



The rpc Group of Companies
Executive Search and Selection Consultants
rpc search and selection
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Information Guide No.7

The First Steps in Career Change

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1. Introduction

Each one of us from time to time, needs to review the progress of our career to fully satisfy our aspirations, appraise our present position and circumstances, and possibly vary our plan for the future.

You may have arrived at such a point by choice, or as a result of circumstances. Which ever way you arrived at the situation in which you find yourself it can be used positively and to your advantage.

It presents you with opportunity and challenge, to review and redefine your career objectives and then move forward to attain them.

2. Psychological Effects of Career Change

It would be surprising if an upheaval such as a forced career change could simply be taken in our stride as though nothing had happened. As with other crisis' in our lives, we may find ourselves surprised and puzzled by our own emotions. We may become concerned about ourselves if we do not accept that it is normal to go through stages, it does happen to most people. It may be more distressing for some than it is for others as we are all different; it will help us to know what to expect and to be able to recognise what is happening. Here are the five phases through which it is usual to pass.

Initial Shock

Whether this takes the form of immobilisation, (inability to plan or perform even the simplest tasks) aimless pottering and involvement in pointless activity, this is a time when the mind has to make necessary adjustments.

Depression

During this phase we may feel low, even a feeling of defeat or hopelessness. Physically we may become lethargic with very little energy, sleeplessness or waking early. We may develop "hypochondriac" tendencies.

Euphoria

The real world is put aside. The situation may seem to be unimportant all appears to be wonderful. Physically we feel good but energy is limited and comes in burst. E.g. DIY jobs at home get attended to, as this is a way of using the energy and avoiding the reality.

Anger

Usually directed at 'the Company/colleagues'. Why me? How could they? Bitterness, resentment and recrimination. Friends and, particularly, family may have to bear the brunt of this period, but their help/support can be a strong positive factor in moving on to the next stage.

Acceptance

The situation is faced squarely – both the negative and positive factors. Decisions can be taken, actions taken, a way forward is clear and the positive opportunity that has been created comes into perspective. This will reduce anxiety and, most important of all our self confidence returns.

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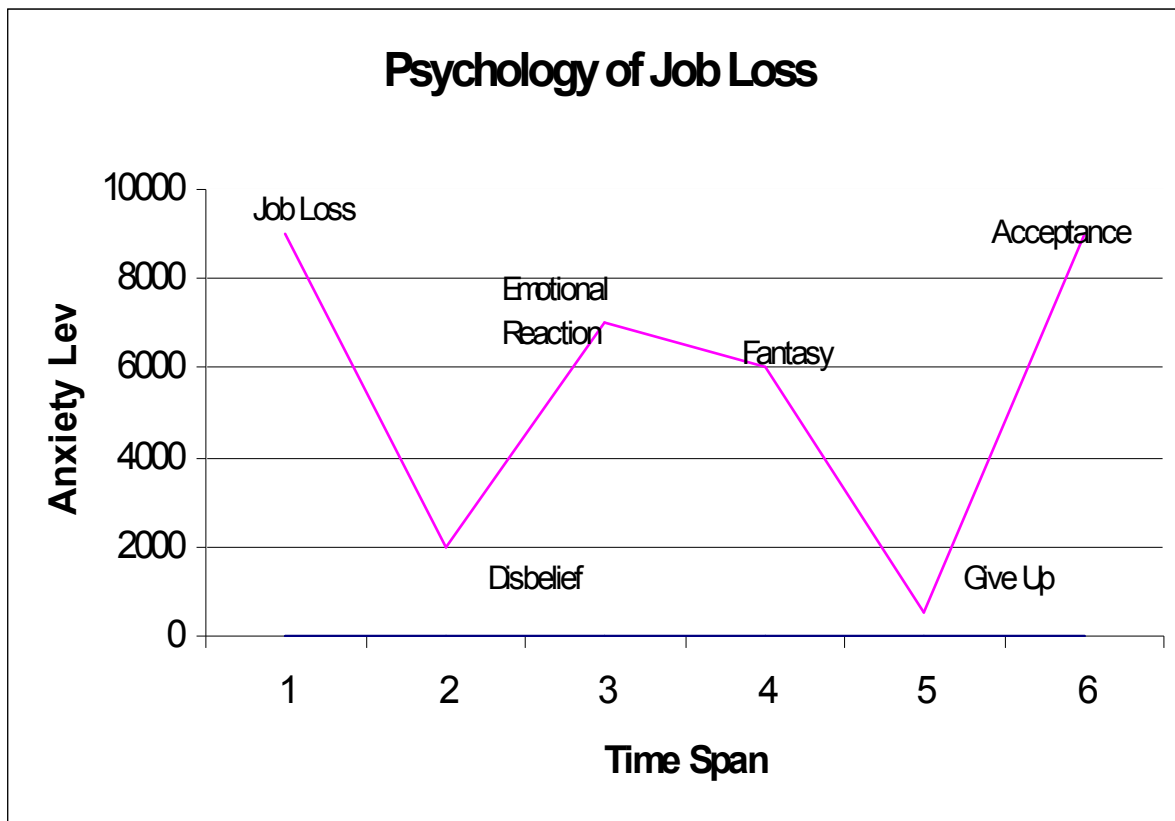
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These stages may be passed through rapidly or slowly; the majority of people can expect to spend some time in each before arriving at the last one. There is no claim to originality in this analysis; but to be aware of the sequence helps to reduce both the duration and intensity of these stages.

