



Counteroffers

What Every Hiring Manager Should Know

When you've found the right candidate, the last thing you want is to lose them to a counteroffer.

Counteroffers are a reality in today's market, but with the right preparation and approach, you can minimize the risk and help your candidate feel confident in their decision to join your team.

This guide is designed to help you prepare before presenting an offer and to manage the process effectively if a counteroffer does occur.

Anticipate the Possibility

Counteroffers are most disruptive when they come as a surprise. It helps to be prepared for the likely scenarios when a candidate gives notice:

- Their resignation is accepted without issue.
- They are walked out immediately.
- Their employer makes a counteroffer.

Discussing these possibilities in advance helps you prepare for each outcome.

Reinforce the Candidate's Motivators

Counteroffers often focus on money. To prevent them from being persuasive, keep attention on the reasons the candidate began their search in the first place:

- Growth opportunities.
- Culture and leadership fit.
- Desire for new challenges or greater impact.
- Career advancement and long-term potential.

Emphasize these motivators when you extend your offer and throughout the transition period.

Watch for Risk Factors Early

Some candidates are more likely to receive or accept counteroffers. Be especially mindful if:

- They have been with their employer for a long time and feel strong loyalty.
- They have highly desirable skills that are in short supply.
- They express hesitation about leaving or give vague answers about start dates.

Identifying these risk factors early makes it easier to prepare and respond.

Stay Engaged During the Notice Period

The time between acceptance and start date is critical. Candidates are most vulnerable to counteroffers during this window. You can help by:

- Scheduling regular check-ins to maintain communication.
- Asking how they expect their manager will respond and how they plan to handle it.
- Reinforcing excitement about their new role and what lies ahead.

This ongoing support reduces uncertainty and strengthens their commitment.



Time Your Offer Carefully

The timing of your offer can make a difference:

- Make offers early in the week so the candidate has time to process and discuss with family. Offers made on a Friday give their current employer the entire weekend to prepare a counter.
- Provide a reasonable but firm acceptance deadline. This reduces the window for competing offers or counters.

Present the Offer With Intention

How you deliver the offer is as important as the details:

- Deliver the offer in a live conversation so you can gauge enthusiasm and address hesitation immediately.
- Pair the offer with genuine excitement. Congratulate them, reinforce why they were chosen, and connect the offer to their long-term goals.

Be Clear About Negotiation Limits

If a candidate signals they may face a counter, decide in advance whether you are open to adjusting your offer. Having boundaries in place prevents rushed or reactive decisions later.

Move Decisively

A clear, efficient process reduces the risk of counteroffers:

- Present offers promptly and allow candidates to accept quickly.
- Keep the hiring process moving to reduce the chance of competing offers.
- Show decisiveness and confidence, which reassures candidates about their choice.

Strengthen Onboarding Before Day One

Commitment does not end with acceptance. A thoughtful onboarding plan that starts before the candidate's first day keeps momentum strong:

- Send a welcome message or arrange team introductions.
- Share resources or set up early check-ins.
- Make the candidate feel part of the team right away.

Differentiate Counters From Multiple Offers

Not every risk comes from the current employer. Candidates often juggle multiple external offers. Both situations require speed and clarity, but recognize the difference: multiple offers are about competitiveness and timing, while counters are about loyalty and retention.

Involve the Future Team

A candidate is less likely to be swayed by a counter when they already feel connected to their future colleagues. A quick note or call from a peer or leader after the offer is extended can reinforce excitement and commitment.

Avoid Scare Tactics

While statistics about counteroffers can be cited, such as "most people who accept leave again within six months," scare tactics can feel manipulative. It is more effective to keep the focus on long-term career growth and alignment with the new opportunity.

Keep Relationships Positive

If a candidate does accept a counteroffer, avoid burning bridges. Circumstances may change in the future, and leaving the relationship on good terms increases the likelihood they may re-engage later.



Counteroffers cannot always be prevented, but they can be managed. By anticipating the possibility, reinforcing motivators, managing timing and presentation, and staying engaged throughout the process, you give your team the best chance of securing the talent you want.