

Do you really want to make a job change?

By Nick Giannas

Equally important to how a job search is managed is how much an individual is “truly” interested in making a career change. This seems like a no brainer. However, it is not uncommon for a person to think, “I will throw my hat in the ring for this job and see what happens.” In addition, the person may also think, “if things become serious, I will manage that as it comes.” It is imperative that the hiring manager and/or search consultant ask the right questions up front but, of course, the potential candidate can respond with the right answers even though he/she has not carefully thought through all the factors that go into making a career change.

Whether you are the hiring manager, candidate, or search consultant, it is likely you have experienced what can happen next. The candidate enters into the search process (without seriously contemplating their overall situation), interviews well, and the hiring organization becomes highly interested in his or her candidacy. Unfortunately, after much time and money are spent, the candidate decides to drop out for reasons that could have been handled up front (i.e., the family does not want to relocate).

To help prevent this situation from happening it is important for an individual to fully consider if he or she is really interested in a job change. Moreover, it is prudent to ask three fundamental questions:

- Why do I want a new job?
- Why I am interested in this particularly position?
- What other factors will play a role in my job search?

These questions are interrelated but need to be answered independently. If these questions are answered at the beginning (ideally before you submit your resume) they will help avoid the embarrassment of withdrawing from a job search midway through the process and will save the hiring organization the frustrations that come with it.

Let's briefly examine some potential reasons why someone is looking for a new job. He or she has accomplished all identified goals in their current position. Perhaps, the person dislikes his or her current job and is ready to leave the organization. A person could quite simply need a job. More personally, the potential candidate needs to relocate to a certain part of the country to move closer to family. All of these reasons are valid in why one may be looking for a job. But they do not truly answer why someone is interested in a particular position.

After an individual identifies why they want a new job, they can clearly focus

on why a certain job opportunity interests them. For example, if the job moves a person closer to family that could be considered a reasonably strong factor. However, that alone will not typically bring about someone's true interest in a new position. The hiring manager will not be totally “sold” that the candidate really wants the job based solely on a geographic incentive. At the core of someone's interest in a new position should be a clear connection between personal and professional goals and the opportunity. The new position should be consistent with an individual's career aspirations. As a result, it is important to have a vision of how you want your career to progress and develop a plan to help you achieve your goals.

Once an individual has answered the first two questions, he or she must focus on thoroughly analyzing all impacts of a career change. Some important factors include:

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- Relocating the family — this can be more difficult if, for example, children are still in high school
- Housing situation — selling a house during these tough economic times may constitute a substantial loss
- Compensation — identifying your compensation expectations is key

The list can go on and on but it is important to note that all potential issues should be identified and examined so they can be articulated up front in the job search.

Taking the time to answer all three questions and thinking things through

before just “throwing your hat in the ring” will lead to a better outcome. It will bring about a win-win for all parties involved. The time, money and frustration that will be saved are truly invaluable.

In today’s market, there is an overwhelming need for “thought leaders” who can really transform organizations to function at an optimal level. Whether in health care, higher education or other industries, this type of leadership is in high demand. You should be as thoughtful when making a career decision as you are in making key strategic decisions that will lead to your organization’s success.

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