



thinking of a career change?

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LIKE ANY MAJOR decision, when you make a career change you need to have researched and planned your move to ensure the best outcome.

Changing careers can be an exciting yet daunting experience. There are many reasons why people consider a career change and we are living in an era where frequent job changes are more common and people are making at least one, if not more significant career changes in a lifetime.

When contemplating a career change, firstly it is important to recognise why you are looking to leave your current position. You need to assess what is motivating you to seek a change and ask yourself why your current role is unsatisfactory. After determining what you don't want, you need to also spend time seriously thinking about what you do want in a new position.

Assessment

- List the positive and negative aspects of your current position. Look at things such as salary, daily responsibilities, team environment, management style, location, career progression, training opportunities, company culture, etc.
- Recognise signs that you need a change – e.g. boredom, feeling unappreciated, anxiety, feeling a lack of challenge, a feeling of being trapped.
- Ask yourself whether your need for change is directly related to your work or is it a more personal issue (e.g. lifestyle, health or relationship problems) that is the real source of your anxiety? It is normal that issues that need to be addressed will invariably affect other areas of your life. Before making the step to change your career, you need to identify what it is that is making you feel dissatisfied and how this is impacting on other aspects of your life such as your career.
- Also ask yourself whether the problems in your current career are able to be resolved? Are you likely to experience these same problems in a new role or will a career change be an improvement on your current situation?

Planning

- Spend time reflecting on what your talents are, what you enjoy doing at work, what you do in your spare time and what you are excited or passionate about. When seeking a rewarding career, you need to consider how your natural abilities, personality, skills, experience and lifestyle will match potential jobs.
- Understand what skills and experience you possess that are transferable to a new position. What skills do you have in your current career that can assist in making a successful transition to another position? (e.g. interpersonal and negotiation skills, organisational

ability, leadership and supervisory expertise, administrative and computer experience, client management and relationship building skills, etc.)

- When considering potential roles, you need to look at what your daily responsibilities will be, what qualifications and skills are required, what kind of demand there is for people in your chosen industry/position, what the earning potential is and what opportunities there are for career progression.

- Build links from your current position to potential new roles by undertaking relevant studies and joining industry associations.

- If you do decide to undertake additional studies at a TAFE or university to upgrade your skills make sure the study options you select will enhance the likelihood of you obtaining a suitable job afterwards. There are a lot of expensive courses out there and before devoting precious time and money you need to determine whether potential employers are going to be more interested in people who possess the qualifications you are considering.

- Consider the financial implications. If you make a career change, you may need to be prepared to start again - perhaps at the bottom of the ladder or, at the very least, with a lower level of responsibility. This will also likely entail a reduced salary – can you afford to make the change?

- Talk to employers and industry experts about the skills, experience and qualities that they look for in a candidate. Speaking to a careers counsellor or a specialist recruitment consultant who focuses in your target market can also give you an insight into what jobs may be the best options for you based on your skills and experience to date.

It is perfectly natural to change your mind regarding your career. The career goals that you have when you finish high school can change dramatically along the way. As you mature and your lifestyle alters you may place a different emphasis on what is important to you in a career. For example, are you focused on a high salary? Are you willing to work long hours? Are you happy to travel and how far away from home would you work? Do you want the option of working flexible hours?

The more effort you put into researching available options and reflecting on what career directions appeal to you, the more likely you will find yourself in a job which is truly satisfying and rewarding. And always remember that whatever decision you make at this time is never forever and if you do make a mistake it's okay to return to "the drawing board" to further refine your career planning process into the future.