

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

February 2011

This Month's Message:

When It's Time To Move On.

Paths Forward

- **Need Career Coaching?**
- **Tired of boring meetings??**

Resources

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When It's Time To Move On.

The reader feedback from last month's LifeMap certainly supported my perception that 2011 may be a good time to make a job or career change. I heard from a few dozen folks who said they had been holding on to a less-than-satisfying job longer than they normally would have in the past due to the lousy hiring picture. Perhaps I'm obsessing here but I'd like to remind all that job-hunting while employed (even in a strong economy) can take longer than you hope because you can probably only pursue one or two new opportunities at a time. Sometimes this frustration can lead to a lack of caution and or a lapse in discretion. It is best to be prepared ahead of time with a neutral, professional response should your manager pick up on this and ask you if you are looking for a new job. This brings us to this month's topic which is how to leave a job without burning any bridges.

I have seen it demonstrated time and time again that every

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industry is like a small town and your employer (and your other former employers and former colleagues) have the ability to enhance or detract from your reputation. Years ago when I worked for a time at a leading executive search firm I was amazed how some insecure (or downright treacherous) individuals would engage in behind-your-back buddy stabbing or gossip mongering when I was checking a candidate's references. You may call it unfair, inaccurate or unethical but it is largely beyond the realm of your control. The only thing you can do is to prepare, develop and maintain a strong set of job references and go out of your way to leave any employer in the best light possible. (And remember "time wounds all heels" - so anybody who has tried to sandbag you will get theirs sooner or later ;-)

Sure, your boss may be an ogre, the work schedule may be excessive, the travel may be brutal but it will do you no good and will likely do you eventual harm to quit a job in a pique of anger, attempt to blow a boss out of the water with a caustic resignation letter or display your immaturity and lack of career savvy to the world with a vitriolic blog posting on your way out the door. This might be a good time to remember that no one forced you to work there against your will, that they hired you instead of other qualified candidates and that you quite willingly cashed and spent their paychecks. If you have decided that it's time to jump ship and you have landed a new, challenging assignment - congratulations. Move on with calm, understated professionalism. Here are some ideas to help make that happen in any situation.

Paths Forward

- **Venting is Fine.** Hate your job? Despise your boss? Can't wait until you're out of there? Fine. At home (*do not* use your work computer) crank out a memo outlining all this and more. Don't pull any punches. Really lay it on. Get it all out of your system. *Do not* send it. Let it hang around a day or two, read it once or twice more and then delete it. If you must save it, print it out and put it in your career file to remind you in the future to more carefully evaluate jobs and bosses before you accept any new job.

- **Short and Simple.** If you need to write a resignation letter be brief and factual. Give at least two weeks advance notice unless your position requires more. You do not need to go into the "why" of your decision, only the "when". Be gracious and offer a thank you for the opportunities your soon-to-be former employer offered. Do not criticize your boss or the organization; it should not matter to you because a) you're leaving and b) whatever you want to point out is probably already well-known. Sounding angry, antagonistic, or pontifical will hurt your reputation and is a waste of your time.

- **Avoid Two Huge Mistakes.** When you leave take only your personal items and files. If you have personal files on a company computer (always a bad idea) transfer them to your personal computer now or risk the embarrassment of having them read or used inappropriately by other parties. If you need office supplies at home go to the store like everybody else. Why tarnish your reputation for a three

dollar stapler or a few pads of paper? Refrain from the colossally stupid (and illegal) impulse to damage or destroy any company data or equipment. And no hiding a dead fish in your boss's dropped ceiling.

- **The Actual Goodbye.** Some of your colleagues may want to wish you bon voyage with a cake, a lunch or a couple of drinks after work. This is an opportunity to show your class and maturity. Be appreciative of all best wishes, ignore any efforts to uncover your "real" reasons for leaving and do your best to steer the conversation to the events and relationships that you have enjoyed. Be careful how you respond to others looking to bail out. Staying in touch, sharing information with friends and maintaining your network are good things but recruiting others from your former employer is a risk that you should clearly assess.

- **Don't Be Rash.** Making a snap decision about leaving a job is often counter-productive. You will only change jobs a finite number of times in your career. So each move should be thought out ahead of time as carefully as possible. We are all - to one degree or another - emotionally invested in our jobs. There are days when we come home frustrated, disappointed, or even angry just as there will be days when we feel fulfilled, satisfied or pleased. What counts is the proportion of one to the other. When the balance tips so that you feel bad more often than you feel good it is time to start planning your move - with research, thought, and care. (For more on this go to www.drpaulpowers.com, click on [LifeMap Archive](#), open 10/23/07 *Pack Your Parachute - Now.*)

LifeMap is about helping you make every job and career transition as productive and positive as possible.

· Need Career Coaching?

The best investment you can make is in your career, your future and yourself.

email drpaul@drpaulpowers.com

· Tired of boring meetings??

Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and personal success.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

Resources

· Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills.

Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job*

Interviews is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

· Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#) *Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love* by Dr. Paul.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>

Have an issue or question you'd like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

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Sincerely,

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