

[MOVING ON WITH DIGNITY]

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6, 2004

Job-hopping is seen as inevitable for a career growth these days. But if you do it showing some concern and care about current organization, it will take you a long way

WORK WISE - A fortnightly column by Rahul Kapoor

A job in the corporate world has never been so exciting and fruitful as it has been in the last 3-5 years. There are a lot of opportunities and options available for youngsters in particular. One can earn a decent first salary and consistent performers can continue to earn more with each passing year. The demand for skilled employees is ever increasing and so also is the marathon effort to retain those already hired.

I am really amazed to see many organizations these days conferring a long service award to those who have served an organisation for just 3 to 5 years. Anyway, let me get to the central point of this article, which focuses on how the young professionals can build a great career in all these new dynamics and challenges.

A definite trend emerging especially among the youth, is that Job security has become a thing of past, job-hopping is their new mantra. Although on one hand it speaks of a bold, confident and skilled new generation on the other hand it also brings along 'dangers of multiple options' which can make youngsters very carefree, irresponsible, unethical and unprofessional.

Let me illustrate this view with examples of two employees of the same organisation. Let us call the first Raj and the other Jay.

Raj has been working in this organisation for 9 months. He is a good communicator; he is efficient and executes his job very well. He is assigned with critical responsibilities and is in charge of time bound projects. His role is vital for the success of these projects. He shares a good relationship with his manager and subordinates. He has grown steadily in this job and has expressed his happiness on more than one occasion.

Suddenly, a very strange thing happens-Raj is missing from the office for three days without informing anyone. No one in the team has a clue about his whereabouts. His mobile phone is switched off. After a lot of attempts his manager gets to speak with him on his land phone. He cites some personal reasons for his absence from work and seeks some more time from his manager to get back in action. But he shows no sign of return and one fine day files in his papers and joins another organisation for better monetary benefits. All this leaves the organisation in a mess as far as his projects are concerned.

Now, let's evaluate this situation and see if we can learn something out of it. Let's revisit the facts:

The blunders Raj has committed: he has not communicated what his work issues, if any, were with his manager. He has stayed away from work without any intimation and has

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made false excuses. Finally, he has left the organisation in a difficult situation, as he has not shared the status of various projects with his successor.

As a result his team and his manager feel very bitter. The projects had to be slowed down and finally shelved for some time until they found a suitable replacement to handle things. In the process Raj earned himself the title of being unprofessional and unreliable. He has also earned himself a negative ex-employer feedback. It's a classic example of win-lose situation.

Let's now talk about Jay. He has been working in the same organisation for the last two years. He is in-charge of Client Relationship management and he also takes care of a parallel project on Knowledge Management. Although he is growing well in this organization, he has received some very exciting new career options. This means that he will have to leave this organisation.

He decides to talk over the matter with his boss. He explains his situation and asks him to relieve him of his duties so that he can pursue his dreams. His boss asks him for a week's time to evaluate the current situation. After having all the facts in place Jay's boss calls him for a meeting over lunch. He explains to Jay that they are in the middle of a very hectic quarter and to lose him at this juncture will hurt the company lots. He requests Jay to continue working for the next three months so that they can get a suitable replacement and also pass on the responsibilities smoothly. He makes provision for Jay to start working on his new career option and promises him of all the support. As things stand Jay is serving his last quarter in this organisation.

Now, let's evaluate this situation. Jay has proved himself to be a member of a team who cares for its success. He has been honest and open in communicating his situation with his boss. The workable compromise has helped both the parties. Most importantly the work has not suffered. He has left a mark of being an excellent team player and earned himself a tag of being a very professional and reliable person. Remember, he is also going to carry along with him, a very positive ex-employer feedback. This is a complete win-win situation.

It's now time for you to evaluate these two youngsters and make your pick. Remember for a good employee the doors of any organisation will always be open, even if he chooses to move on for the moment.

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The problem is not that you chose to move on, but how you do it. Plan your career with a lot of thought and advice from experienced friends and colleagues. Think beyond yourself, think about your organisation at large and responsibilities at hand, stay true to it all and you will realize that it's the best thing you can do for a great career.