

Are You Considering A Career U-Turn? **QUESTIONS? Contact ANH at 1.800.556.1548**

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The average person makes more than three career changes during their working life, according to the US Department of Labor Statistics.



Are you ready to make your move?

Whether forced by layoff or company bankruptcy or initiated by your own pursuit of passion, switching careers midstream can be a traumatic but exciting journey, leading to more 9-to-5 satisfaction than you might ever have dreamed possible.

If you've been thinking about a new career, it's important to take the time now to evaluate your present situation, explore career options, and to choose a new career that will satisfy your passion. Use the following expert tips to ready you for your 180-degree career turn:



10 Steps to a Successful Career Change



- 1. Evaluate your current job satisfaction.** Which aspects of your current job do you most enjoy? Dislike? Analyze whether any dissatisfaction you are experiencing is related to the content of your work, your company "culture," or the people with whom you work. Keep a journal of your daily reactions to your job situation and look for recurring themes.
- 2. Assess your interests, values, and skills.** Review past successful work, volunteer, projects, and job experiences to identify your preferred activities and skills. Determine whether your core values and skills are addressed through your current career.
- 3. Brainstorm ideas for career alternatives.** Discuss your core values and skills with friends, family, networking contacts, and counselors. Visit career libraries at local colleges and use online career resources on job search websites.
- 4. Conduct a preliminary comparative evaluation** of several job fields to identify a few targets for more in-depth research.
- 5. Read as much as you can** about those fields and reach out to personal contacts in those arenas for informational interviews. To expand your network, make an effort to contact acquaintances and meet new people. You can also attend professionals' events, join an industry association, and meet other job seekers online.
- 6. Shadow professionals and observe.** Spend anywhere from a few hours to a few days job shadowing people who have jobs that interest you. A college career office is a good place to find alumni volunteers who are willing to host job shadowers.
- 7. Identify volunteer and freelance activities** related to your target field to test your interest. For example, if you are thinking of publishing as a career, try editing the PTA newsletter. If you're interested in working with animals, volunteer at your local shelter.
- 8. Investigate educational opportunities** that would bridge your background to your new field. Consider taking an evening course at a local college. Spend some time at one day or weekend seminars. Contact professional groups in your target field for suggestions.
- 9. Look for ways to develop new skills** while still in your current job which would pave the way for a change. For example, offer to write a grant proposal if grant writing is valued in your new field. If your company offers in-house training, sign up for as many classes as you can. In addition, look for part-time or freelance jobs in your field of interest and/or use your vacation time to explore other industries or career field.
- 10. Consider alternative roles** within your current industry that would utilize the industry knowledge you already have. As examples, if you are a store manager for a large retail chain and have grown tired of the evening and weekend hours, consider a move to corporate recruiting within the retail industry. Or, if you are a programmer who doesn't want to program, consider technical sales or project management.

Prep for a Career Change

"It's not enough to keep busy. People want to have meaning in their lives and they want work to give them that meaning," says Richard Bolles, author of the book *"What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers"*. Have you awakened to the thought, *"Is this all I was put on Earth to do?"* If so, there's no better time than now to consider a career switch.

Pursue Your Passion

Is your present career providing the fulfillment you crave? If not, you need to understand where your passion lies and identify it. Is it an unrealized dream from your youth that you can never find time to pursue? Is it music, a sport, writing, cooking, activism, entrepreneurship, working with kids or the elderly? Make a list of the things you are passionate about and then narrow that list to those items that present an opportunity to generate income. Whatever you long to do, just make sure you have enough passion to do it full-time.

Tune Your "Transferable Skills"

Once you've narrowed your above "passion list," it's time to match your aptitudes. When people change careers they must first determine from the outset what they most enjoy doing in terms of skills; and second, make sure that they put their needs first – not the job market's. In other words, think about what YOU want to do and not necessarily what's "hot" in the job market.

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Tune Your "Transferable Skills" (cont.)

Good advice is to focus on your "transferable skills". These are the acquired skills you possess that can be used in more than one industry. Some examples of these transferable skills are communication and presentation skills, data analysis, sales, and management skills. If you look at your background from the functional standpoint, a much broader range of opportunities may be opened up, as virtually any functional-area skills are transferable among industries. For example, a stockbroker is essentially a salesperson. He doesn't have to limit his job prospecting to financial services because sales skills are in demand throughout business and industry. Employers, for their part, are looking for people with experience, and will regard the industry switcher as experienced in that line of work, although not in the particular industry. The industry switcher will be welcomed as an expert, and the only requirement is to apply that expertise to a new product line, whatever it might be.

