

**Good-bye girl!**  
Tempting as it may be to make a scene when you resign, wait until you're home to celebrate.

## The right way to quit your job

Five ways to leave 'em so they'll still love you By Michele Meyer

At one time or another, we've all fantasized about resigning, playing out every satisfying detail down to cartwheeling out the door. Some people, like Roxanne Nelson, 43, who lives in Seattle, have acted out the dream. "Just before riding the elevator down for the last time at my nursing job, I shouted, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, I'm free at last!'" she confesses. Was her outburst satisfying? Hell, yes. Was it a smart thing

to do? "Let's just say it's a good thing I went into a new line of work and that my career took off," Nelson says.

When it comes to long-term career prospects, your last impression is more crucial than your first. "An ugly departure can override the great work you've done, robbing you of a good reference," says Libby Gill, author of *Traveling Hopefully: How to Lose Your Family Baggage and Jumpstart Your Life* (St. Martin's Press). Turn the page to learn how to make a graceful exit. >>

# happiness update

## >>> Save the sour grapes.

You may think it's helpful to spell out exactly why you're leaving, but keep mum. "You'll only seem bitter," says Karyl Innis, CEO of The Innis Company, a career-management firm in Dallas. "Besides, people tend to discount the views of



Make it easy for your replacement: Leave a paper trail.

departing employees who haven't spoken up previously."

**Resign in person.** "Go into your boss's office with your letter of resignation when she's alone," Innis suggests. "Say that you have something important to discuss, then hand her the letter and tell her what's in it—that you're resigning and when your last day will be." Give at least two weeks' notice.

**Don't put anything negative in an e-mail message.** It's too easy for someone to forward—and do you really want to risk having your grievances wind up in the CEO's inbox?

**Tie up loose ends.** Write a memo explaining the status of your projects and anything your boss may need to know. Be sure to leave your contact information, Gill says.

**Express thanks.** Whatever your reason for leaving, keep your farewells cordial. If you have nothing positive to say, try, "I learned a lot here" or "Thanks for the opportunity. This is a terrific company." After all, your old boss may know your new one. And who can tell? You might come back one day!

**62% of people are addicted** to checking work messages at home and when they're on vacation.