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Career Advice



Career Tips

What career choices do you have?

You need to assess where you are today before you can decide where you want to take your career in the future. You may have been coasting or you may be bored with your current job. Today is the day when you can make new choices and perhaps even make a leap into a totally different career direction. You must look positively to the future as the decisions you make now will affect the rest of your life.

You should not rush into your next job. You need to consider carefully all the implications of the decisions which you make. Things to consider include which job you would like to pursue, which sort of company you would like to work for, what remuneration (pay and benefits) you require, the working environment, how you match the criteria for the job, and how the job matches your career aims and ambitions.

Setting specific career objectives

Your main aim at this moment in time may just be to find yourself a new and rewarding job. But it would also be a good idea at this time to evaluate all your aims in life, both career related and personal. To achieve some of your objectives you may need to set yourself a number of intermediate objectives. You should regularly re-evaluate your objectives (both personal and career-related), as they will almost certainly change over time.

What are your choices?

1. Move up, down or sideways on the career ladder?
2. What sort of company would you like to work for?
3. Do you want to move into a different industry or sector?
4. Can you change profession or direction?
5. Which job could you do?
6. Do you want a job close to home or in another region?

1. Move up, down or sideways on the career ladder?

Only you can really decide where you want to be on the career ladder, although some positions may be completely unrealistic. Are you looking for a new job because you have been stuck in a rut and denied the promotion you feel you deserved? Or alternatively, do you feel it is the right time to look for a less demanding job? Obtaining a job which is similar to your current position is generally the easiest option.

2. What sort of company would you like to work for?

You will need to consider whether you want to work for a large, medium-sized or small company. What did you dislike in your current/previous jobs and what did you like? This will help you decide on which sort of companies you may want to approach.

Do you like to be someone who really counts in a small firm or do you prefer to work in a large established company? In a large company you may be a very small cog in a large machine whereas in a small firm you can have a greater influence and your actions can make a real difference to the fortunes of the firm.

Some people feel that large firms offer more job security, but these days large firms are making a lot of people redundant, so they cannot necessarily offer more job security than a smaller firm. Smaller firms tend to offer fewer fringe benefits than larger firms, but they may offer bigger bonuses.

The culture in a small firm tends to be more open and friendly whilst large organisations can seem impersonal and unfriendly. A lot of large firms are trying to redress the balance and many top executives can now be seen in the ordinary works canteen rather than in the executive canteen. Office politics tend to dominate more in a large firm although all firms have a certain amount of office politics.

If the size/culture of a firm is important to you, please ensure that any firm you apply to meets your criteria. It is often a good idea to talk to existing employees of the firm and always ask questions at an interview so you can deduce the good points and bad points about working at the firm.

3. Do you want to move into a different industry or sector?

You may want to consider moving into a different industry or a new sector of your current industry. This will be an important consideration if your current industry/sector is declining or if jobs are hard to come by or you just fancy a change.

4. Can you change profession or direction?

This may be the hardest question for you to answer if you are unsure about your current career path. You should take some time out to think about a radical change in your career/life as this may have major implications later on in your career. You should talk any major changes through with your partner (if you have one) as this may have a significant impact on their life, if it means a period studying (when you are not earning) or a period when you have to take a cut in salary to get on the first rung of the ladder in your new profession.

You will need to gather as much information as possible on your new profession before making a final decision, including which qualifications are needed (if any), how you can study for the qualifications (full-time, part-time, evening courses, distance learning, etc), where you can study and how you can obtain relevant work experience. It is also a good idea to see if there are any work placements to give you a taste of the job (you do not want to study for something and then find you hate it!). Find out too what people in the profession think are the high spots and what are the low spots of the job.

5. Which job could you do?

Only you can actually decide which job you want to do. But discussing your options with a career consultant or a close friend/relative, etc, can assist you in making a decision. If you are considering a new career direction you should discuss this carefully with someone who has already followed this career path.

To help you decide on the options you face, it may be advantageous for you to write down all your options and score them as in the following example for a Sales Consultant. With 10 being the top score and 1 being the bottom score.

Position	Interest	Knowledge	Experience
Sales Consultant	5	9	9
Managing Consultant	8	7	3
General Manager	9	2	1
Owner of Business	10	3	1

The Sales Consultant in our above example is only semi-interested in another similar Sales position and would really like to progress to the position of Managing Consultant. Other positions that are of interest are General Manager or Owner of a Business. These positions are probably not very realistic at the moment without further training.

The same may apply to some of your own ideas and you will need a certain amount of determination if you want to pursue them. To start with you should talk to people in any profession you would like to join. Professional institutions or trade may also be prepared to offer advice.

6. Do you want a job close to home or in another region?

Deciding on where you want to live will clearly affect the type and range of jobs on offer to you. You may want to work close to where you currently live, or you might want to move to another region.

Only you (in consultation with your partner if you have one) can decide where you want to live. Your choices may also be hampered by your current career, as there may not be any jobs in your current region or the region which you want to move to. If there are no jobs in your locality or you have exhausted all possibilities, you may have to look further afield or consider a change in career.

If you have a partner or if you are the second wage earner in the household your choices of geographical location may be very limited. You may need to consider retraining or a change in career if you cannot find anything suitable in your current area.

Further Information

If you need help with any aspect of careers advice, please contact us at sales@cushillo.co.uk