

Up in the Air: Every job is a jumping off point to something else

Written by Julie Desmond • Plan Your Career
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A manager at a middle-sized but high-profile organization in the Twin Cities is never bothered when great employers move on. “This is not a place people stay,” she said. “It’s more a place you leap off from.” This is a positive attitude, and also generous, considering the time she invests in training new employees on the same positions every year or two. Maybe the reality is that, if you’re good, most companies, most jobs, are simply a jumping off point; maybe people who are good are constantly assessing their next giant leaps.

If you are finally working again after the economically-imposed vacation many people have been on, you might think it’s absurd to start looking for something new. When you peer down the road, however, you will see that nothing stays the same. You are in your dream job now; any chance that position will look the same in a year? In three years? And if the job does stay the same, what will you look like in a year or two? Will you be the same person, having mastered the challenges this position affords you right now?

Star employees go into each work day with an eye open to opportunities. Ask yourself, “What can I do with this meeting, this conversation, this day to move toward something better?” This Leaping Off approach forces you to think creatively, learn continuously and treat people as if they matter because, actually, they do. The “something better” you discover could be benefit to your company or to yourself and, either way, you win.

Keep an eye on the door - you are more likely to see an opportunity if you are looking for it - but don’t let a foot get out the door until it’s time. You will be prepared to take a leap forward if you have been performing well in your current position. Our manager was proud to send her people on; she was able to provide an excellent reference because she knew these employees were that good.

During job search workshops, I tell people this is only one of their many future job changes. To a one, job seekers nod their heads and sigh and seem to want to strangle me for saying it, but it is true. Think forward, expand your outlook and earn stellar references and you’ll find you are soon leaping in any direction you choose.

What challenges are you facing in your career right now? Write to julie@insightnews.com