

Thinkopolis VI: Moving Work | Year in Review

Canadians are making many more career moves in 2014. We're changing jobs more often, working in more jobs and more sectors over our careers, and moving provinces for work with greater frequency. And it turns out that this is the necessary path to success: 88 per cent of the time, people need to change employers in order to advance their career.

Canadians are working more jobs than we used to

Analyzing the work history data from over 7,000,000 employment-history records in the Workopolis resume database from 1990 to the present, we can see that there is an ongoing shift on work tenure happening.

Earlier this year in *Thinkopolis IV: Time to Work*, we noted that shorter stints at jobs had become the 'new normal' as 51 per cent of people now stay in any one role for under two years. One of the most frequent questions we were asked regarding this trend was if there was a *generational* difference in job loyalty. So we dug a little deeper.

Generation X spends over **20 percent longer** in each job they hold than Gen Y does.

People who graduated university in 1992, **Gen Xers**, worked an average of 3.2 jobs in the first 12 years of their career, staying approximately 41 months or 3.4 years in each job.

Just ten years later, the cohort graduating in 2002, **Generation Y**, held 3.9 jobs over their first 12 years on the job market, with a shorter tenure of 32.5 months or 2.7 years in each job on average.

Gen Y changed jobs **22 per cent more often** over a 12 year period than Gen X did.

Contrast that with the job longevity experienced by their parents. According to Statistics Canada, two-thirds of Canadian **Baby Boomers** entered their fifties in long-time employment – holding down jobs they had been in for at least 12 years with the same employer. In fact, more than half had worked for the same firm or organization for far longer – often 20 years or more.

If the current trend continues, Canadians can expect to hold **roughly 15 jobs** in their careers. Here's what we found out about the current situation from surveying 4,000 Canadians in September and October of this year. Only 6 per cent of people have held just one job in their career, while 16 per cent said that they had held 'more than ten.'

How many jobs have you had in your career?

1	6%
2	8%
3	14%
4	15%
5	13%
Between 5 and 10	28%
More than 10	16%

What stood out for our team in this analysis of Canadian work histories was the apparent *necessity* of frequent job changes for most people.

People change jobs more often because they *have to*

The vast majority of the time, you have to move on in order to move up. The new normal has become for people to stay on any one job for between two and three years – and for most people, this is the only way to advance their careers.

We asked 4,500 Canadians, *"All things being equal when it comes to salary, benefits, and location, what do you consider most important when evaluating a new position?"*

For the largest group, 25 per cent of respondents, the deciding factor was "Opportunities for Advancement." People are looking for those positions that allow them to grow their careers.

However, analysis of job titles and work histories in the Workopolis database shows that **88 per cent of people have to change companies** in order to obtain a position with more responsibility. Only 11.5 percent of people are able to move up a level in job title (manager, senior, director, supervisor) within an organization.

This is actually a growing trend. Between 1990-2004 a little over 15 per cent of people were promoted within a company, which has declined steadily to 9.4 per cent in the last 5 years. These numbers closely match the increasing frequency of people changing jobs.

If a company cannot offer its employees opportunities for career growth, they're going to go find it for themselves elsewhere. You have to move on to move up.

"The reason people leave companies is most often the same reason as they came to them in the first place," says Tara Talbot, Vice President of Human Resources for Workopolis. "When you ask people in job interviews why they want to join your team, they usually say it's a great opportunity to advance their careers, in line with their goals. At exit interviews, people similarly say they're leaving because of lack of advancement – they've found an opportunity to advance their careers – elsewhere."

That being said, once you have made it to the executive level within an organization, you have almost 50% higher chances of continuing to climb the corporate ladder within the same company.

People in Human Resources, Production and Operations, and Energy are more likely than most to be able to advance without changing employers.

Workers in Skilled Trades, Arts and Media and Healthcare have the least chances of being promoted within an organization.

New is always better

The majority of employers surveyed told us that they do not have a succession plan in place, and that if a key manager or director were to leave, they would have to hire externally. The most common reason, 40 per cent of employers feel that "There's no one qualified currently at my company."

"Managers judge people they know and have worked with for years much more harshly than someone they have just met," says Tara Talbot.

"This is why employers will often hire someone they've met only once or twice for a job interview over someone currently employed at their company."

New is always better. Cheating spouse syndrome is standing between you and a promotion.

New isn't always better

However, those employees who do manage to overcome the 'new is always better' bias and are promoted within an organization tend to be the people who achieve the greatest levels of overall success. Their careers advance further and faster than those of the people who have to job hop to move up.

Promotions also leads to employee loyalty. People who advance to a higher level at a company will stay with that organization for an average of 7.5 years, or 200 per cent longer than the majority of people who do not receive promotions.

How long it takes to get to the top

Across industries, it takes people an average of **12 years** to move from an entry-level position to the rank of supervisor or above. This most often consists of having four to five jobs at three or four different employers and four different titles.

Among the most common job titles that the most senior business leaders hold earlier in their careers are **Consultant, Sales, and Customer Service**, and **Administrative/Executive Assistants**. This seems to indicate that client relations and problem-solving skills are amongst the key ingredients for career advancement.

Interestingly, people who start out in **Executive Assist** roles are the most likely of all jobs to transition into business owners. This usually takes rough takes approximately 15 years to move from first job to being the boss.

Changing place

Canadians are becoming more willing to go where the jobs are.

Based on Canadian resume data, we can see that between 1990 and 2004 about 12 per cent of people started a new job in a new province. This rose to 13.5 per cent between 2005 and 2009, and for the period from 2010-2014 about 16.5 per cent of people have changed provinces for work. This marks a 21 per cent increase in the last 10 years and almost 30 per cent over the past two decades.

Moving for work pays off. Those people who have been promoted within an organization are also 46 per cent more likely than the average to have relocated for work.

Changing course

Canadians aren't only increasingly moving for work, we're also changing work more frequently. More and more of us are switching career paths completely at least two or three times. We asked 4,500 Canadians:

How many different career paths have you followed?

1	24%
2	35%
3	24%
4	9%
5+	8%

The most common reasons people gave for changing career paths were discovering a new field they were passionate about (35 per cent), becoming bored/disillusioned with their original work (24 per cent), and setbacks such as lack of advancement and /or cutbacks, layoffs in a career path (19 per cent).

Most Canadians don't think they will stay in the same vocation for their entire career. In a survey of over 1,000 people, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) said that they do not expect to remain in the same profession for life.

Knowing that a job – even a profession - isn't permanent should take some of the pressure off the decision making. It's not so dire which job you take right now since your career will be made up of the many, many jobs you've held and paths you've followed over your working life.

The most important question to ask is no longer "What should I do?" It has become *what am I going to do next?* What skills can I acquire *next*, what can I take on *next* to add accomplishments to my resume, what will my *next* career move be.

This is the way to move your career forward.

Conclusion:

In 2014, evolution isn't 'survival of the fittest.' Evolution is *survival*. Change is the new constant.

As we look ahead into 2015 and beyond, workers can expect to have many more frequent transitions in employment than previous generations. The people who achieve the greatest success are those who are the most willing to embrace change and progress along with the evolving situation. The vast majority of upward career moves come through changing employers, changing companies. Willingness to relocate for opportunities also greatly increases one's chances for advancement.

However, employers can retain their most talented workers if they can recognize their staff's strengths and provide them with opportunities to grow and expand their roles within the company rather than having to hop elsewhere.

Workopolis publishes the latest research and insights on employment in Canada regularly at www.workopolis.com/research.