

# Are you looking for a new job for all the wrong reasons?

by Sarah Butcher 16.12.2014

Featuring Executive Career Coach **Karin Peeters**.

Are you about to make a bad exit?

You want a new job in finance? Fair enough – it's that time of year. But before you succumb to the urge to switch employers, try running some safety checks on your impetus for quitting. The grass may seem greener across the street, but that could just be because you're looking through green tinted lenses...



Ask yourself:

## 1. Are you being too negative about your current role?

“When you're thinking of your happiness and well-being, it's natural to consider your professional life,” says Andrew Stead, ex-head of European convertible bond trading at Goldman Sachs and founder of ‘Your Daily Bread’, a consultancy focused on workplace well-being and resilience. “The workplace is a key aspect of life and area where people can struggle to find happiness,” Stead adds.

However, it's also very easy to exaggerate the pains of work. Stead stresses that the workplace also brings positive well-being. “There are the economic benefits to work. There are also the benefits of working with other people towards common goals within an established structure. Empirically, unemployment is a far greater creator of unhappiness than working.”

Before you leave a current job, therefore, stop and focus on the positives. What's good about the job you do now? Are you exaggerating the negatives and ignoring the positives?

## 2. Is envy your motivator?

Linda Jackson, managing director of career consultancy firm 10Eighty, says it's not uncommon for people to seek new jobs when a colleague has just been promoted, or has left for a new and better role elsewhere. “There's always going to be an element of pegging yourself against colleagues,” says Jackson.

There's nothing wrong with this – Jackson points out that a colleague's promotion can be a much needed wake-up call. But it's wrong to make a knee-jerk job move just because you benchmark yourself against someone who has pulled ahead. You need to manage your own career, not your colleague's.

### **3. Are you bored?**

Are you looking for a new job because your current one isn't stimulating you? Fair enough, but have you thought what will happen in a few years in the role you're moving into? Rather than jumping jobs whenever you're bored, you should devise a plan for the future. "What do you want to do in two, five, or ten years' time?" says Jackson. "Which knowledge, skills and experience do you need to progress to the next stage?"

### **4. Have you spoken to your boss/HR?**

People don't leave jobs for money, says coach Robin Linnecar, who's worked with Deutsche Bank, the Bank of England and HSBC. "They leave because their boss is a disaster or the culture of their workplace is the problem."

Jackson echoes this. If you're leaving for cultural or workplace issues, she says it makes sense to raise those issues with your line manager or human resources (HR) before giving up on the company altogether. "Often, a small change will make a difference. You may want to be recognized as an expert. You may want new responsibilities and challenges. If the organisation values you, it will often go out of its way to stop you from leaving."

### **5. Have you considered changing your own behaviour?**

Before packing your bags and heading for a new job, you should also look at yourself. "People move jobs for the wrong reason," says [Karin Peeters, a life and career coach with banking clients](#). "It's like relationships – you pack up all your problems and bad habits and unpack them somewhere new. You get a cycle of repetitions."

"Very often there are things you can do in your current job to make your life easier and different," says Linnecar. "If you're having trouble with your boss, the only thing you can change is your own attitude – have you created a world in which you see demons rather than possibilities?"

Take responsibility for managing workplace relationships and try to make them better. People need to learn to manage up, says Linnecar. Bosses can be critical because criticism is easier than praise – if a boss criticizes you, you can't fight back. "You might be working for someone who doesn't give you any feedback and always picks out the things you've done wrong. You could have worked on projects three weekends running and he just points out the mistakes on page three," Linnecar suggests.

In this situation, he says you can learn to draw compliments out of your boss: "Help them to engage with you. Bosses are often very susceptible to flattery. Ask what they've done if they've tackled projects like this in the past and which kinds of questions you should be asking."

## **When leaving is the right thing to do**

Of course, if you can see the positives in your current job and want to leave anyway, if you have a career plan and moving on is part of it, if you've spoken to HR and they can't provide you with new responsibilities and if you've tried managing up and your boss still fails to recognize any of your efforts, then searching for a new role in January is the right thing to do. In finance, in particular, those first three months of the year are a key hiring time for experienced bankers.

Post-Christmas is also post-promotion time in banking. If you're a mid-ranking banker who didn't get promoted, it might be because you've fallen into the 'technical expertise' trap. Then again, it might be because your boss is blinkered. Linnecar says it's usually right to leave a role when you're continuously overlooked for promotion and people who (in your opinion) are less competent than you are repeatedly promoted in your place. "Within organisations, people usually know who the good performers and the poor performers are, but for whatever reason, bosses can be blind to this," he reflects.

[Karin Peeters](#) says it's almost always a good thing to move on if you've moved outside the 'stretch' area of a role and into the 'panic' zone. "If your systems are in overload and you can't make decisions, you're in a state of panic all the time – which the company has done nothing to address, then making a positive choice to move is healthier than waiting to be let go," she concludes.

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