

## **Navigating a Career Crossroads**

*By Robert Half International*

Given the current economic environment, many information technology (IT) professionals are taking an honest look at their careers and considering all of their options. Some are deciding to pursue opportunities at other companies, others are choosing new fields altogether and still others are determining it's best to stay put. How can you know what is the right choice for you?

When you're faced with a career crossroads, the answer isn't always clear. You need to give careful thought to the consequences of a professional move, taking into account your unique situation and the potential benefits of making a change. Following are some questions to consider during this process:

### **What motivates you?**

Think about what you like most about your current job. For instance, do you enjoy working with end users or handling independent tasks, such as installing software upgrades? Reflect upon the highlights of your career. You may discover a pattern in your top selections — the fact that many involved interaction with others on project teams, for instance. Take note of the factors that are most important to you and then consider whether they are available at your present employer. Sometimes small changes, such as volunteering for more diverse assignments, can make all the difference in job satisfaction.

### **What are your weaknesses?**

Next, honestly assess your professional shortcomings. If you want to get ahead, you may need to address these. For example, if you hope to move into IT management at your company,

consider whether your communication and leadership skills are as strong as they could be. You might enroll in classes to build your expertise and become a better candidate for a promotion.

### **What do others think?**

Ask trusted colleagues and mentors for feedback on your plans. What you perceive to be assets or liabilities could be viewed differently by others. You may believe you should focus on finding purely technical positions, for instance, while those around you see a natural talent for project management.

### **How can you get involved?**

Regardless of what type of career path you decide to pursue, it's beneficial to get involved with professional and business associations. Playing an active role in these groups can help you expand your network, learn about important trends and stay motivated when faced with roadblocks to achieving your goals.

With thorough self-evaluation, you can be confident you're making the right career decisions. Take the time to think about your preferences and options carefully. You'll set yourself on a course for greater fulfillment in your work in the months and years ahead.

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