Try "Trioing"

"Trioing" was invented back in the 1970s by author Bolles. This is an exercise to help you identify the skills you most enjoy using and can be very useful to those considering a career change. Here's how to "trio":

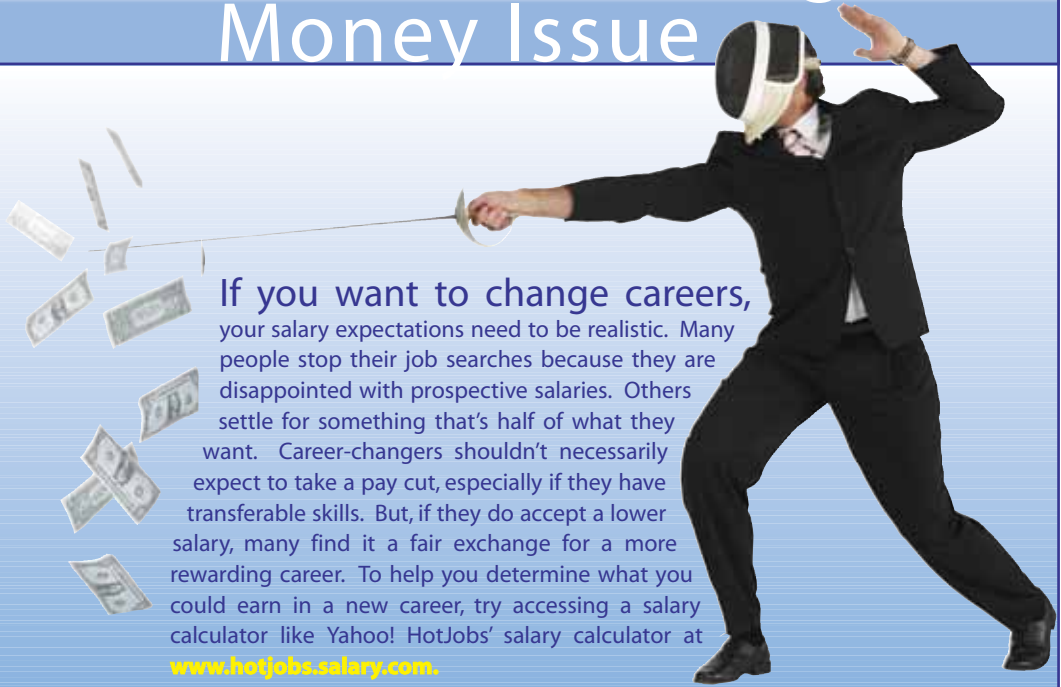
- **Gather two friends or other people you trust. Identify several instances when you achieved something you were proud of. Write down those experiences. Then examine them to pinpoint what skills you used to achieve those successes.**
- **By sharing ideas with your two friends, you can uncover skills that you didn't even realize you had. Your friends can help confirm your strengths and skills, too.**

Get Tested

Career assessment tests are objective tests that measure management style, problem-solving skills, and other abilities. They are also helpful in identifying your transferable skills. Based on your answers to questions, these tests suggest the type of career you might be best suited for. Many career assessment tests are available on-line and at no cost.

These tests are simply one of many career assessment tools; so don't be dismayed if the test results don't point you toward your desired career.

The Career-Switching Money Issue



If you want to change careers, your salary expectations need to be realistic. Many people stop their job searches because they are disappointed with prospective salaries. Others settle for something that's half of what they want. Career-changers shouldn't necessarily expect to take a pay cut, especially if they have transferable skills. But, if they do accept a lower salary, many find it a fair exchange for a more rewarding career. To help you determine what you could earn in a new career, try accessing a salary calculator like Yahoo! HotJobs' salary calculator at www.hotjobs.salary.com.

To survive a potential pay cut in your new career, you should begin to treat your money with more respect. Making better choices in how you spend your money will make it easier to free yourself to change the direction of your life. A good suggestion is to examine the ways that you can "lighten your backpack". Ask yourself, do I really need 100 cable channels? How many shoes, credit cards, and

watches does it take to make me happy? Would life be any more difficult if I kept my car for 5 years instead of 3 before trading it in for a new model? A Certified Credit Counselor can assist you in completing a full-budget analysis that can be very helpful getting a handle on your money, both coming in and going out. **Contact a Certified Credit Counselor at 1 800 556-1548 to help.**

Consult with a Career Counselor

Career counselors can be helpful when you're considering a career change. A good counselor can help you identify your strengths and skills. If you do decide to consult with a career counselor, be sure to prepare in advance. You can do this by simply thinking about and writing down what you like and what you don't like about the kind of work you've been doing.

Unfortunately, career counseling can be costly. So if your budget is tight, you can talk about your career options instead with a mentor, close friend, or someone else you trust or admire; though a common problem here is that someone close to you may have difficulty being objective. Another option is to visit an office where you file for unemployment and worker's compensation, as many of these government-supported agencies also provide career counseling, aptitude testing, and job placement services free of charge.

To quote the Nike Company, "Just Do It!"

Launching a major career switch can be time-consuming and intimidating. On average, it takes four years to change careers, according to Herminia Ibarra, the author of "Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career". Remember to stay positive and keep your enthusiasm up. Focus on small victories to keep your momentum and stay motivated during your career transition.

Changing careers mid-stream can certainly feel like you're starting all over again. But remember, starting over can be a positive. Another positive to keep in mind - some employers are actively looking for candidates with unusual or nontraditional work experiences. So, go for it! Make a commitment to yourself to take those first steps along your passionate career path. And remember, nothing you explore is cast in stone, so feel free to experiment!

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