

Looking For a New Job: The Pros and Cons

By BNET Editorial

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Do you dread Monday mornings, cringing at the prospect of returning to a job you hate, feeling tired, stressed, and unmotivated just thinking about it? If you don't find joy or satisfaction in your work, it may be time to quit—after thinking it through. Even if you're tempted to hand in your resignation impulsively, you should carefully consider your actions. Leaving without planning your next move is not the most sensible thing to do. Competition for the best jobs is fierce, and potential employers may not view you favorably if you simply quit your job.

This article is designed to help you weigh the pros and cons of leaving and staying, so that regardless of your decision, your working life will improve.

What You Need to Know

Why shouldn't I just pack up and leave?

Maybe you should. You occasionally hear a story about a friend of a friend or former colleague who suddenly walked away from his or her job and moved on to a wildly exciting career. Many such stories are apocryphal or at the very least, skip over the struggle or effort that went into making the dream come true. Even if you feel completely fed up, bear in mind that job hunting is hard work and finding the perfect job requires resolve and persistence, so try not to burn any bridges before you have considered your options carefully.

Is it really easier to find a new job while you're still in a job?

Generally speaking, yes. Potential employers are likely to wonder why you did not remain in your old job while you were looking for a new one. Why did you leave so suddenly? Not knowing you, they may draw their own conclusions. Your existing workplace and coworkers could also be good sources of information about openings in your industry.

What to Do

Identify Issues That You Might Be Able to Address Immediately

What is it that makes you want to leave your current job? Is it the actual day-to-day work or another issue or issues? If it *is* other issues and you see yours among those in the list below, you might be able to resolve them and turn the situation around.

- *A poor relationship with your supervisor.* This is the reason a majority of employees cite for leaving their jobs. If you have a bad-tempered, abusive, bullying, or controlling manager, the chances of your doing anything about it are slim. But if the situation has less to do with your manager's general behavior and more to do with neglect—he or she fails to involve you in decisions about your work, never shows appreciation, or fails to develop or encourage your talents and abilities, for example—you should try discussing the situation with him or her. Many people are unaware of how their behavior is affecting others. If you are uncomfortable talking with your manager on your own, you might ask your manager's superior or someone from the human resources department to play a supportive role. Alternatively, see if an option exists for you to move to another department or report to another manager.
- *Feeling trapped.* Even if you feel stuck in your current position, with no promotion in sight and no opportunity to do work you enjoy, you may still have options that will allow you to stay with your present employer. Most organizations encourage employees who show initiative and want to learn and advance, so talk with your manager. There may be opportunities for lateral moves or particular assignments that will make full use your skills. Or your employer might permit you to swap jobs with a colleague who feels the same way you do.
- *Feeling unappreciated.* This is an all-too-common problem, and if it is your problem, tell your manager that you value his or her opinion of your work and would like regular feedback, both good and bad. The manager's feedback will give you an idea of whether or not your feelings are justified, or if you should be putting forth more effort. If your problem is feeling unappreciated financially, get together the evidence showing that you deserve a raise, then go to your manager, present your evidence and ask for a raise. If it is not forthcoming immediately, ask for a review in, say, six months, or ask for a performance-related raise—then perform!
- *Feeling overworked.* In these days of cost cutting and lean teams, you probably *are* overworked. If your job is more than one person can reasonably handle, gather up the supporting evidence and take it to someone in a position to do something about it. The organization may be willing to employ a part-time or full-time person to help you. You may be able to identify tasks that are unnecessary, could be delegated to someone else, or that could be done differently and more efficiently, thereby easing your workload..
- *Being unhappy with your employer, coworkers, or customers.* It would be truly remarkable if you liked everything about your organization and the people in it, so begin by taking an objective look at your own attitude. Can you leave personal feelings aside and still maintain a courteous professional relationship with your colleagues? Can you minimize contact with people you find

particularly difficult (for example, not take your lunch break with a coworker who complains endlessly)? Can you move to a different department?

Recognize the Time to Move On

If you have made every effort to resolve the conflict you have with your current employer without success, planning your search for a new position is your most sensible, or only, option. A great deal of a person's life is spent working, and life is too short to spend that time being miserable. Below are the issues which tend to be difficult or impossible to resolve. If any apply to you, it is time for you to move on.

- Your company is experiencing a downward spiral, losing market share and money, and closure or bankruptcy are on the horizon.
- Your relationship with your boss or other coworkers is damaged beyond repair, despite the efforts of everyone to remedy the situation. The reasons for the breakdown do not really matter: start again elsewhere, and resolve not to have a repeat of the situation.
- Your life has taken a new turn. For example, you may have a family member to care for, have been married, or had a baby, and the salary and benefits are no longer adequate. You need to find a better opportunity.
- The corporate culture goes against your values. Maybe your company is very hierarchical and you hate having a manager watching your every move; you may have to travel abroad for long periods and you want to spend more time with your family. Whatever the cause, the clash between your values and the corporate culture will destroy your morale.
- You no longer enjoy anything about your job. You dread going to work in the morning and have explored the alternatives within the organization without success. It is time to search for a job with another organization.
- Your company is unethical in its business dealings. Perhaps you are asked to be dishonest about the quality of your product; you discover that your company is buying components from questionable suppliers; you find out that your company has just been sued by a competitor for stealing proprietary information. Whatever the issue, leave. Do not risk being thought complicit in the organization's unethical behavior.
- For whatever reason, you have damaged your own reputation by behaving in an unacceptable or unprofessional manner. You have taken too many "sick" days on Fridays and Mondays; you have not been a team player; you have failed to maintain required skills; you have developed a reputation as a difficult person to work with. Unfortunately reputations, once earned, tend to stick with you unless you start fresh elsewhere.
- You have so much stress at work that it is jeopardizing your physical or mental health and your personal life. You cannot remove the cause of the stress, so move on.

What to Avoid

You Don't Do Anything

Having said that it is important to carefully weigh your options before resigning, it should also be said that it is equally important for you to make a decision one way or the other. Indecision will only make a bad situation worse: your performance, confidence, and satisfaction levels will continue to decline. No decision is set in stone, and if you cannot decide definitely to leave, determine to stay and try to turn things around instead. If your efforts fail, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you have done your best, and you can reverse your decision.

You Don't Think Strategically

We spend so much time at work that work issues tend to blend in with everything else in our lives, and our career decisions become based more on emotion than on objectivity. But it is for the very reason that our jobs *do* consume so much time that we must learn to be objective and think strategically about them. If you are in your first job and are thinking about leaving, first consider how additional experience might benefit you if you were to stay on longer. Perhaps you have made frequent job changes in the past few years. You might be better off staying where you are for a while, so you do not get the reputation as a job hopper. Whatever the circumstances, think about what will serve you best in the long run before making the decision to change jobs.

Where to Learn More

Web Site:

Careerbuilder.com: www.careerbuilder.com