

## 6 career risks worth taking

Times of change and upheaval can be challenging, but they can also make us look at our working lives differently. We might feel inspired to make change, or forced to rethink how we do things – perhaps even start again. Or there might be opportunities out there that just weren't clear before.

With this in mind, taking a risk or a leap into something new can really pay off when it comes to your career. You might find greater job satisfaction, new skills, work you're more passionate about or better work-life balance on the other side.

### Taking risks can pay off

Many people who are successful in their work will have taken a calculated risk at some point. Gaynor Topham, Vodafone resourcing manager, says Vodafone regularly highlights employees' career stories to motivate others to take a leap. Often, successful senior people have moved around different parts of the business to get exposure. They get to their destination by following a career map of their own, not a linear or straightforward pathway, Topham says.

### Pause and reflect to plan your next move

Start by planning out which direction you want to head in, Topham says. Write down a career plan – this could be as simple as outlining where you want to be, say, a year from now. Then include the skills, training or other steps you might need to get where you want to go. Making this plan focuses your mind by giving you a structure for the way to move forward. It can also help you work out which calculated risks you can take to reach your ultimate goal.

If a career plan isn't your thing, you could simply check in with yourself to think about leaps you could take or what changes you feel energised about when it comes to work. Then you can look at what you need to do to make this happen.

While some leaps might be clear for you already, here's a list of some to consider taking:

1. **Leaving a big company or corporate job**

If you're employed by a large organisation, it can be a scary thought to give up a role there and all that goes with it. But a stint in a smaller business could well be the way to learn a whole new set of skills and take on different or greater responsibilities. You might find you're able to be more "on the tools" this way, or that you enjoy having a role that lets you wear different hats at once. Who knows, you might even come back to your employer in the long-term.

2. **Making a sideways move**

Your next step doesn't necessarily have to be 'up' to a promotion or a more senior position. A sideways move might look like moving into another part of the company you work in, or to a different business or organisation. It could look like shifting from a business to a not-for-profit. You might not get a pay rise from a sideways move, but it could pay off by giving you the experience or exposure that you need for a significant promotion or step up later on

### 3. **Working out where you can contribute**

See if you can branch out and extend your reach in your current role. If you're working in a particular part of a business or organisation, are there ways you could contribute to projects beyond what you do, to make yourself more influential or recognised? See if you can identify a problem faced by the organisation and find a solution or come up with new and improved processes.

### 4. **Promoting yourself**

Look for opportunities to take on responsibilities that are part of the role you'd ultimately like to work in. You could also see if you can find pain points or issues in the company or business that you're in, come up with solutions, and communicate your thoughts to management. By doing this, you're calculating that you'll be seen as someone more senior than your current role, which could stand you in good stead for a promotion. As you gain more responsibility or learn new skills add them to your [SEEK Profile](#) to stand out to future employers.

If you feel you're just not able to make headway in the job you're in, you could consider going out on your own. If you've ever dreamed of running your own business, it's something worth exploring. You could start by [assessing whether you're ready to be your own boss](#).

### 5. **Learning or upskilling**

Do you need a certificate, degree or postgraduate degree to get ahead? Sometimes it's worth taking a risk and going back to study to get the skills and qualifications that will take you to the next level. This may mean stopping work for a while, or continuing to work while you take on a short course. Either way there are options out there, including [online courses for in-demand industries](#).

### 6. **Taking time to volunteer**

Perhaps the answer may lie outside of work. Could you enhance your skills through [volunteering](#)? As well as doing good for the community, you could find way to do the role or work you'd ultimately like to be in. If your goal is to be a manager, for example, you could volunteer to manage a campaign or group of people in a charity event. Right now,

there are [ways you can volunteer remotely](#).

As scary as it can be, sometimes taking a calculated risk can bring real rewards to your working life. And wherever you're at now, spending some time thinking and planning can help you take that leap.