In summary, the challenge is therefore to:

- Understand and grow through the negative feelings
- Accept and adjust to the reality of the new situation
- Plan positively for the future



3. Dealing with Career Change

There are five key elements to dealing with this very challenging period:

Palliative

- Do things that you enjoy to off set the anxiety you feel, Go out with your friends, visit libraries, museums, gardens places of interest to you. Take part in activities that help you to relax.

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Attributive

- You are not responsible for the state of the economy or the jobs market so avoid beating yourself up. Place the blame elsewhere not with yourself or family and friends

Problem Solving

- Take action to get where you want to go. Identify how you can find the next step in your career and do something about it. Plan your job search and carry out the plan. The activities in this programme are all part of problem solving. We recommend no more than three or four hours a day, (you do not want to turn up for interview looking worn out.)

Look after Yourself

- Get equal amounts of rest and exercise, eat regularly and lead as normal a life as you can.

Look after Your Family

- You may find that your family are more upset by the situation than you are. They care about you and they do not want to see you at this crossroads. Try to consider them in your actions.

Don't get stuck

- Don't spend all of your time (or most of it) in just one of these five areas. Move through each of them appropriately.

Problem solving should take up 3 to 4 hours a day for 5 days a week (any more will wear you out – this is a completely new field for most people and most find it tiring – it will take you time to get used to it). If you are meeting someone to give you support – perhaps once a week – limit the time you spend complaining about the state of things and try to meet them at times without complaining at all (if you don't you may find people avoiding you).

4. First Steps in Career Change

ARRANGE REFERENCES

- Inform your boss or bosses if you are going to use their names.
- Write to friends and associates asking if they would be referees.
- Let referees know what specific jobs they are being used in connection with.
- Think of alternative referees – the same two or three may get fed up.

SORT OUT YOUR FINANCES

- Investigate what benefits and entitlements are available to you don't rely on others.

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- Calculate how much income you will have.
- Produce a weekly budget.
- If you have redundancy pay, discuss the option open for its use with: - an Accountant, your Bank Manager, your insurance company, your building society your, your partner/family
- If you have long periods before termination date try to live on a reduced income – experiment.
- Ensure that you have, or will be receiving all money that you are entitled to.
- Ask your employer if any money due can be paid ‘ex-gratia’ and therefore non-taxable if possible.

PREPARE CAREER HISTORY AND UPDATE YOUR CV / RESUME`

- Check and make notes about schools/college/university you attended with dates and qualifications.
- Check and make notes about companies you worked for, positions held, duties involved and why you left.
- Consider all your achievements in your working and social life and list them.
- Update your CV / Resume`

SEEK POSSIBLE CONTACTS

- Before approaching your contacts, consider the appropriate method to use.
- If you have contact with previous customers, suppliers or competitors, let them know you are in the job-market. (Providing you are not tied to a compromise agreement)
- Inform work colleagues what you are looking for.
- Arrange to meet colleagues and fellow redundant people after their termination date to share leads and information.
- Use information available from historic information to compile a list of addresses and telephone numbers of possible employers. e.g. business cards, networking acquaintances.

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