

Christmas: dreams of Change

Christmas is a time for celebration and giving

It's also a time when many workers head to a favourite spot to unwind. We kick back, drink, eat, get physical, forget about work...as the holiday goes on we relax, get a tan (or not if we're careful), stop wearing shoes...

And many of us start reflecting and dreaming, on how life could be. What if it was like this all the time, what if we didn't have to work...?

By late January, the dream's over.

From mountains, beaches, Bali, and all over the world – Bendigonians come back to their jobs.

Dangerously for employers, this can be when people decide to leave. Unfortunately many cannot leave physically, so they just check out mentally! In

workplaces everywhere, there are workers who've mentally departed. It's just their bodies that turn up, while they dream, and google, about another life.

Research in early 2010 revealed that most Australian workers were not happy with their careers. Three quarters wanted a new job, 9% 'hated' their jobs, and only 22% were happy with their careers. Only 13% planned to stay in their current positions, and many were networking already to get the ball rolling.

In Greater Bendigo with our working age population of roughly 50,000 and 62% participation rate we have around 30,000 people in work, and on these figures up to 25,000 unhappy workers wanting a new job!

Have 25,000 people across Bendigo changed jobs in 2010? No! The alternative is that all over the city there are people ranging from marginally to totally disaffected. This is heightened in January when they return from leave.

There's something terribly wrong with this scenario, and neither organisations nor individuals should just accept it.

For organisations, ensure you have the best possible people in your jobs. Set out to optimise your organisation for performance and

satisfaction. Do some internal research. Get in place programs that make your workplace a great place to be, somewhere that makes your people lie on the beach thinking "Damn, I wonder what I'm missing out on at work!" Consider health and wellbeing programs, community volunteering programs, 'swap a job' programs that give people a taste of another role. If you have people you don't want to lose over the coming months, use the Christmas leadup to recognise and acknowledge them.

For individuals, get serious about it and take charge. Are you after a new job, or a new career? If a job, identify the possible employers and start marketing. If a career, what new direction would

you genuinely feel passionate and committed to?

A recent story reported on tracking down five Australians who totally loved their jobs.

Unfortunately, the jobs were a plus-sized model, an Antarctic chef, a mermaid, a stilt walker, and a whale-shark spotter. The reality is, there just aren't too many of

these jobs around! Look at your real interests in life. What fires you up with passion and enthusiasm? If nothing, what makes you least bored and uninspired? Go with that and work out how to make a career out of it. There's some great help around town in terms of career advice – use it to get past just dreaming.

Consider the old lines by Steven Stills "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with". If you try that with your job you might find that it takes on a new life, as you come at it from a fresh angle. It helps if you change your approach from being a workplace prisoner or whinger, to being a committed 'volunteer'. And they are often not only the best contributors, they enjoy their work more.

You're welcome to contact me for help with your career, or your workplace.

Enjoy the break, have a fantastic Christmas with your family and friends, dream, and act!

