

Should I STAY?



It's said that the average person will change careers somewhere between five and seven times over the course of their working life. It may be an appealing urban myth, but these days the idea of a job for life is likely to fill most of us with dread. Kirsty France gives us the lowdown on when to stay and when to go.

If you're thinking about changing careers, you should first consider whether you really want to. There's nothing wrong with admitting that there's comfort in familiarity. But if your current job is making you truly miserable, there are a few factors to consider.

Firstly, is it your industry that's making you unhappy or your place in it? Many professions have changed beyond recognition in recent years with people finding that the job they enjoyed no longer exists. If either your priorities or your employers' requirements have changed you may find a better fit elsewhere in the same sector.

Networking is key here. If you can talk to others in your industry with a similar role you can find out whether they're affected too. Finding a new post which matches your current skills and experience is a lot easier than changing careers altogether.

The tricky part comes if you decide that a complete change is needed. You may have been in the same business for a long time, it could even have been your dream job once. If you have a goal, great. Move along, nothing to see here. If not, start with your skills. The

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things that made you great at your job can transfer somewhere else. Whether you're good at negotiation, organisation or creation, it's all transferable. Beyond that, start thinking about your personality, motivations and the types of work you might enjoy.

When you've found your dream career and are ready to run off into the sunset, boring practicality gets in the way. Unless your goal is to live naked in the woods, foraging for nuts and berries, you're going to need a roof over your head and money for food. How much do you really need to earn? A lot of this depends on you and whether you have family who will be affected. The household bills won't go away but do you need the gym membership (you never use) or the satellite TV (you never watch)? If you need to study or take a more junior role in order to retrain, things might be tight for a while and being realistic about the sort of pay cut you can stand to take now will stand you in good stead later.

In the end, there is no one size fits all solution. You can only find the right job for you.