

## SO YOU WANT TO JUMP SHIP? Executive Career Management

*"If you don't know where you're going you'll end up somewhere else."*  
Anonymous

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Did you know that we change careers about five times during our working lives? Where are you up to?

- Do you like what you do but don't like where you work?

You're probably considering a job change.

- Do you *not* like what you do?

You're probably looking at a career change.

Career changes are undeniably challenging. They often require specialized training or higher education, and frequently involve starting at a lower position. This means financial sacrifice in the short- to medium-term. You also need to consider that you'll probably have less time to move up the career and company ladder.

Making critical career decisions is no longer reserved for the younger generation. Senior executives are just one group of seasoned workers who find the evolving 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace an increasingly challenging place.

You probably followed the traditional career-oriented education we're all familiar with: go to high school, get good grades, attend college, study for a degree and set yourself up for a lifelong career. Right? Unlikely.

That 'lifelong career' over an executive's working life is subject to constant workplace change. Learning-by-experience, training, retraining and extra-curricular study to gain new qualifications tailored to the work environment require a mind-set tuned to adaptation and flexibility.

### A quick check

Ask yourself:

- Is my *job* unfulfilling?

Look at a lateral career move rather than a new career. Often you can stay in the same company, enjoying all the benefits of your well-earned seniority - not least of which is your salary package. Lateral moves generally require less training and time, and you can capitalize on and transfer the many skills you already have.

- Is my *career* no longer satisfying? When I think about work, do I still get a buzz, or do I just feel 'ho-hum' about it? Are my efforts recognized in a holistic way – professionally, financially, personally?

If your current career is not fulfilling you, and it feels right to do so, make the change. You're much more likely to succeed and advance – and have fun! - in a career you enjoy and where you feel comfortable.

## Before you Jump Ship

No matter the reason for changing jobs or careers, your decision must be a rational, not an emotional one. *And money alone shouldn't be the sole factor for the change.*

There are many tools to assist you in making a considered career move. Remember your goal: to find fulfilling and rewarding work – financially, professionally and personally. Putting in the effort now will reap dividends in the years ahead.

## Know Thyself

- Undertake skill assessment to determine your aptitudes. This tool highlights your strengths and weaknesses, interest areas, likes and dislikes, work environment preferences, stress factors, personality traits and social factors such as how you respond in a given work situation.
- What are your long-term career objectives?
- What are your financial objectives for retirement?
- Do you have a written plan to realize your career and financial objectives?

## Develop a Career Plan

Define your career objectives clearly and concisely.

- Do you need further education or retraining?
- Where will you market yourself?
- Will you need to relocate to make the change?

Prepare self-marketing tools: resume, executive portfolio, cover letters, business cards.

## Call in the Experts!

At this point, you may begin to feel overwhelmed. Do you need objective help in assessing your skills, career and financial goals, and where and how to market yourself? You're in luck. A plethora of experts is out there, just waiting for your call.

Work with a **life coach** to determine where you're at as opposed to where you want to be: professionally, and personally. It's all about complete life balance. You won't always be working.

**Executive recruiters** and **career coaches** can help to objectively and professionally assess your skills, develop a career plan with you, and market you effectively. In your new chosen career, you may not have an established network.

A **certified resume writer** works with you to evaluate your employment history, achievements and professional and personal details. With this information they produce a professionally crafted marketing package: resume, cover letters, career profile, selection criteria, an executive portfolio.

Building partnerships with these specialists gives you the edge over the competition, gets you noticed by the decision makers and can ultimately have you skipping down the path of your new career.

## Now Jump!

Embarking on your Career Plan requires self-discipline, drive, organization and confidence.

You are on board one of the most significant marketing campaigns of your life – you - to secure a career that allows you to achieve your fullest potential as a professional and as an individual.

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