

Be Committed to What You Do

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

I am about to provide you some of the strangest [job search](#) and career advice you will ever receive from someone who's in the [recruiting industry](#). One thing you should know about me is that I'm a straight shooter. If I see a pattern repeat itself enough times, I know it's something that must be true. The pattern I'm about to explain to you is so powerful it could change your career forever. I know it has changed mine.

The secret is commitment.

When I was in my 20s, I had a girlfriend who watched soap operas. She was committed to those shows. She would watch them every single day, and if she could not watch them, she would record them. I'm ashamed to admit that I would sometimes watch the soaps with her when she would catch up on the missed episodes. The one thing I quickly realized about soap operas was that they were all about commitment, in that none of the characters could commit. Each person on every one of the shows would get into a series of relationships, be tempted by others, get out of relationships, get married, cheat, and so forth. This was all the soap operas were ever about. The characters would inevitably suffer hospitalizations for nervous breakdowns or horrible accidents (caused by their distractions). Then there would be horrible, drunken, public confessions and all sorts of other malfeasance. Moreover, the people on these shows would always be led to believe that, no matter how good their situation was, the grass was greener elsewhere.

Several years later, when I got into the employment market and started recruiting, I began noticing this same soap opera pattern with clients and coworkers. People would leave a job for any lapse, no matter how small. If they were criticized by an employer, I would see them start looking for another job. If someone heard another employer was paying more, they would send a résumé. If their current company or firm were getting bad press, they would start looking for another job. The reasons were innumerable. Some might seem proactive, while others were purely reactionary. One thing seemed clear to me: There was a major lack of commitment in the marketplace. People could not or would not commit themselves to a single employer-or to anything for that matter.

Commitment is key in order to experience any form of success. You should not do any sort of job if your heart isn't in it and you can't commit. If you are a [public relations intern](#), you need to be committed to that job. If you are the president of a corporation, you need to be committed to that as well. Not being committed to your career will only have negative consequences.

Several months ago, I was speaking with a proofreader in my company who resigned because she had found a better job across the street, one that paid more. The amount of the pay increase was minimal. I was actually prepared to give the woman a raise, a higher amount than her new job. In our meeting, the young woman explained she liked working for our company, but she needed to make more money because her husband had been unemployed for some time.

I told her I was very sorry about this and asked how she became aware of the new job. She was a nice girl and I was interested in talking to her about this. The job she was doing at our company was very demanding and had required her to take work home at night and to work very hard for the most part. In response, she told me she'd been freelancing for the other company for some time, and this was how she came to entertain a new full-time job offer.

Once she told me this, I was no longer interested in trying to keep this person at our company. I knew immediately she was not committed to our company to the degree I wanted her to be. She was not someone I wanted on my team.

Your boss (and we all have bosses) wants employees who are committed to what they do.

Whenever I hear people tell me they are just doing something until they can find something better, I know they will never really succeed. When I see people leave a job for trivial reasons, I also know that they will probably not reach the success for which they're striving. When I see people watch the clock and leave at 5 p.m. every day because they are not really interested in what they are doing, I know those people will probably have mediocre careers. Commitment shines through, and it is easy to see when it's not there.

Each morning, I read the *Wall Street Journal*. I spend at least forty-five minutes reading it cover to cover. Most of the stories in this publication are about Fortune 500 companies and other such organizations. At least once a week, I see something along these lines:

John Smith started out as a repairman for a local office of X company in 1977. Today, he is [CEO](#) of the same company, with 18,000 employees in 26 countries and revenues of \$4.2 billion last year...

It's not coincidental I keep seeing stories like this in the paper. Without a doubt, the people who are rising up in these situations are those who are the most committed. When they join a company, they join and remain in a committed fashion. They show up to *work*. These are the kinds of people who grow within corporations. They usually keep their jobs, but if they ever lose a job they will find another job quickly. Their commitment attracts success.

Being committed also has financial rewards. I have several people working for me on salary, whose incomes have consistently risen (more than tripled) in the past three to four years alone, because I know they are committed. I know their hearts and souls are in the job. I have recruiters working for our company who make two to three times the money of the average recruiter because of their level of commitment to the job.

It's very common for people who've held too many jobs within a short span of time to never [find a job](#) in their industry again. This happens to lawyers all the time. It is well known in the recruiting community that if you have had more than two jobs in five years (or even five to six jobs over a twenty-plus-year career), it demonstrates a lack of commitment. Even if you can account for the problems you might have had with those employers, it would seem clear that the problem is not your

employer--the problem is almost certainly you.

Prospective employers will want to avoid you because they know you will leave them, too. You will find fault with them just as you have found fault with all of your other employers. You will tell the people you work with why you do not like the company. You will tell other potential employers you are interviewing with why you do not like the company. Who needs that? Most employers avoid these sorts of people like the plague.

It pays to be committed not only to your employer but also to your career. Your commitment will come out in everything you do, and you will shine. There are countless stories of the secretary who becomes the president of the company, the guy in the mail room who ends up buying the corporation and becoming a billionaire, the worker who sweeps up at the [auto dealership](#), who becomes a salesman, then the top salesman, and eventually buys the auto dealership and another, and another, and so on.

All of that comes through the power of commitment.

I am in the [employment industry](#). I love what I do. I want you to succeed. I want to coach you. I am committed to what I am doing.

Are you?

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- [Are You Here? The Importance of Being Present in Your Job and Job Search](#)
- [Show Up on Time](#)

Read More About Asking Any Question that Shows You Might be a Problematical Employee or Might Not Be Fully Committed to the Job:

- [The Only Thing that Matters is Commitment](#)
- [Get Security by Concentrating on the Needs of Your Employer](#)

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