

## MONEY MATTERS

# 4 Times It's OK to Take a Promotion Without a Raise



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Is a new opportunity everything you dreamed – except for the paycheck? Despite popular belief that every promotion needs a [raise](#), here's when it still might be worth it to make the leap.

1. It will help you transition to what you actually want to do.

Sometimes an adolescent dream to work in [marketing](#) loses its shine when you're actually in the field and realize



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transition to a field better aligned with your interests, or a position that can act as a stepping stone to a new industry, might actually save you money by giving your [resume](#) an organic shift – even if the initial offer doesn't include extra cash.

A promotion can also move you out of a less than ideal work environment. If a new team, new department, or new company will remove you from the boss from hell or the colleague always stealing your credit, your mental health alone might [thank you](#) for the move. Just be sure that everything else about the new position, not just the new team, makes it worth it. If that's not the case, see if your current situation is [best resolved](#) by involving a supervisor or talking to [human resources](#).

The key in both of these situations is to know where you want to end up. A new opportunity might look appealing simply because it's not where you are currently. But with or without a pay raise, the promotion should follow the path you see for yourself. That could mean directing a specific department at a large company, having more opportunities for creativity, or developing enough expertise to launch your own enterprise.

## 2. It's a better use of your skills.

Even if a promotion doesn't mean a complete career change, an opportunity to cultivate the skills you want can



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your current content strategist job, a promotion to editor that calls for more editing, big-picture thinking, vision setting, or managing might not need a pay increase to be attractive.

To know if an opportunity deserves a “heck yes,” you should be able to identify what isn’t working in your current job. Also, keep in mind that a [new job](#) that demands more of your time deserves a bump in compensation. Only you can answer to what extent using your skills is worth [burning both ends of the candle](#), but an honest answer will protect your time.

### 3. The money is coming.

If your company distributes raises in December and this particular promotion is set for June, it can be worth committing to the new position and waiting six months before you see the pay off. Your new responsibilities are also powerful chips at the bargaining table, especially if receiving raises at your workplace is a competitive process.

Similarly, some companies sincerely don’t have the means of compensating employees at market value. If you work for a startup or small company, the intangible benefits of your position may set you up better in the long run. Startups and small companies may not be able to provide a pay increase when they want to reward or retain outstanding employees, but they can



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Initially, the position may lack some pay but hold more opportunities, including the opportunity to have an actual impact on the company's operation or vision. As the company grows, you may reap the benefits of the risk.

Even if your career is best continued elsewhere, the hands-on role you played at the company makes for a nice resume and a better promotion – compensation included – down the road. Just as taking time off from or delaying work to pursue an advanced degree often means a higher paycheck down the road, accepting an [underpaid](#) position can be an investment for your career.

#### 4. There are other [perks](#).

Whether or not the long-term benefits of an unpaid promotion warrant it worthwhile, a position with non-monetary perks can be a good reason to accept it. For example, if a new [management](#) role will allow you to be more effective by helping you focus on the projects you want, then the increased responsibilities of managing can be worth the payoff.

Likewise, the position may inherently come with perks to help you do the new job, such as six sigma training, more conferences, or continuing education. You can also use the promotion to negotiate for better benefits or flex time. If your company cannot afford a



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instead, that, too, can count as a win.

Above all, there is nothing more crucial than knowing your worth and being able to communicate it. Money certainly isn't everything, but if a call to greater responsibility is missing a pay bump, it should make up for it somewhere else – and that substitution should benefit your career as much as a pay increase would.

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*Carmen Dahlberg is the founder of [Belle Detroit, L3C](#) a creative agency that provides high-quality creative work to businesses by training and employing low-income Detroit moms.*



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