

What's your next move?

Lifelong careers are rapidly becoming a thing of the past, at least in Western Europe and North America. Statistics indicate that people now have more than three careers over the length of their working life.

However the definition of career change tends to be rather unclear. Is it changing functions within a company – e.g. from marketing to operations? Is it moving from one company to another? Is it moving to a completely different occupation, like architect to chef? Each of these moves entails a progressively bigger change and each presents different challenges.

The University of Nebraska defines career change as moving to a new job family. A job family is a grouping of jobs that have a continuum of similar knowledge, skills and abilities and have associated and related key behaviors. In other words one can move up through jobs at the lowest levels of the family to those at the highest by continually building on a common base of knowledge, skill and abilities. The professions – medicine, engineering, accountancy, etc. – are examples.

Moving to a different job family implies the need for different knowledge, skills and abilities, and career changes of this magnitude are not easy. Research indicates that it takes individuals upwards of three years to make a career move of this type successfully. Nor is the process of change smooth; it's a bumpy ride with lots of psychological ups and downs. A major career change is a life change, not totally unlike getting married or having children.

One of the first things one needs to think about in terms of making a career change is what transferable skills you possess. What do you already know and what skills and abilities do you possess that can be applied to the new job? In the famous

Monty Python lion tamer sketch a man who has been an accountant for 20 years wants to become a lion tamer but the only thing associated with lion taming that he brings to the new job is a hat with the words "Lion Tamer" on it.

Career moves are currently a popular theme of articles and television shows. They follow people who do things like giving up a job as a banker and becoming a sheep farmer. In every case the central issue is the difference in necessary core skills. One of the questions to ask yourself when contemplating a career change is what new skills you need to develop and what new knowledge you need to acquire.

Richard Bolles, the author of *What Colour is Your Parachute?*, says the key thing is to identify what you really enjoy doing. One of the traps that people fall into, he says, is making the decision to change careers based on what the market wants rather than what they want. Bolles says it is critical to put yourself and your needs and wishes first.

Professor Ed Schein at MIT talks about "career anchors" which he defines as "a combination of perceived areas of competence, motives, and values that you would not give up". His point is the flipside of what Bolles says. As well as thinking about what you *want* to have, you need to think about what you *currently* have that you don't want to leave behind. Often new jobs and new opportunities appear seductively attractive. The lure of

the C suite, the romance of an idyllic country life, the idea of freedom from the constraints of your present company, the opportunity to work for yourself, all play to one's fantasies but there is great truth in the old saying that the grass always appears greener on the other side of the fence.

There is virtually no area of endeavor where success can be attained without others. Becoming something like a concert pianist or a successful novelist may appear to be purely a matter of individual effort but without impresarios, agents, publishers, publicists, and a variety of other people the piano solo will never be heard and the novel will never be read. One of the most critical elements of success in any venture is the network of relationships and associations that one makes. Moving to a new career successfully means building a new network of people and groups that can and will provide advice, help, support, counsel, and necessary skills and knowledge. Before making a career change, work on building the network you will need.

And finally, you need to spend time to develop your arguments and rationale for the new career – your selling pitch. At some point you will have to sell the idea to someone, maybe your spouse, maybe a new employer, or maybe the bank. No matter who it is, if you want to get their support you will need to have thought things through carefully.

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strategy people performance

Penumbra is a strategic business consultancy. We bring clarity by using research to drive understanding and direction. We deliver success by balancing experience and innovative thinking.

Whatever your aspiration, we'll provide the tools, information and analysis to turn your strategy into operational reality, in a way that motivates your people to outperform the market.

Overview

As a strategic business consultancy, our expertise is in helping our clients executing strategies and delivering results.

We achieve this by combining a robust management planning system with a focus on people which drives alignment and commitment

We work in partnership with talented and committed leadership teams to help organisations build corporate value with a wide range of customised, cross-functional advisory programmes and services delivered from four complementary service groups:

Strategy

(Development, formulation, implementation and alignment)

Our innovative **Penumbra Balance** approach creates dynamism, drives and sustains momentum and makes strategy real for stakeholders

Organisational Development

(Behavioural issues)

We call our holistic approach **Balanced Motivation** which encompasses activities that improve performance both for the organisation and the individual

Research and Insight

Our stimulating **Clarity** approach draws on our business consulting skills to deliver a mix of business analysis and market research which

provides compelling insights for winning decisions.

Operations

The Operations practice brings all of our hands-on practical experience to bear on execution and delivery of results.

Our technology enabling approach called **Totality** facilitates business focussed services and solutions, aligned to business needs, for people, processes and tools.

Why Us?

Organisations turn to us when they:

- Want to find a new strategic direction
- Have created a strategy and now need to execute it
- Need to drive more value from existing initiatives
- Have a big issue to resolve, usually dependent on lasting employee buy-in
- Need to explore new ways to drive value
- Need a breakthrough result
- Are seeking measurable results

Our Experience

We have real world experience spanning 20 years with our clients. This includes working with:

BP, Citibank, Morgan Chase, WestLB, RBS, UBS, Bankers Trust, Kleinwort Benson, Coutts, Natwest, Intel, Nokia, Adobe, Kall-Kwik, Glaxo Smith Kline,

Dupont, Pfizer, Savills, British Council, Clifford Chance, British Airways, Gillette, Unilever, Shell, Volvo, Vauxhall, British Gas, TradeStation, MWB Business Exchange, Investors in People, University of Cambridge

On projects such as:

Strategic Planning, Strategy development and implementation, Culture change, Post-Merger Integration, Vision, Purpose and Values, Current State Analysis, Organisation Re-design, Transformational Change, Client Focus Strategies, Perception Studies, Client and Staff Engagement surveys, Global Rebranding, Know your Customer, Market Forecasting, Consumer Insight, Market Segmentation, Process optimisation, Lean/Six Sigma, Project Management, ERP Systems Roll-out, Market Research, Financial Modelling, Franchise Start-up Evaluation models, Cost Benefit Analysis, Implementation Alignment, Strategic Alignment, Complex Database development, Custom Application development, Supply Chain Optimisation

Covering diverse sectors such as:

Financial Services, Pharmaceuticals, Manufacturing, Energy, Mobile Telecoms, Travel and Tourism, Aviation, Property, Hi-tech and Business Services