



Changing Jobs in Unprecedented Times

Changing jobs can be a difficult step to take and amidst our current turbulent times, concerns may heighten—and rightfully so. Despite this, there is still good reason to move forward in your career path. Darren Berger and Andrew Todd explain why you should still consider changing jobs and that now may be a better time than you may think.

Until recently, many of us were following our typical daily routines which may have included sending children to school, going to the office for work, and preparing for a much-anticipated spring vacation or trip. Since then these norms have been dramatically altered and now many of us find ourselves working from home, providing online and home school lessons for children and not venturing anywhere near an airport or crossing a border. These are unprecedented times when we are worrying about personal and mental health, community well-being, and impacts to the economy and jobs.

Prior to the current situation, in speaking with many executives whether employed or in transition, the conversation would often focus on how they were looking for opportunities that would allow them to dramatically impact an organization, add value quickly, build on past experiences and skill-sets, while looking to gain new ones. Essentially, they were describing their dream job. The onset of COVID-19 has not changed those desires. What has changed is that executives may be hesitant to start looking for or accepting an offer for a great new opportunity given the heightened uncertainty.

Given that we are now in a changed job market and that COVID-19 impacts people differently, candidates will need to evaluate their respective situations to make the right decision for themselves. For some, it may kick-start a search that was never planned. For others, it may halt or delay their intended search or an interview process that was potentially close to being finalized. Whatever the impact, once the crisis subsides, there will be many good opportunities for executives to make a job change.

Why executives stay in their current roles

Before we explore the reasons as to why executives may decide to change jobs, it is important to consider some of the

reasons why they might remain in roles where they may not be fully satisfied or content. These include:

- a perception that their jobs or roles are secure
- an expectation that the company will find a way to continue to grow and succeed
- loyalty and comfort within an organization and/or team
- flexibility and agility at work given a good track-record and well-established trust
- location is convenient, or the ability to work remotely
- salary and compensation package are competitive

Opportunities for change present themselves (even in challenging times)

Changing a role or career path to align with your values, needs, skills and passions is both doable and the right decision even in today's uncertain times. The key to making the change is ensuring that you ask yourself the right questions, and that you have clarity, confidence, courage and commitment to knowing that what you are doing is ultimately for the long-term benefit of your career.

As we work through physical distancing, self-isolation, working from home and closure of non-essential businesses; people's current sense of job security is low. Being open minded to new opportunities is not only prudent but potentially a necessity.

In a market that is seeing massive economic pressure, there are always companies that find ways to offer a product or service that will solve business or consumer needs during a downturn and the eventual rebound. For example, Zoom, a cloud-based video communications platform has seen its revenues and [share price soar since the coronavirus pandemic started](#). There are also several industries providing essential services (i.e. healthcare, pharmaceutical, food distribution and retail, logistics and transportation, etc.) that are looking for strong and transformative leadership. In many instances, small and [medium sized businesses in manufacturing or distribution are shifting](#) focus to developing and [curating personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) to support healthcare and front-line workers, requiring strong strategic and business leadership.

Why people change jobs (even in challenging times)

There are many valid reasons to make a career change, including:

- **job security:** the perceived notion of job security has been on the decline for many years and people typically don't start and end their careers at one organization. The coronavirus pandemic has reduced employee's confidence even further
- **career advancement:** candidates get "stuck" in their current roles or organizations, and the only way for advancement is to make a move outside of an organization
- **new challenges:** having spent sufficient time in a current role, many leaders are looking for something different that is both challenging and fulfilling
- **gain new knowledge/skills:** continuous learning is a key to success and exceptional business leaders want to gain new insights and knowledge
- **work-life balance:** many individuals strive for more balance, and a new role may provide this through the opportunity to be closer to home, flexibility of hours, and remote working arrangements
- **culture and fit:** executives are looking for opportunities to work with other strong leaders in the right environment; the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this even more
- **compensation:** opportunity for pay increase or a more attractive compensation package overall, with an upside tied to the reemergence of a stronger post-crisis company

Leaving a role and the company you know well; leaving professional (and personal) relationships that have been built; and the fear of the unknown are all valid concerns when making a career change—regardless of the market conditions. The reality is, executives considering delaying a job change may be faced with more competition for positions once we move past the COVID-19 crisis and fallout.

Change is difficult for most people and a job change in turbulent times makes it even more challenging. However, your reasons to consider a career change remain, and should motivate you to continue with your search. COVID-19 notwithstanding, the old maxims hold true – *"there is nothing permanent except change"* and *"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading"*.

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