

## TIME TO MOVE ON OR MOVE UP?

### CCI Newsletter: October 2006

**While it may be obvious to people who are unemployed, about to be unemployed or extremely unhappy in their jobs that something must be done, it is also true for many others – but they don't even know it. Although less apparent, people who can say no more than: "My job's OK", are usually giving the signal that a proactive job-search should be taken. That is because a job should be a thrill, not just an acceptable way of living. But if you are too busy earning a living to search for a new opportunity, how are you going to do it? Then there are people who want an increased challenge within the existing firm or find, that they, personally, have been too long in the same role. How to move up? Practical suggestions follow.**

### **The Job Thrill Tests**

Is your job a thrill? Can you say: "I love my job"? Would you assess your job as more thrill than struggle? Most of us put up with our employment situation feeling that it is 'acceptable' especially when we are used to living this way and cannot see a practical means to do something about changing it. Let us ask another question: If someone knocked on your door with a job offer that is truly exciting for you, in the right location and at the right salary, would you accept it? Are you proud of what you do for a living today? Are you following your passion at work? Can you say your work involves positive emotions equal to or exceeding those in your hobbies, sports or after-work activities? Do you come home from work in a good mood, happy to share them with your mate? If you cannot answer "yes" to most of these questions, now ask yourself why not. Perhaps the job is not quite what it should be. And perhaps you have never stopped before to ask such questions.

Part two of this personal questionnaire begins with: Am I in a position where I am no longer learning any more about this job? Have I been in this job too long? Are there

people above me with whom I feel I should be at a peer level? Do I need more money, more prestige or more challenges? If the answer is: "yes" to many of these questions, now ask yourself why that is so. Perhaps your present work position is not quite what it could be.

### **Why People are Dissatisfied with their Jobs**

Three overarching issues explain the myriad of reasons why people are not thrilled in their jobs. They are: (i) the relationship with their superiors, (ii) the need for increasing challenges, (iii) an individual's temperamental disposition.

#### ***The Relationship with your Superior***

While CCI has a separate paper dealing with this subject alone – the relationship with your immediate superior – suffice it to say that 99% of people leave jobs because of the untenable relationship with their immediate superior. Although the reason for leaving the job for such people may be candy-coated in other excuses (more pay, a better opportunity, time to move on, etc.) rarely do those excuses, in and of themselves, justify such an action. For example, those 47% of people who change jobs within 12 to 18 months of being hired do so for no more, on average, than 5% salary increase. The relationship between a boss and a reporting person works best if it is based on the idea of a partnership. And a partnership works well if it is based on respect. If the boss treats the employee disrespectfully or the employee finds it difficult to respect the boss, the relationship is bound to fail.

#### ***The Need for increasing Challenges***

What drives people? People left to their own devices search for and overcome challenges. Then they try to master skills and in doing so they attempt to attain

competence. On achieving competence, people seek new levels of complexity in what they do. People in all walks of life, in all ages, follow this pattern.

Babies do it as they stack one block on top of another; after success, yet another block is added. How does the baby feel when the ends are accomplished? A big smile on baby's face says it all. Then baby smashes the blocks down and starts all over again to ensure that the success is repeatable. Finally when it is, baby attempts to add yet another block. You follow this process too; your blocks may be more complex but rest assured it is the same process.

### ***An Individual's Temperamental Disposition***

Not only do people not know their own PAVF<sup>1</sup> talents, often they see their strengths as weaknesses. For example, an impatient person (P) may deride this impatience, when in fact it would be an asset to a person in a results-oriented position, such as sales. A very thorough person (A) may find the desire to dig too much into detail a drag, but often this attention to detail prevents a company from getting in trouble later. A wide-eyed dreamer (V) may worry about having feet not quite on the ground but V's are agents of change and change is necessary for survival of any organization. A very friendly person (F) may deride this liking of people as a weakness, especially of being too 'soft'. However the strength comes from being the type of person who readily gets people to cooperate where others would fail to engender group enthusiasm.

