

FINDING NEW CHALLENGES AT WORK

Summary: In this article, a person asks what to do when he is not being challenged by his current job and has no current advancement opportunities.



Question: I completed an M.B.A. from the University of Phoenix in 1986, and as the top sales performer at my company in the transportation industry, I currently earn \$100,000+ and excellent benefits, such as a company car, an annual physical exam and three weeks' vacation. My dilemma is that I'm no longer challenged and don't see any immediate (next three years) advancement opportunities. I live in a beautiful part of the country (Portland) and I'm wondering if I should just relax and enjoy what I'm doing, or go for a job that offers more challenges.

Answer: Many readers of this column would love to swap places with you, but no matter how well you're doing financially and geographically, it can be truly frustrating to lack challenge in your work. The catch in your case is that to duplicate or increase your earnings in a more satisfying position, you'll likely have to leave Portland. You could stay put and try switching to another industry, but you'll have a hard time justifying your compensation level without a track record in that field. Of course, since you're a talented salesperson, perhaps you can sell your potential to a company in a related industry and convince them to match your pay level, but that won't be easy. The simplest solution, of course, is to relax and figure out a way to gain greater enjoyment from your current job. If you can't and you don't start looking for a new job now (or find an engrossing hobby to divert your attention), you'll grow increasingly frustrated and may do something stupid down the line, such as quit without having another opportunity lined up.