

**Career Planning**

# Don't Quit Your Job Before Asking Yourself These Questions

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**Summary.** If you're thinking about quitting your job, first do a quick analysis. Is the organization you work for the source of your concern? Then, you might look for a similar job with another employer. Is the job the problem? Then, you should consider making a move within your... [\*\*more\*\*](#)

Is it time to quit my job? This is a question we've all asked ourselves at one point or another. Most people wait until they feel they *must* leave their job or organization, and that puts them at a disadvantage.

They might end up choosing an “exit job” rather than the right next career step.

Don’t let this happen to you. Instead, be proactive and take the opportunity, at least once a year, to evaluate your organization and your position in it, along with your personal career assets. The three questions below should help you assess where you stand.

### **Are you working for the right organization?**

Make sure you don’t passively ride downhill with an organization in trouble. Here are seven signs that should concern you:

- A merger, acquisition, or change of control has taken place, and you are not a part of the new changes.
- Management is criticized again and again in the business press.
- The organization does not invest in new products or services and chooses to focus on old ways of doing things.
- People you respect are leaving the company.
- Profits are down, or if it’s a nonprofit, contributions are down.
- Outsiders are hired into management positions and begin to bring their own friends.
- Cost-cutting measures are implemented with little notice or rationale.

If four or five of these signs are true for your organization, take a critical look at it. Talk to the people you know who have left the company. Look it up in the business press. Is it an organization in trouble? There *are* times when you might want to choose to work for an organization in trouble, but only if there is a career advantage — like being part of the turnaround team or learning an important new skill.

### **Are you in the right position?**

It might have been a great job for you last year, but is it still? A great job is one that helps you grow and learn. It’s one in which the people recognize you for the job you are doing, and a lot of what you’re working on is exciting and rewarding. As soon as you start thinking that the political part of your job is more important than the work you

are doing, take a closer look at your position. The following seven signs will help you see the risks:

- Your bonuses or raises are no longer above average.
- Your boss circumvents you and deals directly with your subordinates or peers.
- You are no longer invited to important meetings or to go out to lunch with colleagues.
- You are doing things you disagree with, or you believe you have to conceal what you really think.
- You're making dumb mistakes all the time and can't figure out why they are happening.
- Your mentors have left the organization or fallen into disfavor.
- You can no longer predict promotions or who will be seen as a top performer.

If your organization is a great one, and your job isn't working for you, look to find another position in another part of your company. The people who can help you most are those who have recently moved within the organization or those whose positions span more than one business area — like auditing or human resources. Otherwise, time to tune up your resume. Don't get hung up on whose "fault" it is; if it's time to leave, it's time to leave.

### **How are you positioned for your future career?**

Unlike the first two questions that focus on the possible risks or liabilities in your current employer and job, this last question gives you a chance to see your situation from the other side of the balance sheet. Review your personal career assets. Are these statements true for you?

- You have a good reputation both inside your organization and outside in your profession.
- People call you for help and advice, and you try to help them.
- You know what you want to learn next and have spent your own money to enhance your career or expand your knowledge in the last year.
- You know what the hot topics are in your field.

- You know what the next technical challenge will be in your field.
- You have a set of professional contacts you can call on for help or support.
- You volunteer your time in a number of ways.

If you can say “yes” to five or six of the seven statements above, you don’t have to worry. You are well positioned to manage your career. Your personal assets will help balance the liabilities of your current job or employer. If you didn’t score well on this list, you can easily change things. Just begin doing what’s described in the seven statements. Start by contributing to your colleagues, community, and profession, and your professional network — and reputation — will expand with it.

So, if you’re thinking about quitting your job, do a quick analysis. Is the organization you work for the source of your concern? Then, you might look for a similar job with another employer. Is the job the problem? Then, you should consider making a move within your company before you decide to leave. And, finally, are you prepared to make your next move? Build your personal career assets to position your career for the future.

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