

CAREER CHANGE TIPS

Changing your Career after many years of working in an industry can be a daunting and stressful ordeal. However, the good news is that you have more transferable skills than you think. If you work with a church in your spare time, try to transfer those skills to workplace ideals and describe them appropriately in your updated resume. You might be overlooking language and bilingualism, but it is important. Seventy-five percent (75%) of executive recruiters say Spanish is most in demand by employers, and job seekers who speak another language are likely to find work faster and command a higher salary or wage. Make sure you include a list of the languages you speak with written or conversational fluency, in your resume.

Whether you are taking the leap into a new industry or returning to the workforce after many years as a stay-at-home professional, consider the following questions before moving forward with your career change. Sometimes this period of change and flux can be positive because it affords the opportunity to be thoughtful about what you truly want. A job is more than just a paycheck. It's about self-respect and emotional growth. Establish job goals before you begin.

- What makes you happy?
- When do you need to work?
- What kind of atmosphere do you like?
- What do you want for your future?
- How much do you need to earn to support yourself and family?
- What is your minimum requirement?
- Do you need a job that offers health insurance?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are there any jobs that you morally oppose?
- Are you willing to start at lower place to get your dream job?
- Do you want to break into an industry?

Skills Assessment Tests and Quizzes are often helpful in determining the answers to those questions. Websites like www.ProjectCareer.com , www.MyPlan.com ,

www.MyCareerWhiz.com , www.questcareer.com, www.CareerKey.org, and www.Free-Career-Test.com can prove useful. Not all skills assessment tests are free, so beware of sites that charge for these services. Some are worth paying for, especially if you are trying to help your teen determine their strengths and skills. However, if you are unemployed and cannot afford to make such an investment, the free website quizzes will prove extremely valuable. Aptitude testing firms like Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation www.jocrf.org, with 11 offices nationwide, charge as much as \$600 per person! The book "Do What You Are," by Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, may also help enlighten you during your quest.

Don't play down your achievements. People are taught to be modest, but don't forget that even the following achievements can help sell yourself as a "best buy" to an employer:

- Earning promotions
- Increasing sales figures
- Running a project to change something
- Winning an award or prize
- Achieving good results in exams/ assessments
- Being part of a team, no matter how trivial
- Gaining qualifications like a chauffeur's license
- Winning a league race
- Being a captain on sports team
- Running a marathon
- Implementing or designing a system
- Improving efficiencies
- Going long periods without absence from work or school
- Winning customer service awards

Focus on communicating accomplishments rather than listing duties and responsibilities associated with past jobs.

Remember that Employers generally respond best to applicants that already have the skills they are looking for. These skills include flexibility, ability to manage team dynamics, confidence, enthusiasm, innovation, and creativity.

Communication skills, like speaking your mind, being open and honest with information, showing that you can communicate well in multiple languages, and having the ability to bond with different types of people & temperaments, should be highlighted in your resume.

Finally, make your search a full time job. Take it seriously. Create a specific daily job search schedule. Tap into religious, social, and professional networks. Stay-at-home parents report that networking through their kids proves helpful. Network during playdates, preschool visits, or start a job or networking club. If your resume is more than 3 years old, consider re-writing it, not tweaking it.

To find some local networking clubs, visit these websites:

- www.Clickit.com
- www.Fiveoclockclub.com
- www.Allcities.org
- www.Fortyplus.org
- www.Toastmasters.org
- www.Usjaycees.org
- www.Sixdegrees.com

The main question that people face when embarking on a Career Change is whether “To Retrain or not Retrain.” Retraining opportunities abound at colleges, online schools, trade and vocational schools, and community education programs. Don’t forget internships, too. First, define yourself and make sure you have a clear vision of what you are looking for in your new job. See if you can recycle enough skills in order to enter the industry that you have chosen. If you cannot, then you should consider retraining.

This time in your life can be exciting. Try jobs out, try internships, and take career test drives. Studies show that your “Career Best Fit” is where the following three

circles overlap: what you love to do, what you are especially talented at, and activities that others will pay you to perform. If you focus on serving others and stress “process over outcome,” this exercise may yield a dream career and teach you a lot about yourself.