

Brave moves in difficult times

We all hope that the talk of looming recession will not affect us but the hype means many of us will think twice about leaving our current employer even if we are not satisfied with our work. But what are the long term effects of staying in a role or an organisation that doesn't suit us? Michelle Lucas, Executive Coach of local consultancy greenfields offers a way of assessing what's right for you.

How strong is your dissatisfaction? There's a difference between the Monday blues and a constant sense of dread as the alarm clock goes off. Do your bad days outnumber your good days each week?

How long have you felt this way? Is it just a difficult time right now which you believe will pass or do you struggle to remember back to a time when you really enjoyed your job?

Is your feeling shared by others in your business too? Are your work colleagues dissatisfied about the same things or is it only you? If it's the former, this can put your feelings into perspective – however if everyone is on a “downer” then it will make it much more difficult for you to maintain motivation or to get inspired about your situation.

What impact is your dissatisfaction having on your confidence ? Are you able to tackle your work challenges effectively or are you beginning to make silly mistakes, to forget things or to feel anxious approaching tasks that previously, you took in your stride? Often our confidence erodes so slowly we hardly notice – so think back to 6 months or a year ago, what difference do you notice?

What's your assessment of the cause of your dissatisfaction? It's important to differentiate between those things you can control and those you can't. If a boring workload is the problem – this is something basic that you could probably address. Conversely, a new boss, a change in organisational culture or a loss of key colleagues are more permanent shifts which you will have to adapt to.

Is the grass greener elsewhere? Can you find out if people doing similar jobs for other companies are experiencing the same pressures? Sometimes the economy affects whole segments of the market – and so moving companies would only bring you “more of the same”. If people in other organisations are happier, then the chances are you could be too.

How marketable are you? Do you think you could find a new job easily if you gave your notice in tomorrow or are you unsure that anyone would want to employ you again? If you are not confident in your skills, then go to an agency with your CV and get some feedback - if they anticipate difficulties then work out what you could do to address them before making your move.

In order to leave a company we need to have the self-confidence that we stand a good chance of getting a better job. Ironically, the longer we stay in a role that doesn't utilise our skills – the greater chance of both our skills and confidence being eroded. So truly consider the effectiveness of staying somewhere where you are not happy – if you constantly wish you weren't there, then you probably shouldn't be!

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