

What to consider when you're considering a career change

If you're unhappy at work, it can be tempting to just throw in the towel and look for something else. But changing jobs can have a significant impact on you, your career and your personal life, so it's best to put some thought into it.

Read on to find out the most important things to consider when looking to make your career change a successful one.

- **Financial stability.** Whether you're providing for your family or just yourself, it's important to ensure you can keep your head above water financially while you transition into your next role.

As Kristan De Sousa, director for Queensland at Six Degrees Executive, explains, "To ensure success in changing roles you may need to take a sideways step or a small step backwards. Therefore financial stability is important to make sure you aren't under undue stress."

If you don't already have savings to cover your expenses for a few months, consider waiting a while to build up that capital, so you'll be prepared for any potential dips in salary. That way, when the time comes, you'll be able to focus on picking up the job to the best of your ability, and won't have to worry about making rent.

- **Impact to friends, family and emotional well-being.** There's more than just money that can impact your family and friends when you change jobs. "Going from something you are highly competent at to unknown areas that require development can be daunting and it does take time to adjust – for you and your

family,” says De Sousa.

A new job can also be more demanding of your time and energy, which can mean reduced time with loved ones and a negative effect on everyone’s emotional well-being. To avoid this, plan ahead to keep that quality time consistent. You could block out one day each week for devoted time with family and friends.

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Building a support network. Our loved ones can support us in our quest for career happiness, but they can only do so much. That’s why De Sousa advises reaching out to people within the industry or role you are looking to join. “Run a quick search online and see who in your network belongs to the new industry. Then ask those people for advice on what skills are the most important and what the biggest challenges are, so that you’re armed to make it through the interview process and sell your most aligned attributes.”

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Talking to someone who has done it before. Once you’ve built up your professional network in the industry or role you want to work in, you can use it to help you get where you want to be.

As De Sousa says, “Many roles are filled through the strength of networks, so leveraging yours during a career change is vital. Reach out to your network wherever possible and ask about their experiences. What worked? What didn’t? How was the transition? Is there anything they would do differently?” By utilising their experience, you could improve yours.

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Doing your research. At the end of the day, it pays to be prepared, so take the time to really familiarise yourself with your new industry or role. “Know what you’re getting yourself into, speak to people in the know, read articles, attend events and meetups and subscribe to industry body publications,” says De Sousa. “The less surprises you have, the better you will cope.”

In saying that though, you can’t know everything that will happen, so you have to allow for changes to your plan. It’s what keeps things interesting!

By keeping these points in mind, you’ll make your move into your new career a lot easier. And remember: life is short, so as long as it won’t have a major negative impact on your financials or family, you should go after the career you want.