around for the rest of your career. "It can take years to build credibility, [trust](#), and professional reputation—and seconds to lose it," said legal professional Julia Kelly Hoey. "You don't want to sabotage your reputation and alienate former colleagues—as well as potential references and job search sources by leaving on a negative note."

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8. Don't pester your colleagues for help. "If your former coworkers have offered to provide you with assistance in finding your next job, stay in touch but don't act desperate," said Hoey.

9. Don't drown your sorrows in retail therapy. If you have lost your job, it may be tempting to head straight to the mall on your last day to blow off some steam. Instead of wasting that cash on things you don't need, you'll feel much better in the long run by volunteering—which will keep you occupied while you help others.

10. Don't disconnect from the job. "It is best when leaving a position to always work out your notice with 110% effort. Often people tend to mentally check out when they submit their notice to terminate their employment," said Dallas Teague Snider, Founder of [Make Your Best Impression](#). "Understand that while you are still on the clock of the employer, you should always honor that commitment. When one mentally checks out, they are in essence stealing from their employer."

This article originally appeared on my [Workplace Communication Examiner](#) page on July 26, 2009.

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Posted by Kenya McCullum at December 31, 2010 

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