

Why I left Google.

David Pullara – May 4, 2016

I am an ex-Googler. Those who know me will likely be very surprised about the "ex" part of that sentence. As a marketer, I've loved Google for over a decade. When I began working there last year, I made no secret of how privileged I felt to be a part of a company that was redefining digital marketing and helping to redefine how people work. Google is literally changing the world as we know it, and I was living my dream of working there.

But my decision to leave Google, incredibly difficult as it was, was absolutely the right decision for me to make. I know this because I came to realize I was working for a company I loved in a role that was not making me happy.

This isn't something I could have anticipated when I first saw the "Account Executive" role posted on Google's website in early 2015. In fact, I remember thinking, "this role is perfect for me!" My career has been full of interesting changes – moving from one industry to another, from one company size to another, from one job function to another – and I've always found the thrill of adapting to a new environment and learning a new set of skills exciting. Would moving into a "sales role" be any different?

As I was interviewing, I **was upfront about** the fact that my background didn't include any traditional sales experience, but my interviewers told me that wasn't what they wanted. They were looking for a strong, strategic marketer who had been "on the other side of the table and who understands how the media decisions are made." "That's me," I thought. I fit that description, and knew I could be a valuable contributor to the team. Google seemed to agree; they offered me the position, and I began my life as a Googler in June 2015.

The learning curve at Google is very **steep**; every Googler acknowledges it, and nobody makes any apologies for it. The type of people that Google hires are all really smart and intellectually curious, and they're used to figuring things out on their own. So when people ask you in your first few months how things are going and you say things like, "It's fantastic, but I feel **overwhelmed**", people smile, nod their heads enthusiastically, and tell you that the feeling is completely normal and that every new Googler feels like that. They tell you not to worry, and that things will start to feel better in a few months.

So I decided not to worry. Instead, I redoubled my efforts to understand all of Google's products and how marketers could use them to achieve their objectives. I embraced the speed at which Google operated, a very different pace from what I was used to at previous companies but one that proved both empowering and **exhilarating**.

But something was still missing. Something still felt wrong.

I finally reached out for help. I had a candid conversation with my manager about what I was feeling and what I wanted to do about it, and together we put a plan in place to help me become more comfortable in my role. I set aside more dedicated time for training. I connected with various Googlers to get their advice on how to succeed in the role, and implemented their suggestions whenever I could. I even began

working with an Executive Coach, an investment I made personally, to better understand myself and what I needed to do to succeed.

But in the end, it was my newborn daughter that helped me realize the problem.

My wife and I welcomed our daughter Charlotte to the family in early February, and my manager strongly encouraged me to take advantage of Google's generous paternity-leave benefit. I had **mixed feelings about** taking this time, but my manager reminded me I'd never be able to get those first few weeks with my daughter back later on, and she was right. So I took four weeks of paternity leave to spend time with Charlotte and her two older siblings.

As a parent I can absolutely **vouch for** the benefits of taking time for yourself to reevaluate your life's priorities. That's what I was able to do while holding my daughter each day over those four weeks, thinking about everything that made me happy and everything that didn't.

And I realized that what didn't make me happy was my work.

I loved Google. I loved the company's mission and culture. I loved the fact that I was surrounded by smart, passionate people. I loved the way the company treated its people, not only from a compensation and benefits perspective, but also from a trust, information, and respect standpoint. I loved Google. I love Google. But I came to realize that I simply wasn't in the right role.

Steve Jobs said, "The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking. Don't **settle**." I wasn't unhappy because I was struggling, I was struggling because I was unhappy. And there was an obvious way to solve that problem.

My manager was very understanding; she fully supported me as I explored other options within the company, and when I determined the right role wasn't available, worked with me to implement a smooth exit plan.

Do I sometimes wonder if I made the right decision, leaving a renowned organization like Google without having something better waiting for me? Of course I do. But then I think about how many hours the average person will spend at work during their lifetime, and how terrible it would be to do something every day that you didn't love. I remind myself that I didn't really leave Google, I left a role that did not make me happy.

And most importantly, I remember I have three young children who will **look up to** me, and that I'd like to teach them to find what they love to do, and courageous enough to pursue those passions.

Adapted from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-i-left-google-david-pullara>

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