

On Monday, Amazon [reportedly](#) began a series of rare layoffs at its headquarters in Seattle, cutting several hundred corporate employees. But this week, something quite different is happening at the company's warehouses and customer-service centers across the country: Amazon will politely ask its "associates"—full-time and part-time hourly employees—if they'd prefer to quit. And if they do, Amazon will pay them as much as \$5,000 for walking out the door.

Officially called "The Offer," this proposition is, according to Amazon, a way to encourage unhappy employees to move on. "We believe staying somewhere you don't want to be isn't healthy for our employees or for the company," Ashley Robinson, an Amazon spokesperson, wrote to me in an email. The amount full-time employees get offered ranges from \$2,000 to \$5,000, and depends on how long they have been at the company; if they take the money, they agree to never work for Amazon again. (The idea for all this [originated](#) at Zappos, the online shoe retailer that Amazon bought in 2009.)

Considering that Amazon [reportedly](#) already has high turnover—it is a famously efficient company that asks a lot of its workers—it may seem surprising that it would incentivize workers to walk away...

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