

Think Broadly:

Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of meeting up with 2 ex retailer marketing executives who had both recently moved into an agency environment. Neither of them had even considered moving jobs originally and the impetus had simply arisen as a result of a large scale reorganisation within the retailer. I was impressed with how energised they both seemed and how they truly appeared to enjoy their new roles. In fact both of them chose to clarify that they had not been looking to make a career move originally nor indeed did they have their eyes on a move out of retailing, but both were really delighted with where they had ended up.

But it goes like that with careers doesn't it? In the early days it is so important to claw your way up the ladder in a very linear direction. Achievement of the next, more senior title is where all your energies tend to be focussed until you either run out of titles or some event happens that causes you to be diverted from your linear path towards a broader more lateral goal. Suppliers move to retailers, clients move to agencies and vice versa. Sometimes, even larger steps are taken where individuals choose to move sectors, industries or even countries. Now we are talking.

Successful entrepreneurs often reflect on their early days in business and claim that the biggest jump for them involved making the move from 1 outlet to 2 , for example, and that moving from 20 outlets to 30 really didn't mean as much , nor affect the business dynamic in the same way as that first risk laden step. Yet success would never have accrued if they had not had the vision to take that risk.

Maybe that's the way we should look at our careers and be prepared to take a risk broadening our vision. Isn't it better to lead your career in whatever direction you choose, rather than being led by the existing linear structure or current job title escalator?

Many individuals I have met who have been through some form of redundancy are often forced to consider thinking more broadly. Most of them end up in great roles and have never been happier- like the 2 gentlemen I met this week. But perhaps it is time for those of you in existing positions to get ahead of the curve and start thinking about yourself and your career more deeply. It is probably time for some self-analysis: think about what you really like doing, what gives you the most satisfaction in your job, and consider what you are really good at. Often these attributes all go hand in hand- we tend to be good at what we enjoy, and we tend to enjoy what we are good at.

Now start planning where you could just possibly lay your hat and then have a serious think about when. You just might start to have more fun, be more energised and discover a more fruitful career.

(Glenn Steward is a professional business coach and Director of The Trading Edge Co. and author of the Ebook 16 Rules for Jobseekers)