

Recent events in the Middle East have caused shock and dismay, leaving many expatriates urgently considering their immediate future.

In times of uncertainty and instability, individuals make quick decisions over what is best for themselves and their family, and the tendency can be to rush into job moves which may have a damaging effect on careers.

During difficult times this is common, and understandable, but those considering moving on are cautioned to avoid rushing into what can become negative career moves.

Many expatriates concerned about the impact of recent events on their careers and financial well being, and about security for themselves and their families, are either considering moving on, or are worried that they could be relocated to another region.

But those taking stock of their professional situation and plotting their career path should observe some key guidelines. These include studying the market and the relevant industry sector, making use of networking to build up market intelligence, and, most importantly, seeking expert advice.

Specialists in engineering, finance, IT or any other sector, should recognise that career management is an equally specialist subject, and seek professional assistance in planning their career move, in reviewing and assessing job offers, as well as in negotiating salary and benefits.

Regardless of who they turn to for professional guidance, they should be looking for a professional package which includes career development strategies to help them continue to make genuine progress in their career, and provide a safety net in case of later redundancy or other enforced moves.

In a nutshell, those planning a sudden move and already looking for a suitable home and schooling for their children owe it to themselves to invest just as much time and effort into ensuring that any new job they secure elsewhere presents more than an initial escape route.

We readily turn to financial consultants when we want

advice on where to invest our hard-earned money, and employ legal experts to negotiate the procedures involved in setting up new businesses.

So it's logical for us to seek professional advice when making what can turn out to be key career decisions. That's true under normal circumstances, and particularly true during times of stress, when individuals can be panicked into making hasty decisions which can backfire on them, and their families.

If you go back to your high schools days, when your first serious thoughts about a career were developing, it may have taken you months of agonising over the multitude of choices presenting themselves before deciding on the professional path you should follow. You didn't rush then, so why would you rush a decision on your career now?

Even if you are being forced to leave your current position, and the industry in which you have built your career does not initially present any equal opportunities elsewhere, the temptation to jump at a lesser job providing an immediate salary should be resisted.

In some cases, a change of career path can bring a new lease of life, and open an exciting new chapter. Proper career management can make all the difference, by making individuals aware of their strengths, and their abilities to operate effectively in areas they might not have considered.

In times of stress, it's easy to get confused by the options available, and make the wrong choice. That's why a comprehensive and professionally-planned career programme, allowing individuals to develop realistic and challenging career objectives, and the skills and confidence to seek out and secure fulfilling career positions that satisfy their personal and professional aspirations, is so valuable.

You've worked hard, and invested an enormous amount of time, effort and dedication to getting where you are professionally. You don't need to make the next key decision alone, and you don't need to make it without professional guidance. It may be the time for tough decision making, but those who play their cards right can reap the benefits.

**DON'T  
PANIC IF  
YOU  
DECIDE  
ITS TIME  
TO MOVE  
ON**



Based in Dubai, David Thatcher is a regular contributor to the Arab News 'Career Spotlight' articles.

David is Managing Director of career management firm Bernard Haldane Associates and has given us permission to reprint this piece.



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