



IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME TO CHANGE JOBS?

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Many of us have experienced unexpected job loss at some point in our careers. Yet this past year we've been witness to the worst employment scenario in memory. Even those gainfully employed wonder how long that might last. Some will take on the responsibilities of others who have been let go, without additional compensation or even assurance that their own jobs are secure. Yet, too often – these newly over-tasked people fail to see the potential they have to grow.

Whether being required to learn a new system, or even oversee a function they're unfamiliar with, could be a good thing for those who recognize it. Embracing this change rather than being disgruntled with the employer may not only protect your place on the totem pole, but will surely strengthen your skills and enhance your future opportunities.

I've encountered many people that had considered a job or career change, but now are stopped in their tracks due to this employment market. If currently employed with a company that is meeting payroll, continuing to provide benefits and making plans for the future – one might think twice about trying to leave now, unless you have another solid offer, in writing, and are assured of a job title, start date and more. Leaving your current job before landing another? Not the best time, but there is a sense of better days to come.

Think twice, about the real reasons you would want to make a change. If you find it necessary to change jobs, consider staying in your industry or at least pursuing something you are qualified for. The competition is high and there is a vast amount of people unemployed -- many for more than a year now. Professionals are willing to take far less in salary, even take on multiple part-time jobs in areas they are highly overqualified in; whatever it takes just to get a regular paycheck, to feel productive and part of an organization once again. Maybe not unemployed, but certainly under-employed.

Employers facing workforce reduction rarely find this an easy process. They more often feel great trepidation when it's a company-wide cut; the decision of who should be cut and when is never taken lightly. Some employers will rely on attrition to in order to achieve reduction; but are learning that it may not be happening fast enough as less people are leaving their jobs voluntarily.

On the bright side, there are employers that are recruiting; some directly, others utilizing search firms. When a company is hiring during an economic downturn, it is likely for positions that are essential. This one article and the opinion of this one recruiter certainly can't speak for all industries or all companies and their strategy. Most often the same advice applies in a high employment market as in a recession – do your homework. Be certain you want to make the change before making the plans to change. Might there be additional growth opportunities in your own company, or is it truly time to look outside? Most of us look for our jobs or careers to define us.

In this past year, joblessness has defined too many people. Things will turn around. Companies will start to hire again and industries will plan for growth. However, competition will remain strong for some time to come. Whether you work in a corporate environment, health services, academics, banking, customer service or any other field, your personal worth is fundamental to who you are, and not what you do for a living..