

Should I Stay or Should I Go?: Weighing Options for New Opportunities

By Carol Dombrowicki

To quote the song lyrics, “*should I stay or should I go*” is the question you inevitably will ask yourself when considering a move from your current position. Indeed, there may be many opportunities within cardiovascular services, but are they really what they appear to be? Whether you are actively looking, or an opportunity has come your way unexpectedly, you have many things to consider as you decide. These decisions include the dynamics of your local job market, the availability of positions that match your expertise, and the overall cardiovascular trends in your area, which can contribute to an abundance or shortage of jobs within the heart and vascular specialty.

Before you accept or decline an opportunity, Corazon advises that you ask yourself some important questions related to your current and future ideas of success for your career. You should first determine WHY you are considering a job change—this is a big decision that no doubt should be taken seriously. Are you looking for **new responsibilities** that will challenge you more than your current job? Are you considering a change due to **lifestyle reasons**, such as a higher compensation, a location closer to home, or a more accommodating work schedule? Are you seeking a new opportunity that will bring you **one step closer to reaching your overarching career goals**? Or, are you looking for a new job because of **general dissatisfaction**—you’re just not happy where you are? Looking deeper into these questions will help develop the pros and cons of staying in your current job or leaving in search of a more suitable position...

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

First determine what specifically it is that you are looking for...Do you want to change careers or remain in the same field? Maybe it’s a slight adjustment—moving from the cath lab setting to another role within the service line, or going from a general service line position to one within the vascular or EP subspecialty. Whatever the case, you must be honest with yourself and consider whether you have the clinical and functional knowledge and skills for increased or different responsibilities. Essentially—are you qualified for the position you seek?

Also, before concluding you have to leave your current employer, investigate whether the opportunity is obtainable within your organization. A manager might work with a valued employee in order to keep him or her, even if in a different capacity. And finally, perhaps most importantly, consider how a change (in careers, in positions, or in organizations) might impact not only your professional life, but also your personal life.

The Pros to NEW RESPONSIBILITIES could be better compensation, more vacation time, flexible hours, and/or the satisfaction of expanding your knowledge and mastering new skills. **The Cons** could be longer hours, challenges of establishing new relationships, and the uncertainty that accompanies a new position. Furthermore, if you move into a leadership role, there are challenges associated with ‘managing’ those who used to be your colleagues.

LIFESTYLE REASONS

In a 2007 Survey of Job Satisfaction, The Society for Human Resource Management cites that salary remains the #1 key motivator behind a job search, with work/life balance also among

the Top 5. But, if you are considering a change on the basis of salary alone, you need to look at the BIG picture and consider everything included in your total compensation, such as vacation/PTO time, sick time, pension plans, 401K or 403B options, health benefits, and your monetary salary. If you change jobs or positions, think about what you will gain, but also what you might give up. For instance, an exempt, salaried position might seem more attractive, but with no overtime pay, your compensation might eventually decrease. Also, with an increased salary often comes increased hours, leaving less time for your personal life.

You also need to consider vacation/PTO. You will likely lose banked sick time and your accrual rates may decline as a new employee starting with another organization. Ask questions about your pension, such as the time it takes to be vested and the matching policy of the organization. Comparing health benefits can also be a big consideration...the benefit offerings and also the co-pay and deductible amounts are important. Though these may seem like minor considerations, the affect of them in total can be significant. The cost of living is going up in more regions of the country, so these items can really make a difference in the bottom line of your paycheck, especially if you have relocation costs to consider.

Also consider travel and the possibility that you might be spending more time getting to and from work. With expensive gas prices and parking costs, that higher salary may be evened-out with new expenses you might not have encountered before. The **Pros** and **Cons** related to LIFESTYLE REASONS will be determined by your particular situation and the policies of your current and/or prospective employer.

REACHING YOUR CAREER GOALS

Everyone should have both personal and professional goals outlined, with the necessary steps defined to achieve them. If an opportunity arises that can bring you one step closer to your goals—whether within in your organization or external—it is important to share these thoughts with your manager. Communicating your goals and future plans is good way to build a strong relationship with your supervisor, who could be your biggest supporter. Open and honest communication is key, especially if you hope to stay within your organization. Furthermore, news of someone looking for a new job travels fast...so if you don’t tell your boss, someone else will!

The Pros to moving closer to REACHING YOUR CAREER GOALS is a feeling of achievement and personal growth, which can be rewarding not only professionally, but also personally. Clearly, your hard work is paying off. On the other hand, **the Con** is that in your new position, the hard work has just begun. You will certainly be challenged in new ways and at times, can be overwhelming.

GENERAL DISSATISFACTION

In this case, you really need to look introspectively to discover the reasons for your unhappiness with your current job and what you can do to correct the situation. A study released in February from *The Conference Board* cites that American job satisfaction is steadily decreasing among workers of all ages and across all income brackets. In fact, only half of all Americans today say they

are satisfied with their jobs, and among them, only 14% say they are “very satisfied.”

Some reasons may be boredom with a monotonous position or frustration with the lack of opportunity to advance; you may not get along with your co-workers, or you may feel stifled by a negative environment; or, the culture of the organization may not be a fit for your personality or work style. If you are bored, consider the challenges that will make you more satisfied or the responsibilities that would increase your happiness with your work life. There are varying opportunities available in cardiac and vascular services, so it's important that you take some time to look in to them before deciding on a new or modified career direction.

One option could be an Interim [temporary] Placement in a job, similar to the positions filled by Corazon's Management Resources division. An interim position could meet your need to do something different in a new area, with new people and/or new responsibilities. And, with Interim Management, you are not usually permanently uprooting your family, but rather temporarily adjusting your current lifestyle. If you thrive on change, interim opportunities offer exposure to many organizations and cultures, and limit the possibility of becoming bored or disinterested in the responsibilities of a permanent position.

If you feel you have mastered your current position, but interim employment isn't right for you, apply for a transfer or a promotion within your organization. Talk with your manager about your ideal position and gather insight on available positions and your potential for making the move. Again, communication is key in any relationship, partnership, or situation...if you don't ask, you won't know your options.

Indeed, these are just some of the many reasons why people ponder “*should I stay or should I go.*” Always remember, no big career decision should be made quickly. You must take the time to consider whether you are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready for a change, and whether a new job will mesh with your personal life. While only you can determine what is best for you and your future, we hope you'll take our advice and evaluate these considerations before deciding to change jobs, organizations, or careers. Indeed, with new and expanded cardiovascular programs opening nationwide, there is a shortage of qualified clinical and managerial professionals within the specialty. But, jumping at the chance to change jobs may not be in your best interest.

Once you have identified the factors most important to you, weighed the Pros or Cons of staying or going, you will best be able to see the big picture and make the right decision. Corazon believes it takes at least six months to adjust to a new position, organization, or location, so if you do make a change, give yourself some time to adjust...no one can master a new job immediately—building relationships and understanding the responsibilities takes time and dedication. Ultimately, it's up to you whether to stay or go, but making an informed and educated decision will give you the most potential for success.



Carol is a Recruitment Consultant at Corazon, a national leader in specialized consulting, management resources, and recruitment services for cardiovascular program development. Corazon combines strategic business planning, market and financial analysis, feasibility studies, clinical operations, program implementation support, Heart Hospital design, best practice benchmarking, interim management, executive search, and staff/leadership education for newly established or existing heart and vascular programs. Call 412-364-8200 or visit www.corazoninc.com.