

Overall Best Practices

- Be quick: Convey why they are here early in the message without excessive detail
- Be human: Avoid rapidly running through the script
- Be honest: Convey thoughtfulness, apologizing for the need not the action

Materials

- Script (below)
- Questions they might ask (below)
- Things to avoid saying (below)

General Flow

1. Review script and memorize severance length, benefit details
2. Conduct 1:1 [10-15 min]
 - [2 min] Deliver message, pause for reaction/initial questions
 - [3 min] Share benefits, pause for questions
 - [5 min] Answer questions
 - [5 min] Buffer
3. Send follow-up email
4. Send slack to HR + IT (*this will trigger HR / IT to conduct next steps*)

Script

Acknowledge 3rd party in the room

<<Name>> is here as a neutral party and can help answer any questions as well.

Deliver the news

Thank you for meeting on such short notice. {the leadership team and I have had to **make some difficult decisions due {insert reason}.**

Unfortunately this means that **your position as <<POSITION>> is being {eliminated, terminated, etc.}.**

While you will be relieved of your duties, **{effective immediately}, {date}** will be your last day with us.

Pause for immediate reactions / venting / emotions [Most questions will require a pivot, see FAQ below] If none come up, keep going

I [recognize that this may come as a shock].

If an employee...

Becomes confrontational, listen and empathize: "I am sorry, I know that this must be very difficult for you."

Becomes overly emotional and cannot continue: "I recognize this is distressing and a major change. Would you like some time to process and we can continue the conversation later today? Alert Transition Support team so they can follow-up."

Asks why me or questions the change: "I'm happy to set up additional time to discuss. However, this decision is final. I want to make sure you have all the information you need in this transition, so I'm going to jump into sharing about your severance package and benefit details."

Severance & Benefits [if needed, HR / Neutral party can share this part]

I want to share information about your **severance package, healthcare options**, but I know this is a lot of information coming at you at once. **All of this information will be sent to you via email after this meeting.**

If they are eager to receive details, continue with the details...

- **Last Day:** Your last day of employment will be **{Date}**
- **Final Pay:** You will receive your **final paycheck {Date}**
 - **[CS ONLY]** Your paycheck will be OTE.
 - **[Sales ONLY]** You will receive any unpaid commission amounts as soon as the amounts have been deemed earned and are calculable, no later than **{Date}**.
- **Severance:** We are also giving you **{##} weeks of severance pay**, in gratitude for your service.
 - **[CS / SALES]** Your severance will be OTE.
- **Healthcare:** Your **current health insurance** benefits will **continue until the end of the month**, then you will be able to continue to receive healthcare via COBRA. If you sign up for COBRA. You will receive more details via email after this call. Your COBRA packet will be mailed to your **home address** on file within 10 days.

- **ModernHealth:** You will have access to coaching and therapy through the end of the month.
- **Laptop / Company Property:** You can keep your laptop if you like. **Access to company resources will be restricted within the hour, but you will continue to have access to your email until {end of day} and your computer won't be wiped until {end of day}.** We want to ensure that you are able to say goodbye to coworkers, transition necessary working documents and move your personal items off of the computer.
- [The People Team will be in touch about **picking up personal items from the office as well as collecting other company property.**]

Again, you will receive an email with all of these details after we get off. **Do you have any immediate questions?**

Pause to allow for questions

Talk about leaving

I know that some people prefer to leave quietly while others want to say goodbye to a few close friends. We'll respect whatever decision you make. How do you think you would like to handle that?

Pause to get a response

Closing

I know this is a lot of information at one time and it's **normal to have questions that come to you later that aren't top of mind right now.** Please feel free to reach out to me or the People Team if further questions come up.

Before we get off, I want to say thank you for your hard work. You have made Clearbit a better place and I'm going to miss working with you.

Take care. [Hang up]

Potential Immediate Questions/Reactions

If they ask a question that you don't know the answer to.

I don't know the answer to it. However, right after we hang up, I'll reach out to our People Team to confirm and they will follow-up.

How will I say goodbye if you restrict my Slack access?

We want to ensure you have time to say goodbye. The People team will be inviting you to a #goodbye Slack channel (via your personal address) as well as adding you to the Clearbin Alum Network.

Why am I being let go? Was this related to performance?

I am happy to schedule separate time to discuss further, however this is a very unique set of circumstances **{Insert Reason}**. I want to make sure you have all the information you need in this transition, so I'm going to jump into sharing about your severance package as well as other important benefit details.

Who else is being laid off? Am I the only one in our department? Why me?

Yes, yours is the only position in our department that's being eliminated.

How can that be? Who's going to do all the work that I do once I'm gone?

With the elimination of your position, other members of the department will have to take on the remaining job duties that you've handled up to now. We want to share the details related to your severance package as well as other important benefit details, so I'm going to jump into that now.

What if I worked harder or took a paycut

<<Name>> I'm going to stop you, the decision has been made. I'd like to focus now on ensuring you have all of the information you need for the transition.

- *It is much better to deliver the news as it is, and privately work behind the scenes if you truly feel an error has been made and needs adjusting.*

“Wait. You can't lay me off and keep <<Name>>. I've been here longer than she has.

“I recognize that. We determined that, based on all that historical information along with our evaluation of who would work best in the post-layoff environment, you would be selected for layoff. I want to make sure you have all the information you need in this transition, so I’m going to jump into sharing about your severance package as well as other important benefit details.

Are you letting me go?

Yes.

When is my last day?

Tomorrow is your last day as an active employee. Your access to Clearbit accounts will be removed after this meeting, but we want to ensure you can say goodbye and close out critical items.

Who can I talk with to get this decision reversed?

I’m sorry. These are not reversible decisions

Can I keep my job if I take a pay cut or reduce my time?

I’m sorry but no.

Avoid Saying

1. **“This is really hard for me.”**
 - Talk about your feelings with someone else.
2. **“I’m not sure how to say this.”**
 - Don’t even imply that your employee should feel the discomfort you’re going through. Your job is to help your employee through an incredibly difficult moment. Not you. Cut to the chase as quickly as possible.
3. **“We’ve decided to go in a different direction.”**
 - State the reason as clearly and concisely as possible.
4. **“We’ll work out the details later.”**
 - You will have all the details you need to share. If they ask something you do not know, you can say, “I will follow-up with the People team right after this and be sure to get an answer for you.”
5. **“Compared to [coworker], your performance is subpar.”**
 - Never muddy the waters by bringing another person into a discussion.
Pivot: “I’m happy to schedule follow-up time to discuss, however nothing we talk about will change this decision.”
6. **“I understand what you’re saying, but here’s where you’re wrong.”**
 - If they start to argue, “<<Name>>, I’m happy to talk about this for as long as you need... but nothing we talk about will change my decision.”
 - Be professional. Be empathetic. Don’t respond if your employee begins to vent. Just listen. It’s the very least you can do—and the most you can do.
7. **“You’ve done a great job here, but we have to reduce the team.”**
 - If you’re downsizing, leave performance completely out of the discussion.
8. **“I know you weren’t happy here, so this is actually a good thing.”**
 - Whether or not your employee will someday be glad you let them go is not for you to judge. Let your employee find their own glimmers of possibility.
9. **Make promises you can’t keep...If I can help you out in anyway, just let me know.”**
 - Pivot: “Please let me know if you have questions about your final paycheck, health benefits, or other details.”