

Ask HR: How Should You Handle Counteroffers?

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ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Even if a job candidate tests positive for THC (marijuana's active ingredient), an employer may not refuse to hire them solely based on the drug test results. If an employer wants to eliminate marijuana use from the equation, it could change its drug-testing policy and ask candidates to submit to a four-panel test that omits THC—or it could take things a step further and remove drug testing from the hiring process entirely. Be sure to review your drug-free workplace policies with appropriate legal counsel to determine the best path forward for your business.

FULL TEXT

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SHRM President and Chief Executive Officer Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, is answering HR questions as part of a series for USA Today.

Do you have an HR or work-related question you'd like him to answer? Submit it here.

When I told my employer I wanted to resign to take a new job, my employer offered me a salary increase of 10 percent above my pending position and 27 percent above my current position. Is this a common practice? If accepted, would I burn a bridge with the prospective employer? –Lidia

Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.: In today's ultra-competitive labor market, it is common for an employer to counter an employee's new job offer with a salary increase. For employers, retention is at a premium as they seek to avoid the replacement costs of recruiting and retraining new employees. This practice can be more prevalent in specific industries where there is high demand for certain positions. If you accept the higher salary, yes, it could burn a bridge with your prospective employer, but your prospective employer is likely aware of the challenge of finding talent and may anticipate a counter from your current employer.

Before you decide, revisit your original reason for seeking another job. If earning more money is your priority, then engaging in the counteroffer process may be an effective way to secure a higher salary. However, if the reason you're looking to leave is a lack of career growth, culture misalignment or working for a difficult manager, a higher salary will not serve those interests. Allow your career priorities to inform your decision.

I'll add this: Carefully analyzing the reasons you are seeking to leave your current employer may help determine if accepting a counteroffer is beneficial to you. It will also prevent you from eventually leaving your company in the next six months or a year because you still aren't satisfied with your work there. If burning bridges with the prospective employer concerns you, be honest with the organization. Explain that you did not anticipate a counteroffer and, upon further reflection, you are choosing to stay. However, if the new job suits your career desires and goals, confidently move forward along your career path.

I run a New Jersey logistics facility overseeing 170 employees. Now that recreational marijuana use is legal in New Jersey, can we still screen for marijuana in drug testing? –Reilly

Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.: The legalization of recreational marijuana does not necessarily change what employers can do in terms of drug testing. Your company has a few options to consider under the legislation:

DETAILS

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