

# Thinking of making a career change? Look before you leap.

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Changing careers is never easy. There are hundreds of people who will be quick to tell you that you're making a mistake and the inevitable "I told you so" from a close friend or family member. For many middle-aged or multi-talented people in boring, dead-end jobs there isn't another option. If they don't find something new to tackle they may just lose it completely!

## **Don't look for a job in another career field without looking at yourself first**

Make sure that you fully understand what it is about your current job that doesn't meet with your expectations. Find out what you need in terms of challenge and ensure that your skill set matches. There is nothing worse than getting another job and within a few months realizing that you're in the same predicament as you were before.

## **Don't look for "Trendy" career fields unless it suits you**

You wouldn't consider squeezing yourself into your skinny friend's leather suit so why try to work in her field? It is often tempting to think that you should be in the field that is currently making all the newspapers and where your friends are making money – take your time to properly investigate your options and remember that "hot" industries are often the first to "burnout".

## **Don't think that just because your friend is succeeding in a particular field that you will too**

We are all different and not necessarily suited to the same jobs or industries. Spend time properly researching the field and remember that personal testimony from various sources is always the best way to gain accurate information. Speak to your friends, family and associates – if possible get the low down from someone who isn't so successful so that you have an all round view.

## **Don't limit yourself to career fields you already know about**

Stretch your perceptions of where you think you'd fit in. Read job profiles and explore career fields that may not immediately have sprung to mind. A personality profiling tool could assist you in highlighting areas you'd be suited but had not previously considered.

## **Don't let money be the deciding factor**

No amount of money can replace job satisfaction. Often one is expected to take a salary cut when changing careers and if you're not satisfied with your progress your stress levels are likely to increase, impacting negatively on your health.

## **Avoid making the decision to change careers alone**

Speak to friends and family to vent your dissatisfaction. Let them assist you by suggesting careers they feel you'd be suited to. Consult with a professional recruiter who could give you objective advice on your chances of making the change successfully.

## **Don't study further until you've done your homework**

You're never too old to learn but there is no point in spending time and money on the wrong studies. Qualifications are not always the deciding factor in securing a position so speak to a recruiter or people within your chosen field to determine what the right thing to study would be.

## **Don't expect a career counselor to tell you which career field to enter**

Career advisors are facilitators and are trained to follow your lead. They can assist you in ferreting out your talents and ambitions but the research and decision-making rests with you.

## **Don't expect to make the change overnight**

It is likely to take between six months and a year to successfully change careers. Be patient and work towards increasing your knowledge and making yourself more marketable.