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FREE

5 Steps to Implementing Your Successful Career Reinvention

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Step One: Brainstorm Potential Career Options

Once you have had a chance to assess your career likes, dislikes, motivated skills, values, and passions, it is time to brainstorm career options where you can hopefully meet most of the criteria you have outlined.

Brainstormers. The best way to go about this is to recruit two to five brainstorming partners. The expression, more heads are better than one, definitely applies in this case. A good brainstorming partner is someone who is a good “out-of-the-box” thinker, someone who has worked in a variety of careers or settings and who doesn’t have their own “agenda” about what you should or should not do.

Once you have recruited your brainstormers, send them a document outlining everything you have discovered about yourself – career likes, dislikes, passions, values, etc. Add in any additional notes that you think would be relevant, such as not wanting to go back to school, or geographical limitations. Then, ask them if they would take 30 minutes of their time and brainstorm as many possible career options. Give people about a week to complete this assignment.

Analysis. Once you get back all of your brainstorming information, sit down with a trusted colleague/friend and look at the choices and try to narrow them down to three to four career options that you seem really interested in and that you would like to research.

Once you begin researching options, you can always go back and modify this initial list. For example, suppose you select “fundraising” as one of your three to four choices that you would like to learn more about. If, after some initial Web research and some informational meetings, you decide it is not something you want to pursue at this point in time, you can always take it off your list and add in another career option.



Step Two: Research Occupations and Industries

Now that you have narrowed your brainstorming options to a few careers/industries/occupations, you can begin your research to learn more about them and decide if you would like to pursue them further. Don’t worry if you are unsure at this point – it is a natural part of the career reinvention process.

U.S. Department of Labor Resources

The U.S. Department of Labor provides two very good resources for gathering information:

1. Occupations - the Occupational Outlook Handbook

Link: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>

Before you begin researching, you might want to have a quick look at their online tutorial, which can help you navigate this rather large database.

Link: <http://www.bls.gov/tutorial/oooh/home.htm>



2. Industry Guides - Career Guides to Industries

Link: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/>

In addition, **O*NET**, developed under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Labor, offers excellent information for researching occupations.

Link: <http://online.onetcenter.org/find/>

For example, check out O*NET's guide to "The Green Economy" one of the new and emerging occupational fields.

Link: <http://www.onetcenter.org/green.html>

All of these resources allow you to explore occupations and industries and learn more about the realities of working in these occupations. They will discuss the training and education required, potential earnings, expected job prospects, working conditions, and tasks performed.

An additional way to research a potential field or occupations is to organize informational meetings with individuals currently working in those occupations. For example, if you are interested in potentially becoming an occupational therapist, first do your research in the above databases to ensure that this potential career option is of interest. If it is, then set up informational meetings with occupational therapists to find out more about what it is really like to work in that field, how to transition in from the point you're starting from, and other helpful pointers such as additional education that might be required.

Step Three: Consider Dipping Your Toe in the Water

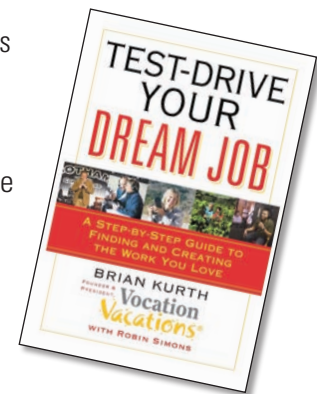
Now that you have narrowed down your potential choices and hopefully have earmarked a field in which you want to work, it might be helpful at this point to get some real world experience, and road test this career. There are several ways to gain experience in a low-risk way. Here are some helpful suggestions:

Volunteer. One way to try out a new career or occupation is to engage in volunteer work in the new field. This method will place you in a position or organization that intrigues you. It will provide you with an unlimited view into how this type of work fits your interests, passions, and goals. And, it will provide you with insight as to whether your skills match up to this type of position. At the same time, volunteering can open up new networking avenues for you, which may be useful later if you decide to pursue this field.

