

How to approach your boss about a career change

Change is good. It forces you to move out of your comfort zone, learn more, meet new people and, ultimately, challenge yourself to be the best you can be. If you're not satisfied with your role, it's a positive thing that you're considering changing it, but you're probably wondering how to go about this. After all, you don't want to burn any bridges.

Here are four reasons why you might want to change your work situation, and how to approach your boss about it.

1. **When you want to try something new at work.** If you're a chronic clock-watcher and find yourself muttering "same stuff, different day", then it might be time to try something new at work. This could mean joining a team (say a social committee, or a mentoring/leadership group), shadowing someone in a different role or department to learn new skills, or taking on a more challenging project.

Whatever it is you want to do, be direct and honest about it. Explain to your boss that while you enjoy your role, you want to continue expanding your responsibilities. Tell them that joining this team/shadowing this person/being a part of this project would enable you to do that. Communicate the time commitment this would take and the benefit to the business, as your expanded capabilities are likely to help the company, as well as you, in the long run.

2. **When you want to pursue flexible hours to make time for further study.** Are you going through the motions in your job, unchallenged and uninspired, and feeling the need to expand upon your knowledge? If so, it might be best for you to tell your boss you need some time to yourself, to study.

But first, do your research. Find a class – online, at a university, or at a community centre – that aligns with your interests. Work out a plan for how to fit it into your schedule, and have all the details ready to show to your boss. This demonstrates your commitment, both to wanting to study and to stay at your

job. They'll quickly realise that they may not be giving you enough opportunities or challenges to keep you interested, and may even offer to pay for your study if it aligns with your current or a future role.

3. **When you want to take a sabbatical to explore your passion.** Many people sit at work dreaming of travelling or taking a workshop, but few take the plunge. Even just asking for the time off to do these things feels like a huge, insurmountable barrier. But it's not! It's all about vocalising your feelings and framing them in a way that your manager can empathise with.

Before you ask to talk with your boss, consider the impact your leave could have on the business, and write down anything you could do to alleviate them. Have a time frame in mind, including flexible departure and return dates, and think about how your work could be handled during this time. Would they need to hire a temporary replacement, or could one of your colleagues absorb your responsibilities? Demonstrating your consideration of the demands on the business could be the difference between getting the OK to go and a flat-out "No".

4. **When you want to move on to pursue a new career.** If you're unfulfilled at work it can be tempting to quit in a dramatic fashion, seizing a moment to let it be known how unhappy you are. But it's always best to be professional. After all, you'll need a reference for your new career!

Request a meeting with your boss and, when the time comes, let them know your intentions. They'll want to know when your last day will be, what projects need to be wrapped up and any handovers that need to occur. Be helpful with this, not only because it's the right thing to do but because you never know who your boss could introduce you to in your new industry. They might be able to recommend you for a role in an adjacent industry, or point you to an organisation they're familiar with. Move on graciously and good things are bound to happen.

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