

## Career Q & A

Do you have a burning HR or recruitment question? Send in your questions to [info@gmprecruit.com](mailto:info@gmprecruit.com) and have them answered by a GMP recruitment specialist.

### Question 1:

*Some of my friends change their jobs every two to three years; they say that each jump would get them a higher salary. What would potential employers think of such job-hoppers? What is an effective way of getting a better pay without being labelled a job hopper?*

It is generally true that during the early stages of your career, you might enjoy a pay increment with each new job as you gain more work experience which is valued by employers. However, unless you deliberately build on your credentials and related work experience, subsequent increments with each new job will slowly decrease. In today's volatile economic climate, it is unlikely that you will get a huge pay increment with each move unless you are a star performer with a solid track record.

While employers do not expect their employees to stay with them forever, they will not accept just any job applicant who comes their way. Some candidates switch from one job to another unrelated job. They lack focus and do not have a clear career progression path. Furthermore, they do not build their domain knowledge. Very often, these candidates fail to impress potential employers as it is clear that they are only interested in the additional money and fancy job titles.

Employers loathe these serial job-hoppers because their motives are questionable, and their expectations are unrealistic.

Yet, there are rock-solid star candidates who leap from one opportunity to another, concurrently moving up the corporate ladder. Employers have no qualms offering them a better remuneration package. They are real talents and are highly sought after for their skills and expertise. One clear trait of these star candidates is that they have strong profiles and a list of impressive achievements. Despite that, job hopping must stop at some point because a trail of continuous job hopping is detrimental to one's career. And most employers do not want to incur additional resources to train hires only to have them leave the company before they are even productive.

Instead of being obsessed with higher pay, there is a more sustainable approach to a better job with corresponding remuneration.

First, understand your strengths and know your career goals. What exactly is it that you want to achieve in your career and life? Confucius said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." Too many people are trapped in jobs that they dislike just to pay the bills, and they are not motivated to improve themselves.

The most effective approach to a better job is to take charge of your own learning and career. Be curious and build up your domain knowledge. Do not depend on others; you need to ignite the fire in your own belly. Develop a T-shaped career profile where you have the expertise in a single field and yet are able to collaborate with the other experts in different disciplines. Always ask yourself whether you have added value to your job. Are you productive? Could you do more by taking on additional responsibilities? Once you have found the passion, and are productive in what you do, the money will follow naturally.

Of course, if you love your job but dislike the workplace, then it's understandable that you leave. But remember that, like any relationship, there is no perfect partner. You need to invest efforts to make the relationship work.

### Question 2:

*I'm thinking of resigning from my job three months later and I plan to inform my supervisor closer to the date. However, my supervisor has just given me a new project that will run for the next six months. What should I do to avoid putting myself in a sticky situation and at the same time, not offend my superior as I don't want to burn bridges?*

Many employers would agree with me that the attribute that they value most in their subordinates is integrity. A good dose of good work ethics and professionalism will definitely help to build your credibility and serve you well in your career.

Regardless of your notice period, it is imperative that you raise your intention early because it gives your supervisor an opportunity to address your concerns. Sometimes, you are clouded by your anxieties and feel that resignation is the only way out. Fortunately, resignation is often not the only solution. You could be a working mum who just requires some flexi-work arrangements to help you cope with your personal commitments or a jaded executive who needs a fresh challenge. However, you should NEVER use resignation as a bargaining chip. It might work the first time but you may not be so lucky subsequently.

Some employees might deliberately choose to delay the notice because of the impending bonus. While it is not uncommon that employees pocket the bonus first then throw in the towel, you will need to weigh whether it's worth tarnishing your reputation over the monetary rewards.

If you have already made up your mind to leave the organization, the more you shouldn't delay the notice to your supervisor. You will only frustrate your supervisor should he/she find out that you are disengaged from your work and you held back the notice for reasons that only you will know. To ensure a good exit, it is only fair to give your supervisor ample notice so that he/she can make the necessary manpower arrangements should negotiations to retain you fail. Meanwhile, you will need to honour all the work commitments that were previously assigned to you and ensure a proper hand over by preparing a list of outstanding duties and location of all the resources. In today's tight employment market, your supervisor will appreciate the early notice so that there is sufficient time to recruit a suitable candidate to replace you.

If the project is urgent and you do not have any concrete plans, you may want to consider giving the company the option to engage you just for the project or plan a transition during the project. However, be prepared that you will be asked to leave immediately and be compensated for the notice period by your employer. Employers who resort to this measure often do so to protect their proprietary information.

Employees join and leave companies. But a good exit will not only make the process less painful for everyone, it will also help to build your reputation as a responsible employee who always has the employer's best interests at heart. Who knows, your extra effort might just earn you some recommendations on LinkedIn.

### Question 3:

*If you were a tree, what would you be?*

In the early 2000s, encouraged by the dotcom bubble, technology companies used off-the-wall interview questions to further assess the creativity and problem-solving abilities of prospective software developers. And according to US online job portal Glassdoor.com, these ‘strange’ interview questions were often applied by large corporate organizations to distinguish between multiple job applicants with MBAs – who are usually taught case studies and therefore, would be able to handle such questions. There is a point to the kinds of questions asked by employers. Often than not, these questions were asked to do a number of things – test your creativity, find out how well you respond to stress and reveal your thought process. So, there are almost no wrong or right answers to such questions.

### Question 4:

*“Think before you speak” may be the most important advice, especially when it comes to answering any question during an interview. There is nothing wrong in taking some time to mull over the question for several moments rather than blurt out a less thought-out response to fill the silence.*

### **Keep calm and cool**

The bizarre interview questions could serve as a form of a stress test. No matter how strange the question, remember to always be polite in your response.

### **Recognize the light-hearted nature of the question**

Most interviewers acknowledge these questions are of a humorous nature. An equally humorous response is often warranted.

### **Decipher the question behind the question**

The questions may be strange but they are most likely asked to gauge your ability from your response and reaction. Attempt to give an answer that would reflect your creativity, personality and self-awareness – avoid obvious politically-correct responses, but do not reply with equally off-the-wall answers.

### **If all else fails, politely redirect the question**

If your mind is a total blank, state politely that you would get back to the question later, or respectfully decline to respond. However, use this only as a last resort.