

# Find work which works for you

Globalisation has done wonders to the economy and the livelihood of Indians. An increased GDP, personal income growth, demand for human capital in a knowledge economy are apparent. Beneath the veil of these changes, is an enlarged canvas of opportunities for the Indian youth, who are now breaking away from the conventional career choices of medical, engineering, law and management.

Ten years ago, the service sector contributed only 25% to India's GDP; today it is over 57%. The rapid changes are due to several industries coming up on focus galvanised by significant changes in the socio-economic factors of our society. The businesses that have developed are Entertainment, Media, Hospitality, Retail, Banking, Financial Services, Travel and Tourism. Steadily, an increasing array of offbeat career choices to suit every interest and passion, have emerged.

Today, our youth are in an enviable position unlike anywhere else in the world. A vibrant economy and rising family income have reduced the responsibilities of the youth, enabling them to take risks, which is characteristic of unconventional and offbeat careers. These developments are the catalysts of change in the history of modern India.

## Make an informed choice

A choice of a career, which typically lasts for 30-40 years, isn't an easy decision; nor can you be sure you made the right decision, until you get close to the pinnacle of success. I often get people undergoing a mid-career crisis telling me about their inability to balance work and personal life; people who are clear they want a change, but not clear what they want to do. If you are not passionate about your career, the challenges of a conventional career can drain you completely, affecting your health and relationships.

It's important to understand the complexities of a career — conventional or offbeat, as it might unfold in the years ahead and choose right. The key to success is to find work, which works for you, work that motivates you from within, facilitating your physical and emotional well-being, for a complete life span.

## Choices unlimited

The choices in unconventional or offbeat careers are varied and an outcome of creative thinking. Therefore, the list (see box) is only indicative.

With unlimited choices

## OFFBEAT CAREERS Choosing an unconventional career is the new trend. V Pradeep Kumar explains ways of finding out if your passion can be channelised into a job



how do you decide? How do you manage an offbeat career? The following is a guideline:

**What's your passion?** Irrespective of your choice, it's fundamental to identify your passion and interest. However, not all interests, hobbies or passions can turn into career opportunities. Therefore, carefully examine what's worth pursuing as a career.

**Is there commercial scope?** Critically evaluate commercial scope and viability for the area of your interest. For example, if you want to get into sports as a profession, be clear about the nature and scope of the game in the long term. Currently, in India not all games have the potential for a full-time career. Further, commercially evaluate at an appropriate time.

**Do you have family support?** Support from family is critical for an offbeat career, from many viewpoints. Generally, you take a longer time to settle down in an offbeat career. Parents could lose patience and may indulge in peer comparison, which can be frustrating. When you are mentally down, family support is important to keep you motivated. The initial years are therefore tough and challenging, mentally and financially. Ideally, have an open and qualitative debate with your parents, before plunging into offbeat careers.

**Set career goals:** Plan your career after getting convincing answers to the above questions. There are students from well-to-do families, for whom financial scope could be secondary and the satisfaction from a chosen profession, is all that's important. Therefore, set career goals according to your situation, considering long-term priorities like number of years in the career,

retirement period and financial status, post retirement.

**Have a role model:** For your career, consider a role model to emulate success. Your role model should be one who despite challenges, has attained success and is highly respected in the industry. For example, Sachin Tendulkar and AR Rahman are role models, for youngsters pursuing cricket and music, respectively.

**Acquire skills:** After careful deliberation, you have chosen a career. It could be music, acting, radio jockeying, sports, writing and so on. Remember, passion alone isn't a gate-pass for success. Therefore, supplement your passion by acquiring precise skills through education and training. Also, develop soft-skills like communication, personality and grooming which are vital for success.

Acquire skills beyond your career goal. For example, if you want to become a director, it helps to know other aspects of filmmaking such as acting, cinematography, editing, production and distribution; if you are a news reporter, get some competency as a presenter too. Such extended multi-tasking skills help in exploiting opportunities that come your way. In the long-term, it enables you to pursue higher goals in the related area.

**Networking and PR:** You will initially be unknown. So become your own PR person, meeting the right people at the right time. Understanding the key people in your profession and networking with them will make a big difference in projecting yourself into the top league.

**Adaptability:** Many offbeat careers are of a high profile nature and success may not last long. Some careers by de-

sign have a shorter life span. For example, if you take acting as a career, be clear about your changing status. Careers in lead roles last for a short time requiring adaptability. Several external factors contribute to your success or failure, such as hits and flops, which are unpredictable. Similarly, if you run a specialty restaurant, changing preferences may demand changing to multi-cuisine or vice-versa. Further, in a few careers, new technology can swing fortunes either way. Therefore, be alert of any impending technological changes, preferences and adapt yourself to the situation.

**Managing finance:** Financially, offbeat careers do not have a regular pattern of income. The income and its periodicity can wildly fluctuate. Decide your life style, savings and investments, carefully considering your projected income. Maintain an appropriate life style avoiding extravagances, and wisely invest for the future.

**Managing success:** Success is not just acquiring fame and wealth; it is about managing the euphoria of success. Learn lessons from private tragedies of several successful people in public life. As these professions often throw you into the limelight you may have to live with a split personality if you do not manage success well. This can cause deep anguish and stress. Having the right attitude, being humble and not getting carried away by success are more important in life.

Finally, exploit the abundant opportunities around; enjoy the success of becoming trailblazers and create legacies for future generations.

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## Offbeat careers to choose from

1. Acting, direction and cinematography
2. Journalism and content management
3. Singing, composing, playing instruments
4. Sound engineering
5. Choreography
6. Beauty profession
7. Restaurants - speciality, multi-cuisine
8. RJ/DJ/VJ
9. Animators and designers
10. Entrepreneurship
11. Social, political, voluntary activities
12. Environmentalist
13. Events/wedding management
14. News reporters and presenters
15. Fashion Photography
16. Careers in Museums/libraries
17. Career counselors
18. Personality grooming specialists
19. Health and fitness specialists
20. Sports

All these careers need specific education/training to develop required skills

