

**The Sunday Times, Invest, Pg 24
4 January 2009**

Mid-career switch from marketing to human resource

[YOUR PERSONAL ADVISER: CAREER]

Q I am 36 and graduated from the University of South Australia with a degree in business administration. I am interested in human resource (HR) as my future long-term career. However, most of my experience lies in marketing. I am contemplating taking up a postgraduate diploma from the Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) to kick-start my career in HR. My ultimate goal is to become a human resource manager in a multinational company.

Will taking up the diploma help me in my future career as an HR manager? Should I switch careers at this age? Also, after taking up the diploma, can I apply for the post of an assistant HR manager in a local firm for a start? I am currently working as a recruitment consultant in a small local firm.

A Taking up a postgraduate diploma in HR will definitely lend you some advantage in your newly chosen career path. Besides being able to earn you a more competitive salary, it will be the most effective way to get a broad understanding of the industry.

However, as a person's career progresses, education plays a smaller part in his advancement compared to experience, achievement and proven capability. Thus the diploma may not be able to help you reboot your career as an assistant manager as it would need you to oversee the performance of an executive team. You may need to start off at a senior executive position.

Here are some other considerations.

Mid-career switches at 36 to a different industry or profession definitely come with compromises that you will have to make. Your current job as a recruitment consultant is undoubtedly a start in the industry, but it typically takes four to five years before a fresh person to the industry can get to a junior managerial position.

Because you do not have comprehensive prior experience in HR, you would have to be prepared to build your career from the ground up. This means you should not be discouraged by younger peers who may be ahead. Instead, with dedication and hard work, you could move ahead in your career given your past managerial and soft skills.

Meanwhile, continue to work on improving your knowledge of the industry.



Annie Yap
Chief executive officer
The GMP Group

Advice provided in this column is not meant as a substitute for comprehensive professional advice. E-mail questions to lorna@sph.com.sg