



## Job hopper or career strategist?

When I coach people, particularly those who have been made redundant I find that attitudes towards finding a new job vary enormously, from the 'I'll do anything that pays the bills' to 'I am not prepared to take a step down in status or less money'. Some want to get even further up the promotion ladder. Some may need the money but their desire for status stops them considering anything less than their former role. So some are hopping from job to job and some are planning what they do.

Is there a right or wrong approach?

As a coach I don't judge.. people need to do what is right for them, I am not in their shoes or living their life so who am I to judge their needs and or wishes. What I do is try to help them unpick what is driving those desires and whether they are genuine motivations or constructs that they have adopted because they think that they ought to feel that way.

Fundamentally there are lots of trade offs in finding in a new job: some people realise through coaching that actually they would be happier in a more local job that paid less than their old one but which allowed them to get home to read a story to the kids at bedtime. Can you put a price on that? Others are driven by such a genuine desire to make a real contribution to improving the lives of others that they are striving for maximum influence across maximum area.

In the post WW2 years Edgar Schien analysed what motivated people at work – I find his research interesting as it was done on US servicemen.. note the 'men'.. he did not find that there was a group of people who go to work for social reasons. Schien said that people were motivated by the desire to:

- Exercise *Technical/Functional* expertise, to be seen and respected as an expert
- Be a *General Manager*– to run an organisation, to synthesise the efforts of others
- Have *Autonomy/Independence* – to do their own thing and not have to answer to others
- Have *Security/Stability* – to have routine and predictability in life
- Exercise *Entrepreneurial Creativity* – to create something which will enable them to leave their mark
- Provide *Service/Dedication* to a Cause – to do good for others and improve their lot
- Enjoy *Pure Challenge*- to do anything that is new and exciting and demanding- and I mean just keep doing new stuff!

- Enjoy *Lifestyle*- to have a job where the ability to balance life and work, to come home with energy not exhaustion.

These are not exclusive, people will be driven by two or maybe three. One woman I was coaching was very clearly motivated by the need to exercise her technical knowledge, we spent about 4 months of procrastinating as she tried to motivate herself to apply for jobs back in her former profession. Was just not happening. She is now working part time as a lecturer and loving it!

Another coachee started off talking about status and money and realised that actually he could do more good (Service) by being a service manager and that he could do with less money than he thought for that sort of job.

More recently Chiumento have come up with new research, done largely in the private sector: they did not identify altruism as a driver! Yet I find many of my clients are driven by that very desire. Chiumento suggest that people are either:

- Socialisers – working for the pleasure of the social interaction and that good colleagues are a key satisfier.
- Protectionists – who place more importance on job security and a stable environment, routine and regularity.
- Achievers who thrive on challenge and variety.
- True Believers who have faith in what the organisation does and delivers and gain their satisfaction from being part of that enterprise (I think public sector altruism could fit here)
- Materialists who seek material gain and reward.

So what is the difference between a job hopper and a career strategist?

It is not in what they do but in how they understand what it is they want work to do for them, how they come to understand what work plays in their life and choose their options in line with that understanding. They make deliberate choices about which jobs they will apply for or accept because they understand what they are doing. They understand what they want their lives to be about and what role will play in that.

I have a questionnaire based on Schien to help you work out what is driving your career; please get in touch [mary@maryhope.co.uk](mailto:mary@maryhope.co.uk) or read my book [www.topcareerstrategies.info](http://www.topcareerstrategies.info) for more thought provoking and educative tips.