

# HFMA Career Center

## **Bungle-Proofing a Job Transition**

Bungle proof a job transition by asking the following two questions in every step of the decision to transition to a new job:

1. What if I'm wrong?
2. What is the evidence that this company will be a good fit for me?

End of the story (and this article) right? Not necessarily.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics claims that employees today will likely switch jobs, some as many as 10 times. The popular 1990's concept of the "worker as free agent" remains very real today. Many today share the view and will experience the reality that there are no final destinations in a career. A career is part of the process of continuous personal development.

But while job transitioning is almost inevitable, they are seldom easy and often include missteps that lead to deep dissatisfaction. Researchers Boris Groysberg and Robin Abrahams identified common missteps, in addition to forgetting the two questions posed above, it changing jobs. The missteps are related and together play out as a system of self-defeating behavior. The missteps provide a distinctive pattern and can persist throughout a career.

Job seekers often do not perform due diligence in five important areas.

### **Mistake #1: Not conducting research**

Job seekers often do not do their homework on the job market realities for their industry and/or function. The sad result: unrealistic expectations when job searching and transitioning. Job seekers all too often pay little attention to the potential employer's financial and market position.

Additional compounding missteps include not considering the organization's culture and assuming that the official job title and description accurately reflect the role. Press for the specifics, including how performance in the desired position is evaluated.

### **Mistake #2: Leaving for money**

Focusing on money can blind the job seeker. The required research cited above is either not undertaken or forgotten in the lure of a financial offer. The change to make more money frequently leads to choosing a position with an ill-fit.

### **Mistake #3: Moving "from" rather than going "to"**

Often, job seekers become so unhappy in their current position that they will accept anything in order to get out. Instead of planning a career, these individuals jump from job to job with a frantic urgency rather than working for the right offer. They work from the premise that the "grass is always greener on the other side" and fail to look at their career strategically.

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## **Mistake #4: Overestimating one's self**

It is all too common for job seekers to over-value themselves while under-valuing the organizational capabilities they relied on to achieve success. All too often, job seekers have unrealistic views of their skills and capabilities (and sometime culpability) and dismiss the role of organizational resources in their successes.

## **Mistake #5: Thinking short term**

This is a serious career misstep that frequently drives the previous four missteps. The sad reality here is the misperception of time horizons related to actual career accomplishments.

What's the best self-protection against career-management missteps? Self-awareness, which is why the two questions at the beginning of the article are posed, is the key. Self-awareness is broad, encompassing not only knowledge of strengths and weaknesses but also insight into the types of missteps that lead to careers faltering. The first step to a satisfying job transitions is understanding and avoiding the missteps.