



YOUR JOB IS NOT NECESSARILY FOR LIFE. SHOULD YOU SWITCH CAREERS?

Executive search firms regularly come across people who have decided to switch careers. There was a time where you chose your profession and stuck with it until retirement and many people still follow that path. An increasing number of people, however, are deciding to give up their first choice and try something new. For many, it is a move to a new country, or an exploration of a new skill, but for others, it's moving the skills they already have to a new sector.

If you're taking the plunge and switching careers, can you convince an executive search agency that it's all for the best? How do you demonstrate that you haven't lost any of your abilities?

Switching careers is a brave thing to do. It can affect your income, your working hours and even where you live. It's not a decision that people take lightly, and it's one that's viewed differently by everyone. If you take a career break to travel or to study, you should be prepared to turn that experience into positive ways you can contribute to your new company.

Executive search firms look for the right candidates for the job. If you have switched careers or taken a break and want to sign on with an executive search firm, then it's a good idea to make an appointment to go and see them. This will allow you to sit face-to-face with the consultant and explain why you took a year out, or why you decided to change from medicine to law. Whatever your experience, you should be able to use elements of it to illustrate how you could be valuable to a company in a senior position.

For example, if you spent your time volunteering for a charity and working in Africa, you will have gained better communication and diplomacy skills than most people. If you were involved in a building project, you can illustrate how you managed to project, getting people to work together as a team to achieve a common goal. Whilst sorting out a problem business area isn't the same as building a school, the things you learned from your project can be applied in any situation.

It's not whether you have changed careers that interests an executive search firm; it's why, and what you've learned that could benefit their clients. It could be that your career switch gives the client exactly what they're looking for. It's up to you to turn it into the positives that could win you your next job.

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