**7 career mistakes holding you back**

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## *Here’s what to do if you’re stuck in your job*

By

### Serena

At some point in your career, you’re likely to feel like you’re in a rut. Maybe you took a job for the money thinking that it’s temporary and five years later, you’re still there. Or you’ve signed on for a position you were told was one thing and suddenly you realize you’re wearing 20 hats — and hardly any of them are the ones you thought you’d be wearing.

Though you may feel stuck when these career roadblocks crop up, there are concrete ways to circumvent them. Here are seven common career mistakes that can trip you up and how, with some proactive work, you can overcome them and tackle your current job (and future jobs) with renewed perspective and purpose.

**1. Taking a job for the money — then feeling like you can’t leave**

A lucrative job can sometimes be like a siren song: It pulls you in because the money is too attractive to resist, but then you find yourself in a role that makes you unhappy. For instance, you took a role as a consultant because the pay is high, but now you don’t have any work-life balance because your career is all-encompassing.

“At certain ages and certain stages, your career is number one. [But as you’re] building your career, you’ll start looking towards your overall life goals: ‘How does the job or career that I’ve selected fit into all the other things that I want in life?’” explains Bonnie Diamond, career-management consultant at global career-management agency Right Management.

What to do if you land in a high-paying job that is affecting your overall quality of life? Diamond recommends creating an exit plan, a budget and a timeline. “You may say, ‘I’ll work really hard at this job for the next two years and sock away money so that I can look for a career change that will give me more satisfaction on the personal side.’”

And while you remain in that job, keep an open mind. “Observe other people that you work with and see what type of projects they are on and if any of those might be a better fit for you,” adds Victoria Crispo, managing partner and career coach at Morganville, N.J.-based Career Services USA. “There may actually be an opportunity at the same organization that fits you better.”

**2. Taking a job without a full understanding of the role**

Searching for a job is a lot like dating, says Diamond: “We look for someone who has certain characteristics but in the end we’re looking for the fit, the ability to work together, get along together and have a lot of the same values and life goals,” she explains. So, what happens when that great job you take isn’t the sterling suitor you expected? “If you feel that you’re seeing your job responsibilities change, schedule some time with your direct supervisor,” suggests Crispo. “Be prepared to present your case in a way to explain this is what you [understood you] were hired for and these are your skills and how you feel you really fit this type of role.”

To try to avoid getting into the scenario in the first place, don’t forget that you’re an equal player in the equation when you’re seeking a job. Do your due diligence and talk to people who’ve worked at the company and thoroughly research the organization and the culture on sites like Glassdoor.com. “If you see common themes throughout the reviews, take them into account,” explains Crispo. “But also once you get to the interview process, really use that as your opportunity to interview your interviewer and the company as much as they’re interviewing you.”

**3. Getting too comfortable in a position**

The challenge in staying in the same job for years is that when it’s time to look for a new role, the perception can be that your career has stalled. “Career management is managing your career the same as you manage every other piece of your life,” advises Diamond. “We need to be forever learning and improving our skill set, being current, being flexible, being up on technology, being aware of what’s going on in the industry.” A big piece is knowing how to market yourself: Have you played many roles within that job? Have you been with the company through times of change? Be clear about your own personal branding statement — what you bring to the table that no one else does.

And never underestimate the value of joining professional organizations. You may be interested in event planning but you’ve never worked in the field. So, join the conference committee of a professional association, advises Crispo. And a hobby or interest can open up unexpected career opportunities. “Maybe you start a book club, and if that book club is joined by people who are doing a variety of different things in different industries, it will open up your network,” she explains.

**4. Working in a specialized role in a shrinking field**

There are benefits and drawbacks to having a specialized role. “In an online search, if somebody has very specific skills that can make them very hire-able,” explains Diamond. The flip side is when that niche is in a field that’s not as significant as it once was. “If you’re in retail today, you need to be looking at e-tail because it’s not going away. If you’re in technology and your product isn’t on a mobile app, beware. You’ve got to really be watching and in this world of fast-changing technology, we’re only as good as the skills that we have.”

Still, regardless of how specialized your skills are, they can be transferable to another industry. Crispo recommends taking inventory of your strengths and enlisting friends and family members to help you. “Sometimes the outside perspective is really helpful,” she says. “Especially if you’ve been in the same career and doing the same thing for a long time, you may not really even be aware of what you’re excelling at.”

**5. Allowing your skills to get out of date**

It’s never too late to update your skills. In fact, if you feel you’re not growing in your position, take a proactive approach to rectifying that. Talk to your employer and ask about opportunities for further training and professional development — and be prepared to explain how it benefits the company. “Be able to say, ‘If I was able to learn X, Y, Z, I could do things like this,’” says Crispo. “Give a good argument for why it’s important for you to gain this skill in your current job.” In the end, keeping your skills fresh is an investment in yourself “just as you might have invested in yourself or your parents invested in you and sent you for a college education,” explains Diamond.

**6. Staying in a role too long out of fear**

Inertia in a career can happen because of the fear of making a move. “They say that usually you make a change when the pain of where you are is greater than the pain of the unknown,” says Crispo. “It’s a common issue that a lot of people deal with — that feeling of being stuck.” If this sounds like you, it’s a good time to start brainstorming with a friend or family member or a trusted colleague about ways to make a change. “Take it in steps because it took you a long time to get you to that point of feeling stuck. It may take a few steps to get out of it as well,” Crispo adds.

**7. Getting out of touch with your “values and drivers”**

Managing your career is looking at a long-range picture of your professional accomplishments and your life, says Diamond. The trick is that sometimes we lose sight of the things that are really important to us because we go on autopilot in a job. “We do an exercise with our candidates called values and drivers that allows you to take a look at what’s important to you—what are your deal-breakers, what are the things you must have and what are the things you must avoid. You really need to be true to yourself.”

If, for instance, you really aspire to work for a nonprofit but are firmly ensconced in the corporate world, figure out an action plan to make that transition. It may not happen overnight — or even in a year — but you can plot a course now so that it becomes an eventual reality.

*The story* [*“7 common career mistakes that can hold you back”*](http://www.dailyworth.com/posts/2765-what-to-do-if-you-re-stuck-in-your-job) *originally appeared on* [*Dailyworth.com.*](http://www.dailyworth.com)