

Advice on going back to permanent work from contracting

Introduction

Contractors sometimes consider going back to permanent employment. This article discusses the reasons why and offers some advice.

Reasons for Changing from Contracting to Permanent

Common reasons for moving back to permanent work include:

Tired

The highest paid contractors work very hard to stay at the top. They are continuously reading and training themselves on the latest trends within their arena. It is more than a nine to five job, often encompassing evening and weekend working for no money in order to command the highest rates in the market.

After many years of this, and perhaps with other things in life to focus on, this amount of effort is too much. Moving into a permanent position where training is done on the job can be attractive.

Frustrated / Bored

It can become frustrating having to keep churning out the same type of work when moving from contract to contract. Shortly after getting the job it is time to start at square one again elsewhere. Also, after many years doing the same type of work it can become tedious that the only option to savour any sanity is to move into a role which is only available via permanent employment.

Security

The security of the contract market is relative and depends on a contractor's ability to keep up with the latest skills and market and sell themselves. Those that can find themselves continually in well paid contracts. Security can become an issue for those contractors who find themselves less able to secure contracts, particularly in market downturns. Moving into permanent employment becomes an attractive option.

Fixed location

Some type of contract work cannot always be found close to home and being 'geographically mobile' for each new contract can be annoying, particularly for contractors with families.

Same money

The most common situation for contractors returning to permanent work is the reasons above combined with an offer from an existing client to go permanent where the financial remuneration works out about the same.

Issues when returning to permanent work

Politics

Corporate politics will increase dramatically, particularly if you enter a large organisation where you hope to rise up the ladder. Large organisations have many middle managers playing games and building miniature empires that are more aligned with increasing their own status and level in the company than actually benefiting the company.

If you are entering at a management level and are not a fan of politics then it would be advisable to re-think your strategy.

Job Security

After a probation period (up to one year) a permanent job is more secure than contracting. You also get paid for sick days and holidays.

However, whilst there are advantageous employment regulations on your side there are other ways of forcing people to leave companies. Don't bet solely on the security.

Money

It is unlikely you will get as much money as contracting and you will need to take into account other benefits such as health insurance and pension etc.

Unpaid overtime

You might be expected to work overtime on the promise of it 'looking favourable' on your next appraisal or bonus. For organisations with bonus schemes the amount you earn will be dependant on your co workers and not you alone. Some years you might not even get a bonus.

This might be difficult to get used to, since in contracting you know exactly what you are going to get paid.

Training and personal development

Sadly, there are few organisations who have good training and development programmes for their staff. If you wish to attend a training course you will need to convince the company that they should spend the money.

It would be advisable beforehand to see if there is an allocated budget for training.

You will lose the freedom of being able to attend any training courses that you want.

Holiday

You will get around 20 to 25 holiday days per year plus bank holidays. You will no longer be able to take off more than 3 weeks in a row.

Conclusion

For contractors who have been at the top of their profession for many years they will find it hard to adapt to the culture that goes with a permanent position.

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