

Moving on from the Law

A study by a major life insurance company revealed that 35% of people who left their current employment for pastures new did so because of stress. LawCare's aim is to support lawyers in their work, but inevitably there are some who would prefer to move on into a new profession.

REVIEWING THE SITUATION

Before you make the decision to change career, ask yourself some questions:

- ▶ When did you last take time off? Do you need a good holiday?
- ▶ Would you feel differently if you could find a way to reduce the stress?
- ▶ Are you bored? Would a change in specialism or area of practice help?
- ▶ Do you need additional training or support to help you do your job better?
- ▶ If a particular person were to leave your workplace, would you feel differently?
- ▶ Does your organisation know that you are unhappy? Might they be willing to make changes to keep you?
- ▶ Do your skills align with your current career path, and where will that path lead?
- ▶ What would a career change require? Could your education and expertise transfer to a new career?

THE THREE LEVELS OF CAREER CHANGE

1. Job Change

Doing the same type of work in a different setting, such as a more flexible organisation or even just changing to a different department or specialism.

2. Career Alteration

Utilising your legal skills in a different setting - teaching at a law school for example.

3. Career Transition

Moving to a new career significantly different from the practice of law. This could involve retraining.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

The grass isn't always greener elsewhere, and starting somewhere new can be difficult. Remember that you are a well educated and highly trained professional, who is worth employing. If you choose to leave the law altogether, don't feel that the time you spent training has been wasted: your skills will be valuable elsewhere, and they don't obligate you to remain in a job you don't enjoy. And don't make any drastic career decisions if you are depressed or experiencing another mental health concern.

CAREERS COUNSELLING

Be your own careers counsellor: give yourself a career “check-up”. Put together a comprehensive and detailed personal history including your professional status, education, employment, professional affiliations, marital and family background and financial needs. Remember to include all of your experiences in practice, including administration, staff relations or finance. Talk this through with someone, or brainstorm on a blank sheet of paper. Your aim should be to evaluate your career goals, clarify your values and priorities, and develop a concrete and realistic plan for changing job or career

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ What are your major and secondary skills, interests and capabilities?
- ▶ What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- ▶ What part of your work do you enjoy most? What do you dislike about your job?
- ▶ What do you do for fun? Could any of these lead to a potential job or career choice?
- ▶ Are you prepared to take a pay cut in favour of greater job satisfaction?
- ▶ Are you prepared to re-qualify in another career, with all the necessary cost, study and training that will entail?
- ▶ Has the time come to go it alone in that business venture you’ve always wanted to try?

RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

You may prefer to seek expert professional help, from a recruitment agency or professional careers counsellor or coach, to get your CV up-to-date and as attractive as possible. You could also explore temporary or contract employment opportunities as a transitional option to get you out of an unhappy situation and to buy you some thinking time.

*Call LawCare’s free, independent, confidential helpline
on **1800 991 801** for immediate support or visit
www.lawcare.ie*