

WORKING

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Career goals in focus for new year

Resignations, recruitment on the rise

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If you're thinking about making a career change, you're probably not alone. After the Christmas holiday season of rest, relaxation and perhaps some quiet reflection, the job market always picks up in the new year, say recruiters and coaches.

"After the soul-searching over the holidays ... everything I'm seeing in Calgary, Alberta and across Canada indicates there's going to be a resume tsunami of voluntary turnover" in 2012, says Jeff Aplin, president of David Aplin Recruiting in Calgary.

"We always see an uptick in January (and) February of people who want to make a move," he says. "It goes with New Year goal setting."

The good news is that employers appear to be in hiring mode, too. With a relatively strong economy in Alberta, many companies are ramping up their staffing requirements in anticipation of continued strength and large, new projects on the books.

"Calgary is its own microclimate," says Sherri Olsen, a Calgary career coach. "All the oil and gas stuff is happening, so there's recruiting going on everywhere."

One of her clients recently mentioned that her company's hiring department has a "blank cheque"



Jeff Aplin, chief operating officer of David Aplin Recruiting, at the company's downtown offices in Calgary. Aplin says voluntary turnover will probably increase dramatically as the new year proceeds.

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when it comes to hiring new staff this year to keep up with demand.

What they all agree on is not to make a rash, poorly planned decision to leave your job before you realize why you want to make a change, what type of position would truly fulfil you and how you plan to get there.

"If there's somebody out there you know who has a job that you want, go and talk to them," advises Eileen Dooley, a Calgary career coach. "Most people are very candid about these things."

Aplin suggests writ-

ing down a list of five key things that need to happen in 2012 to make it the best year ever and go from there. Cam MacRae, a career transition consultant, says people should first consider talking to their boss about what changes they would like to make and see if there's an opportunity to accomplish that with your current employer — perhaps in a different department, a new role or working with a new team.

"If you're going to pull the pin on a job ... but you're too concerned about bringing up some of the things you'd like to change about

your job, it's in your best interest to bring that up," MacRae says.

Just don't rush out the door before thinking it through. "Take time to take stock ... or you'll be looking for another job in two month's time," he adds.

Olsen says that based on clients in transition she sees, about six in 10 people actually end up staying with their employer because they identify the source of their discontent and "tweak" their roles after discussing options with their managers.

It's also not best to wait until things have gotten so

bad that you're making a decision based on immediate emotion, rather than a well-thought-out career plan.

"The best time to do a career change is when you just start to wonder about it in your current job — not when you just want to get out now," Olsen says.

People leave jobs for all sorts of reasons, but it's the younger professionals just coming out of university who tend to move around the most and are most easily distracted by the lure of more money.

"Young professionals coming out (of school) have seen the change that's

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CAREER COACH
SHERRI OLSEN



gone on over the years and they're far more prepared to move across the street for more dollars," MacRae says, adding they sometimes need to be willing to get some experience first so they have the skills to be more employable.

"A lot of new professionals want some things that they haven't put in the time to achieve yet," he says.

No matter what direction you're headed in, Dooley says, the most important step you can take is to do your research first. Try volunteering for an organization in a role you'd like to move into to test the waters and find out where those types of jobs are offered.

When economic times are good — Alberta and Saskatchewan are forecast to lead the country in economic performance in 2012 — people tend to be more eager to look around at other opportunities. Just don't forget that it doesn't mean you have your pick of any job you want, regardless of the economy.

"No matter how good the economy is, it's still a competitive job market," Dooley says.

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