

CHANGING CAREER

It may sound radical but often all your job needs is a few tweaks



BY JULIA THRUL

When Monday morning comes around, how do you feel? Are you an excited or a condemned man or woman? If work doesn't energise you now, think about the next ten or twenty years. That's why more and more people are switching careers.

When it comes to choosing a career, most of us follow the advice of our teachers and parents. It's amazing really. We don't trust them to choose our friends, clothes or music, but we don't question when they try to influence one of the biggest decisions of all; what career path to follow. It's often a gamble and if it turns out to be no fun, we usually feel that we've no choice but to stick with it and literally make the best of a bad job.

Have you ever envied someone because of their job? The chances are that their own career path didn't follow a logical progression. Many of those fortunate enough to have an 'ideal job' have made a conscious decision on how to get there and

undergone several career changes in the process.

Ask yourself this. If money were no object, and you could start your career over again, would you do things differently? If so, then it's time to start thinking about a change. Another thing that could be on your mind is that your current line of work may be in decline – and that doesn't just apply to coal miners. Thinking flexibly about a career change might actually secure your future – and new professions are emerging all the time.

Changing career sounds radical, but sometimes just a few tweaks in your current situation will suffice. If, for example, you like your job but not the environment, try suggesting some improvements. Many bosses are open to change if you explain clearly what you want, why and how they will benefit.

Make the time and effort to find your ideal vocation. Most people happily devote weeks to choosing a holiday or buying a

car, but we don't spend nearly enough time on career decisions. Your research may take months, but it's a sound investment.

Still doubtful? You're in a stronger position than you think. The government's thrust to encourage minority groups to develop professionally means that there's never been a better time to change career. The black community is recognised as being one of the most dynamic driving forces in the country's economy. Substantial support is available in the form of governmental programmes, legislative measures and grants – make these instruments work for you.

One of the keys to switching career is getting to know yourself better. Examine your values. Is external recognition worth more than the knowledge you've done well? Is your job title more important than a pay rise? Is the prospect of climbing up the corporate ladder more exciting than going home on time? Don't stop there: try to define what really fires you up.

So where do you start? Begin by asking yourself the following questions:

What did I enjoy as a teenager? What do I enjoy doing now?

How do I spend my free time and why?

What did and didn't I like about my last and my current job and what do I think of

the company?

Which do I prefer: working with people or producing things alone?

In which situations do I get a sense of achievement?

What engages me? What's the subject that I get most enthused about?

Finding the right information is crucial. Use the internet, libraries, media and people you meet to broaden your mind and find out more. Other suggestions include, using all the government help available (advice, start-up schemes and adult learning).

Thoroughly review your finances to estimate how much you need to earn

Identifying the skills you'll need: talk to the relevant people about how they got where you want to be, and find out if your perception matches the on-the-job reality.

Finally, change your mindset. Instead of thinking 'I can't do that', start thinking 'How can I make this happen?'

I found *What Colour Is Your Parachute?* by Richard N Bolles very helpful.

And remember, it's never too late to make the change, that's something you might want to consider Monday morning over a cup of tea.

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- career change
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- career planning
- success
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