

# TheNational



## Taking the career switch plunge in the UAE

Jessica Hill

December 12, 2013 Updated: December 12, 2013 17:58:00

You find yourself clock-watching from lunchtime onwards. Your mind is always wandering to where to go for your next holiday. You don't fit in with the corporate culture ... but still, the idea of changing whole career midlife and risking losing everything is something that most people are too terrified to contemplate.

But some do find the courage to take a leap into the unknown. Pauline Emaure, a Dubai resident, found herself in her 30s feeling trapped in a job as a market-research analyst that didn't satisfy her. She admits that it took her a long time to find the courage to leave. "I would find myself waking up in the mornings on workdays with a feeling of dread in the pit of my stomach, knowing I had to go to work. But it was a painful decision to have to make. To get out of your comfort zone, it's a very difficult thing."

To help find a new career, Emaure turned to the Dubai-based success strategist Susan Castle, who founded Outwith the Dots in 1997 and this year set up WLP Success with her fellow coach Donna Needs.

Castle gave Emaure a questionnaire to assess where her natural talents lie and identify in which sorts of jobs she would be "in flow", using her natural talents to their maximum potential. "We looked at my strengths and I discovered I'm very well organised and I like processes, so I can concentrate my job search on jobs that require these skills."

Castle explains: "When you are in flow, time is suspended because you're loving what you're doing. And because it comes naturally to you, it's hard work but it's also effortless. You're productive, incredibly empowered and the results you produce are extraordinary, because you're working to the best of your ability."

Castle helped Emaure to work out the next step and she is now focusing on setting up her own exhibitions company. "I'm really enjoying it so far," says Emaure. "And it's flexible, so I have time to do my activities, too. Every exhibition is different, which makes it interesting and I am meeting new people. It's exactly what I was looking for. But I waited too long to do this. It's risky and it's not easy quitting your job because you lose your security. But if you want to be happy, you have to do what you need to, to make it happen."

Giving up an unfulfilling job to set up your own business can be a better choice than trying to switch careers in the UAE. "In a way, it's much harder to move out of professional careers here because you get recruitment professionals who want somebody with the postage-stamp-exact-same-CV as the job description – it's all about ticking boxes," Needs explains. "But to become an entrepreneur, the sky's the limit here. It's expensive to start a business, but there are endless possibilities."

One woman who has left a career to do just that is Samia Shehadeh, who gave up her job as an executive coach in Abu Dhabi and a year later set up the Art Beat art studio with her younger sister, Amanda. "A big reason was to have a challenge and also to get a work-life balance, which seems crazy as in some ways it's harder to get that in your own business. But having my sister there has made it much easier. So it means that after school in the afternoon, 90 per cent of the time, I'm available for my children."

### Related

- UAE moves away from choosin arts or science by combining both
- Silver lining to career switch for UAE aviation leader
- Teaching careers need change if UAE is to climb league tables
- Career guidance 'should be provided at schools'
- Workers head back to school