

Things to consider before making a career move during the pandemic...

Significant changes on the work front is one of the many knock-on effects of Covid-19. So, too, has been the tragic loss of jobs for over 2.2 million South Africans in the second quarter of 2020. For many, a career change has been necessitated through retrenchment or reduced income or - in rarer cases - a new opportunity has been spotted which led to a leap of faith. Whatever the circumstances, the impact of a career change on one's life and finances should be carefully considered.



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Lee Hancox, Head: Channel and Segment Marketing at Sanlam, stresses the importance of remaining focused on your financial future, especially during the tough times. "This has been an extremely tumultuous year for so many of us. Carefully planning our way through the fall-out of Covid-19 is highly recommended for everyone, and especially those with altered financial or employment circumstances."

Hancox looks at the types of employment change and offers insights into how to plan through them.

1. “I have recently been retrenched”

If you have been retrenched, it is important to remain calm and remember that you have done nothing wrong. Hancox advises working together with your financial planner to decide on the best way to invest the package you have been offered. If you do not have a financial planner, now is the time to find one.

"Your planner will ask the right questions and offer guidance on how to make provision for an income during this time and invest the rest. This is also the right time to re-evaluate your budget and cut out unnecessary expenses."

"Use this time to update your CV and make it stand out from the rest, focusing on your skills and not job titles. Your next employer needs to know that you have the necessary skills and adaptability to work in this new world."

2. "I am considering changing jobs"

If you are considering changing jobs, ask yourself if you are doing it for the right reasons. Use a mentor or a friend as a springboard for discussing the pros and cons. Also, do your research thoroughly to make sure you review not just the job title and salary on job ads, but go through the fine print to check if the job and the company is a good fit for you in terms of culture, values and skills.

At a time when the world is very far from 'business as usual', it probably makes sense to only change jobs by choice if there is a confirmed prospect for alternative employment.

3. "I have been offered a new job opportunity"

Congratulations! While this is an exciting opportunity, you need to consider that joining a new company under the current conditions may make it harder to build relationships, especially if you will be working from home initially or long-term.

Before you sign on the dotted line, inform your financial planner so that they can compare your current and new package holistically. "A financial planner will take everything into account including your cash salary, leave, bonuses and group benefits from your previous company versus your new employer."

With the help of a financial planner, you will also be able to revisit your short, medium, and long-term goals to ensure your new job is aligned with achieving those goals. Hancox also explains that it is important to set boundaries in terms of your priorities given the current working-from-home situation. If your new job requires you to work from home or travel into the office every day, consider how this will affect your family and personal life.

"No matter what situation you find yourself in, it is important to have the guidance and holistic advice of your financial planner to ensure the next step in your career is the right one," concludes Hancox.