

How many jobs do Canadians hold in a lifetime?

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Earlier this year in our report *Thinkopolis IV: Time to Work*, we noted that shorter stints at jobs had become the standard as 51 per cent of people now stay in any one role for under two years. In fact only 30 per cent of people stay in any one job for over four years. [Job hopping is the new normal.](#)

One of the most frequent questions we were asked regarding this trend was if there was a generational difference in job loyalty. So we dug a little deeper. By analyzing 7,000,000 work histories in the Canadian resumes in the Workopolis database, we were able to discern an emerging trend in career changes and how many jobs the average Canadian can expect to have.

It turns out that Generation X spends over **20 percent longer** in each job they hold than Gen Y does.

People who graduated university in 1992, **Gen Xers**, worked an average of 3.2 jobs in the first 12 years of their career, staying approximately 41 months or 3.4 years in each job.

Just ten years later, the cohort graduating in 2002, **Generation Y**, held 3.9 jobs over their first 12 years on the job market, with a shorter tenure of 32.5 months or 2.7 years in each job on average.

Gen Y **changed jobs 22 per cent more often** over a 12 year period than Gen X did.

Contrast that with the job longevity experienced by their parents. According to Statistics Canada, two-thirds of Canadian Baby Boomers entered their fifties in long-time employment – holding down jobs they had been in for at least 12 years with the same employer. In fact, more than half had worked for the same firm or organization for far longer — often 20 years or more.

If the current trend continues, **Canadians can expect to hold roughly 15 jobs** in their careers.

Here's what we found out about the current situation from surveying 4,000 Canadians in September and October of this year. Only 6 per cent of people have held just one job in their career, while 16 per cent said that they had already held 'more than ten.'

How many jobs have you had in your career?

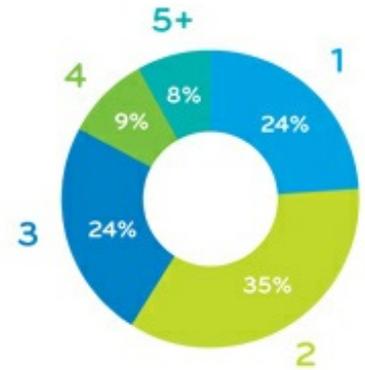
- 1 – 6%
- 2 – 8%
- 3 – 14%
- 4 – 15%
- 5 – 13%
- Between 5 and 10 – 28%
- More than 10 – 16%



More and more of us are also switching career *paths* completely at least two or three times. We asked Canadians:

How many different career paths have you followed?

- 1 – 24%
- 2 – 35%
- 3 – 24%
- 4 – 9%
- 5+ – 8%



The most common reasons people gave for changing career paths were *discovering a new field they were passionate about* (35 per cent), *becoming bored/disillusioned with their original work* (24 per cent), and *setbacks such as lack of advancement and /or cutbacks, layoffs in a career path* (19 per cent).

Most Canadians don't think they will stay in the same vocation for their entire career. In a survey of over 1,000 people, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) said that they do not expect to remain in the same profession for life.

Knowing that a job – even a profession – isn't permanent should take some of the pressure off the decision making. It's not so dire which job you take right now since your career will be made up of the many, many jobs you've held and paths you've followed over your working life.

It's through working that we learn what we like to do, what we're good at, and in what direction we want our career journey to take us.

This research was done for our most recent report, [Thinkopolis VI: Moving Work](#). See all of the latest research and insights from Workopolis at <http://workopolis.com/research>.

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