

Job switching: What you need to do before you take the plunge

"The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them." - George Bernard Shaw

Switching careers is no doubt challenging. Throwing away all that you have worked for, to pursue hitherto unknown territory is no mean task. It takes a great deal of hard work, determination and perseverance along with a well thought out game plan to get what you want.

However, you must know exactly what you want and to what length you will go for it. Firstly, distinguish between a job change and a career change.



Being unhappy with your current job because of your equation with your boss or peers or a measly salary does not call for a career change. The solution may lie in a job change.

Switching a career refers to a shift in job profile. It can mean switching sectors based on the same skills or it can mean a completely different profession.

An example of the former is a public relations professional switching to copyediting books (the basic qualifications and skills required are similar) while the latter will be like a banker becoming a chef. Either way you have to think really hard, invest time and energy before taking the plunge. Never be impulsive. Consider the following before switching:



Skills and interest

Following your heart may be the best recipe for happiness but you will also need to be practical and realistic. Consider your skills as well as your interests before going ahead. Finding a career where both complement each other is a dreamcome-true as it is bound to bring both happiness and success.

"It is a culmination of my desire to be an entrepreneur and my talent for training and fitment,"

Prioritise

Take stock of your priorities. Opt for a practical and viable option, taking into account factors like the risk involved, financial obligations, responsibilities, lifestyle, etc.



Groundwork required

Ensure that you have enough information about the new career. You can read books and journals as well as attend relevant seminars and discussions. Do not just go by the current scenario, try to find out its growth potential and where it is headed. It is advisable to network and talk to industry stalwarts or seek the advice of a career counsellor for guidance.

Training Career Counsellor advises, "You have to be in the learning mode. Relevant training or recognised refresher courses as well as getting an idea of that industry while still on the previous job will stand you in good stead." Hands-on experience will not only help you save time but will also give you an idea of whether it will suit you or not.

And says, "Relevant experience helps a great deal. Besides my regular work, I was dabbling with something similar at my workplace, which got me thinking in the first place. I also went and watched at least 20 training sessions by a friend before taking a call."



Flexibility

A 360-degree career change is almost like starting from scratch. So lower the bar and be flexible in terms of salary, designation, grade, etc.

You will have to be patient and accept the fact that you may have to report to people much younger to you or less qualified (compared to your overall qualifications). "You need to set realistic targets, giving yourself a minimum of three years to see how you are faring," adds Swati Salunkhe.

Way

ahead!

Once the decision is taken, unless you decide to be self-employed, the next giant step is to attract recruiters. You will have to convince the recruiter about your credibility (as it may be questioned) and how, in spite of your obvious lack of relevant experience, you are suitable for the position. Appropriate training or refresher courses will look good on your resume. Look up vacancies and job descriptions of postings in that industry to get an idea of what is required and highlight your skills accordingly.