To select a job properly, you must, first, understand the PAVF demands of the position itself. Therefore, if the position is mostly an A-oriented job (detailed and repetitive), it must fit a person who is naturally disposed toward A, that is, one who displays an A talent, and so on. If you select a job not disposed to your personal PAVF nature, while you may be able to do

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<sup>1</sup> The four characteristics are: P = Producer, A = Analyzer, V = Visionary, F = Friend, the temperaments used by CCI that evolved from Hippocrates in 350 B.C. For more information, please ask CCI.

the job, you will never be able to excel at it. You will certainly never thrill at it. It is much better to have people enjoying what they do than have those who are fighting 'human nature' by performing task that are not natural to them. Well disciplined and strong they may be, but becoming a super-performer in that trade will always remain elusive. And getting a thrill from it will be a very rare event indeed.

### **Time to move on or up?**

From the author's perspective and experience of having worked on career issues with hundreds of individuals in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Calgary, Barcelona, Vienna, Russia and Shanghai, the time to move on is when you cannot answer 'yes' to the first group of questions or 'no' to the second group of the opening paragraph. It's that simple. What are you waiting for? You deserve more and lining up and getting that great new job is a fully achievable task.

The easy way to go about it is to decide to invest a half-month's salary to program the career approach for the rest of your life, that is, to hire a good career coach. However for those of you who read papers like this in order to initiate your own program, we suggest the following:

### **Remedies are as simple as the Reasons for Dissatisfaction**

#### ***The Relationship with your Superior***

Three options exist to try to improve the relationship with your superior. (a) Work on what you, yourself, can do to change your own attitude and actions in a positive way towards your superior. Give the effort no more than two months to show signs of succeeding. If it does not prove out, move onto the remaining two suggestions. (b) Begin the process of 'training your boss'. A paper of this title can be found in our series of articles (August 2006) illustrating how to approach instituting such changes. (c) The third option is to move on and begin that search for a new job. Usually people who engage in (a) and (b) end up at (c) anyway.

### ***The Need for increasing Challenges***

You can request and demand new challenges from your superior. If the reply is that you must first show competence in what you are already doing, then, after ascertaining what the measures for such competence are, set about to exceed those measures. Then make a further request for tasks of increased complexity of your superior. If new challenges are not forthcoming then you must take the steps to find a new job.

Sometimes people are quite pleased with their roles but are ambitious to move upwards. To accelerate the climb usually, we feel, requires the involvement of a coach, to strategize, critically assess, etc. (Our own success rate at CCI at helping people move up is near 100%.) This is an investment in self that usually proves to provide a sound return very quickly. (Imagine, for comparison, the improvement of a high jumper with a coach versus an athlete training alone without a coach. Which will win the competition?)

### ***An Individual's Temperamental Disposition***

Clearly, if you do not fit the PAVF demands of the position itself, you will never be happy in the job. This is a primary and overriding imperative. That is, failure to match here often results in your superior's dissatisfaction with you and hence, the poor relationship. It also can lead to an inability to have the right challenge. So this PAVF job match is paramount to your own recipe for job success.

While a coach is probably needed here, you can tackle it on your own, as an initial step by honestly assessing yourself, recognizing that none of us has a full deck of cards. So if you are very active and results oriented (P) you will never thrill at a job where patience is an ongoing necessity. If you are careful, cautious and thorough (A), you will never thrill at a job where chaos reigns supreme. If you are creative and full of ideas (V), you will never thrill at a job that is big on detail, has little variety and keeps you under strict control. Finally if you are empathetic and sympathetic with others (F)

you will not thrill at a job where you must continuously make strong demands on other people and need to deliver the goods against strict timelines. First, to assess yourself, choose two of these characteristics that fit and reject the other two, once and for all.<sup>2</sup> I know, I know, you can do the others and you often do, quite successfully – BUT YOU WILL NEVER THRILL AT THEM – and that is the point. If you are not with us at this juncture, you should probably move onto another intellectual pursuit. However, assuming you are still with us, the second thing to do, after you have selected the new job type that fits you as a PV (for example) is, once on the job, find an A person and a F person to shore up your natural weaknesses.

### **Conclusion**

Succinctly, while still employed you may discover that you are not really happy in the job it is our suggestion that you take steps to find another. Believe us, the right job for you is there; it is closer than you think! Do this alone, or with a proven coach – one is usually faster than the other, however, the choice is yours. And if you want to move up the ladder at your existing company, we suggest that you can accelerate it more with a coach at your side.

**Bill Caswell**

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<sup>2</sup> This is the summary of a six-hour analysis, so take this 3-minute written dissertation for what it is worth.