

Stick or Twist?

If that's the question you ask yourself, then consider your options carefully.

Stick or twist is the name of this game.

Stick with pouring all my energy and attention into my current job in the hope that I can extend my career or give up and make a serious and sustained attempt at redirecting my working life.

We all try and hedge our bets of course, but let's be honest – given the scarcity of positions in the wider job market, many of us decide to tough it out because it's better the devil you know.

Changing career direction is no easy matter, especially since speculative applications are not an effective strategy in the current climate. So what do Executives being supported by Rialto Executive Transition Specialists do?

Own your career, build your brand

Rialto senior clients who are considering a 'stick or twist' dilemma of their own, are often given the following advice: "Your personal brand is now an international commodity, so invest in it and ensure that it is fit for purpose". Get yourself noticed and known in your industry by networking actively outside of your organisation, for example through trade bodies, seminars, being active on relevant social media channels.

An individual who is unhappy does not add value to an organisation or themselves. If you have exhausted all of the possibilities to resolve the issues internally, then you should begin to look at the broader market. Saying that, Rialto advise not to jump ship unless you are clear about what you want to do.

Executives will need to assess a number of variables which will affect their saleability to the outside world:

- A. What is their current skillset
- B. What is their background
- C. Their mobility
- D. Their ability to sell themselves

For many, an outdated skillset may prove to be a stumbling block. For example, a CMO who is out of sync with social media, who is not prepared to relocate will have a very tough time finding another position, so the best advice is to stay put and improve your knowledge and experience before contemplating a move.

"Employers are less keen on transferable skills in the current climate," says Tricia Malone, Rialto Executive Consultant. "They want an individual who will hit the ground running and start delivering from day 1. The creative days of cross-sector fertilisation are not back as yet and remain a distant prospect until the global economy really starts to improve."

5 reasons Employees decide to Stick

1. Industry sector or organisation is still growing and there may be new opportunity for me
2. Not explored the internal options fully yet including lateral or international moves
3. Despite some dissatisfaction with the role I am still learning and adding value to my CV
4. I have a strong working relationship with my boss and peers and work in a good team
5. This role suits my current personal needs ie. family, location, personal issues

5 reasons Employees decide to Twist

1. My lack of motivation makes me feel like not getting out of bed
2. The leadership of the organisation or the team is poor, I do not have a voice or influence here
3. I am in conflict with my boss and I am not aligned to the direction of the company any more
4. There is no route for promotion or lateral move, I cannot grow, my path is blocked
5. I can learn no more that will add value to my CV – time for a new challenge

Become Match Fit

For the above reason, any exit must be planned meticulously, with the support of an independent Executive career expert. "The C-level market remains flat to slightly improving and there are a lot of highly skilled, experienced people looking at the moment. It remains a buyers' market".

Tricia points to recent trends which indicate that executive placements are taking an average of 3-6 months, with 9-12 interviews, compared to a buoyant market, where the process was an average of 6 weeks and 4 interviews.

"A front-foot strategy will be critical to any successful career move. At the senior level, the market relies enormously on informal referencing, so it is essential for a senior executive to take control of their brand and reputation if they are to dip their toes into the market. The alternative is that someone else will do it for you and they may not be on your side."

To find out how Rialto can help you and your organisation:

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