When to start looking for new job or different role

Calls with job offers from all directions: Be clear in your mind so that you don’t stagnate. FOTOSEARCH

By SCOTT BELLOWS

Posted Wednesday, May 18 2016 at 17:44

In Summary

- Do not let paralysis over too many choices or poor organisational or supervisor support make you feel trapped in a job position. Explore your options and look for your appropriate employment fit.

Prof Sheena Iyengar at Columbia University conducted a famous study on food purchases. She discovered that when a shop places multiple items for sale on display, 33 per cent more customers come to a booth or enter into a shop.

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Interestingly, when many objects to purchase flood the store, only three per cent of customers buy any merchandise during a visit. However, when only a few items appear on display in the store, a stunning 30 per cent of shoppers bought products.

Consumers like choice in theory and get drawn into a store because of the allure of choice. But when inside a store, customers become overwhelmed by so many choices and actually buy dramatically less. Likewise, the paradox of choice permeates the labour market and our job selections.
Often in developing economies, excess demand for work results in an acute supply shortage of desirable jobs. The labour demand mismatch causes a worker to be ever so thankful that he or she even landed a job at all, that they become immensely happy with almost any work scenario.

However, as Kenya continues to grow economically, interesting and challenging jobs for skilled workers will proliferate. So, Kenyans now feel something funny in their gut that earlier generations felt less often: the agony of choice.

Did you choose your job position from among many other jobs available for you? If so, all the time and effort you put into looking into each post increased your awareness of the benefits of each position. You therefore become less happy in the position you ultimately chose no matter how good or bad the new job turns out.

The burning question on the minds of millions of Kenyans “should I quit my job” both stresses and intrigues us in equal measure.

Today Business Talk continues its series on whether employees should quit or stay with their current employers after tackling job satisfaction last week.

We spend more than 35 per cent of our awake time every month at our workplaces. Then add the workplace duties we take home with us and, in some industries, work intervals may exceed 50 per cent of our non-sleeping schedule per week, per month, per year after year after year.

In an average lifetime, a conservative estimate of our time in offices and places of work exceeds 90,000 hours. Inasmuch, deciding on the right career-job-life fit proves no trivial task.

Researcher Barry Schwartz of Swarthmore College investigates how choice decreases our happiness. The paradox of choice sometimes leads to decision fatigue that wears us down and we give up searching for new roles. We simply give up in the face of so many choices. Younger employees face a barrage of career choices from medicine to foreign relations to NGO work to business to IT.

More experienced workers with strong CVs push forward through onslaughts of possible positions within their industries of choice. Should they become a manager, a specialist, relocate for a promotion, take a calmer position— name it?

Schwartz states emphatically that “the logic behind the presumption that if some choice is good, more choice is better seems compelling”, but ultimately falls apart under empirical scrutiny.

Try to cognitively understand that you made the best job selection possible and that every employment relationship comes with ups and downs. In so doing, you minimise your selection regret.
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One favourite indicator to decide whether you should remain in your specific job position revolves around perceived organisational support. Researchers Eisenberger and Stinglhamber delineate how employees form broad perceptions concerning the extent to which their organisation values their inputs and cares about their well-being.

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Employees do not want to work for an entity that fails to appreciate their contributions and holds no benevolence towards them.

Therefore, ask yourself the following four statements that represent different levels of satisfaction that you hold with your current workplace in each category.

Take each declaration and judge it in your mind on the following 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 point scale whereby each number represents your following opinion of your workplace as: Extremely Dissatisfied (1), Dissatisfied (2), Somewhat Dissatisfied (3), Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied (4), Somewhat Satisfied (5), Satisfied (6), Extremely Satisfied (7).

Write your numeric answer for each of the following proclamations:
This organisation really cares about my wellbeing.
This organisation really values my opinions.
Help is available from the organisation when I have a problem.
The organisation would be willing to help if I needed a special favour.

Now add up the numbers for each of your answers. Take your total and divide it by four to give you your average response. If you scored a 5.5 or higher, then you enjoy a good job fit. If your average result resulted between a 3.5 and 5.5, start contemplating different options in the medium term.

If you sadly rated your job satisfaction on average as below 3.5, then you should start an immediate search for a new job for the sake of your psychological health and wellbeing. However, sometimes organisations represent stellar places to work, but a particular supervisor causes the problem.

If in such a scenario, ask yourself the following four questions as well using the same seven-point scale:

- My supervisor really cares about my wellbeing.
- My supervisor really values my opinions.
- Help is available from my supervisor when I have a problem.
- My supervisor would be willing to help if I needed a special favour.

Now divide your total by four for the supervisor questions too and see if you should stay or go. Supervisors who provide extremely low support to employees generally make poor bosses and staff should look to switch positions within the firm or switch companies entirely.

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Explore your options and look for your appropriate employment fit.

Next Thursday Business Talk continues assessing more variables to ascertain whether you should quit or stay with your job. Share your own job quitting or staying stories with other Business Daily readers through #KenyaTurnover on Twitter.

Rating
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