If volunteering does not work for your schedule or commitment, you might want to consider another option. Vocation Vacations (<http://vocationvacations.com/>) is a company that organizes vacations that allow you to spend several days with someone working in an occupation you might want to pursue. The founder of Vocation Vacations, Brian Kurth, has written a wonderful book on this concept (link below), which describes how to use this avenue to test out a dream career. I just finished reading the book myself and wish I had known about this option when I made my own career change – it would have been helpful for me.

Website: VocationVacations.com

Book: [Test Drive Your Dream: A Step-by-Step Guide to Finding and Creating the Work You Love](#)



Work Part Time. A similar method would be to keep your current job (or a reduced hours version of your current job), and then start working part time in a job that you desire. So much work is contracted out that you can get experience working in a prospective career through freelance work or temp work. It will make your schedule busier, but it also will bring in some money and give you experience to add to your résumé.

Transfer. If you like your company but just don't like your job (i.e. the skills you are using on a daily basis), consider transferring within your company. You could first take on additional duties to show your boss and other supervisors in your company that you are capable to doing more, willing to assume more responsibilities, and ready to move up or laterally to a new position. Letting supervisors know that you would be interested in a certain type of job builds an avenue of communication that could help lead to an effective job transfer or promotion.

Update Your Skills and Broaden Your Knowledge. Another method of shifting career directions involves formal education and or additional professional development; this will help you decide if you really like the subject. If you know your future direction and can afford it, you can go back to college full time, pick up your new graduate degree, and move on to your new occupation. If you can't afford that option, you can enroll in a part-time graduate or certification program or take individual professional courses, classes, and seminars from a professional association in your efforts to change your career.



Step Four: Prepare Your Marketing Documents

One of the biggest mistakes career changers make is to try to use the same résumé that worked in their previous career when pursuing a new field.

Career change résumés need to be targeted to the new audience you are trying to SELL to. And since you are switching orientations, you need to rebrand yourself and modify the perception for yourself in the buyer's mind.

How do you find out what a potential hiring manager might be looking for? The best way is to research the field you are trying to move into, and to find out what qualifications, skills, and competencies hiring managers are seeking. Network with people in the industry, and ask this question during your informational meetings.

Transferable Skills

For example, let's take the case of a classroom teacher trying to transition to a career in educational software sales. This teacher can leverage her communication skills used daily in the classroom (class presentations, leading group discussions, and report writing) as transferable skills that would resonate with a hiring manager in sales. Transferable skills are skills that you developed in one career that are applicable to another.

Qualifications Summary

You might want to lead with a Qualifications Summary that highlights your most relevant credentials so the hiring manager can easily see that you are qualified for the new role. Don't make hiring managers try to figure out the connections between your old career and where you want to go. Spell it out for them and connect the dots for them.

For example, if we continue with the school teacher example, her résumé might include the following information:

Professional Qualifications

- Outstanding knowledge of educational software and technologies
- Strong presentation, communication, and interpersonal relationship skills
- Ability to build and maintain collaborative working relationships with teachers, administrators, and students

In addition, if you have volunteer and or hobby experience that can highlight and speak to transferable skills that would resonate with a hiring manager, then by all means, include this information in your résumé as well. In the example above, let's assume the school teacher also was volunteering at a nonprofit in the area of fundraising. Well, fundraising is actually related to sales, so she would want to highlight these transferable skills on her résumé by including this information either in a separate section called Volunteer Activities or by incorporating this information into the Professional Qualifications example above.

- Successfully contributed to fundraising activities for Make a Wish Foundation that directly benefited children with life-threatening illnesses.

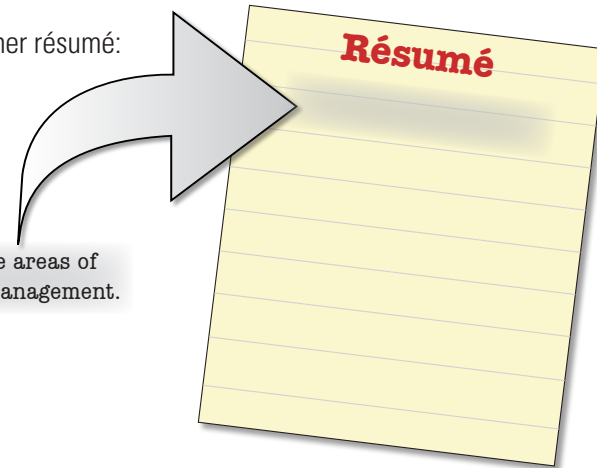
Career Objective

Sometimes, it is helpful to add a career objective or career goal to your career change résumé so it is obvious to the hiring manager that you are not staying in the industry in which you had previously worked.

