

The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one

Oscar Wilde

Despite this quote being over a hundred years old, it applies perfectly today. Job change by choice is a great option to have. But many people are facing the jobs market having unexpectedly been let go from their most recent employers.

CHANGING JOB

Before you decide to change employer, take some time to reflect on what your drivers are and can they be overcome in your current workplace.

Most people who change job, do so simply because they no longer enjoy their work. Location, compensation, security and work life balance all play a part for some, but ultimately the source of most people's desire to find a new job is simply dissatisfaction with their current one.

How we feel about our job can have a profound impact on how we feel about other aspects of our lives. So, happiness and fulfilment at work is key. But job change can be a stressful and risky process.

If you are bored with your role, before you consider changing employer, can you ask for new challenges to be attached to your current position, even if there is no immediate compensatory benefit. Perhaps there is an alternative role for you within your current organisation, if not now, at some point within the next six months.

If there are personality factors behind your decision to move, these can be more difficult to deal with. Relationships are complex systems and resolving differences can be difficult. That said, no matter how wronged you feel, it is rare to find a

breakdown between two people being just down to one party. Honest reflection may result in you identifying a need or opportunity for your own personal development. Perhaps in conflict resolution, communication or other important areas which your organisation may support.

It is however, important to reflect thoroughly on your decision to change jobs before you take action. Once you start a job change process it is distracting and can make your own working environment difficult to live with. But do make the decision to change or not, absolute. Above all else, when it is time to resign you may be counter offered by your current employer. Accepting a counter offer is the number one mistake that employees make. It is never, ever, a good decision.

Three months to six months after the counter offer, your employer will resent you. The problems you had will not have gone away, but now you are no longer trusted. An endless number of studies prove and confirm that six months after accepting a counter offer, you will regret the decision. Stay put or move. There is nothing in between.

CHANGING JOB

If you have decided to change jobs, create a clear strategy. When working with recruiters, choose them carefully and limit it to three or four at most. Make sure you meet with the consultant to discuss what your needs are and to give them a chance to learn about your skills and competencies. Without that opportunity, their ability to promote you to a client is substantially reduced.

If you are applying directly to companies, make it position specific and ensure that your CV and cover letter are very strong.

Personal contacts are the number one way that people change jobs. Former managers, ex-colleagues, college friends, industry or association contacts can provide extremely valuable network opportunities for you, if you work them.

Develop a check list that you can use to objectively evaluate a position with a prospective new employer, consider some or all of the following:

- i) What determines the right company for you? Is it product base or growth related?
- ii) Does the work content mean more to you than the role level? Does compensation matter more than security?
- iii) What are you hoping to learn by taking on a new position? What do you see as either key personal development needs or longer term career development issues? Will the prospective role you are looking at meet these?

iv) Do the numbers in detail. What is the true value of your current compensation pack? What would it cost you in gross salary terms if any of your current benefits were not provided by your next employer? When is your next salary review and what can you reasonably expect it to be? If there is an annual bonus, irrespective of how it is calculated, how has it typically been paid out in the last three years.

If at all possible, before you accept a new position, try and talk with someone who has recently left the firm. It can help a great deal in terms of making a fully informed decision.

Finally, reflect on where the new role can evolve to. If job security is your priority, then the future direction of any new role is a key element to this.

Find out how other good performers in an organisation have been treated. Did they get promoted, did the roles evolve or did they just stagnate.