

Know when to fold 'em at dead-end job

Question: "I have worked as an administrative assistant for seven years with the same boss. I have constantly asked for more responsibilities, as I feel I could do more—I'll be graduating with my master's degree in December. My boss seems to just brush my request off. At what point should I start seeking opportunities elsewhere?" - *Natarsha, Administrative Assistant*

We reached out to some experts about how to recognize a dead-end job and how to know when it's time to cut your losses.

"Some people waste years of talent in a dead-end job without ever seeing the signs they were in a dead-end job," says career strategist and human resources blogger Toni Howard Lowe. Signs include:

- Not feeling challenged or passionate about what you do.
- Hitting a glass ceiling that restricts your advancement.
- Seeing no opportunity to grow.
- Watching the company sink financially.

When you have reached a stage where you have acquired all the skills, knowledge, relationships and personal development that a job has to offer, then it's time to look at outside opportunities, says career coach Katherine Street. If you've tried to make changes to no avail, this is a key sign that it's time to move on, Street says. It's vital, however, that you move on to something that will give you an opportunity to grow and develop skills and knowledge.

"Often people who feel they are in a dead-end job will move on to anything, and, for a little while, as they learn the new job it feels rewarding, but this will soon fade if they have merely swapped one dead-end job for another," she says. The individual needs to identify the areas where they want to grow and only accept a new role that will give them that development, she says. "Otherwise they will become serial dead-enders."