In the example above, the school teacher might want to include the following at the top of her résumé:

Career Focus: Sales

Contributing to a software company's success by applying skills in the areas of Relationship Building, Sales, Persuasive Communications, and Project Management.



Résumé writing is much too dense of a topic to cover in this e-book. However, I would like to add in a few points that are relevant to career change résumés:

- Ask the right questions and do your homework before you begin writing your résumé.
- Think about how you want to be perceived by your target audience, and express that brand in your profile and throughout your résumé.
- Don't use the words "transferable skills" in the résumé. Demonstrate them instead with concrete examples.
- Make sure all of your experience is written in a format that focuses on your ACCOMPLISHMENTS. Be sure your professional experience demonstrates the success and the value add you brought to the organization for which you worked.
- If you find this difficult to do, then hire a professional résumé writer to produce a top-notch career document for you. This document is your "brochure" marketing the product "YOU." In today's competitive job market, where competition is tough, you must have a document that can sell you in a positive light to a hiring manager.

Step Five: Power Up Your Networking and Find a Mentor

The key to changing careers is to develop new connections and to use these connections to the field in which you aspire to work. Unfortunately, your old connections, helpful and kind as they may be, might not be useful to you at this juncture. There are numerous ways to do this, but there are two that stand out as the most relevant to career change.

Join Professional Associations. This is a great way to stay current about the trends in your potential new industry, *and* network with your future colleagues. In fact, professional associations quite often sponsor conferences, networking sessions, and educational opportunities for their members. In many cases, online services also will accompany your membership privileges. Take advantage of these services, as they will help keep you on track.

To find associations, visit

- [Job-Hunt's Directory of Associations](#) for national and international organizations
- [Job-Hunt's Directory of Local Networking and Job Search Support Groups](#) for local organizations

Build a Relationship with a Mentor. Changing careers is a major life decision that can get overwhelming at times. Find a mentor in your new occupation who can help you through the rough patches. Your mentor also may be able to help you by taking advantage of his or her network. A mentor doesn't have to be a highly placed individual, though the more powerful the mentor, the more success you may have in using that power to your advantage. Also consider having multiple mentors in your new field, as each one can offer you different advice, connections, and perspectives.



About the Author: Randi Bussin



Randi Bussin

Randi Bussin, CCMC, CPBS, MBA, is a Career Reinvention “strategist” and holds the Reach Certified Personal Brand and Online Identity designations. The founder of Aspire!, she partners with successful individuals, helping them find more meaningful work while reigniting the passion that has dimmed professionally. She guides them to a renewed sense of direction, an actionable career reinvention, and a personal branding plan. Reinvention can be a new career, a role more aligned to their values, an entrepreneurial pursuit based upon a passion, or a retirement game plan. Randi has changed careers twice, working in high tech, higher education, and is a serial entrepreneur.

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About Job-Hunt

Job-Hunt.org is a free “employment portal” Website which links to over 13,000 employers and job search and career resources. Advice from various job search experts is also provided, from protecting your privacy to using Craigslist, LinkedIn, and Twitter in your job search.

Follow Job-Hunt on Twitter [@JobHuntOrg](https://twitter.com/JobHuntOrg) and find help with your job search issues on the [LinkedIn Job-Hunt Help Group](#).

Randi Bussin is Job-Hunt’s “Career Change Expert” offering advice every month to help job seekers succeed in their career change efforts.

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This is the 2nd of two free ebooklets on reinventing your career. The first book helps you assess and prioritize your interests, the foundation for implementing your new career. Both are available for download at Job-Hunt.org.