

UK Learning College



Career Transition

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Things have to change!

Maybe you've decided you need a complete change, a new challenge, or perhaps you've been made redundant and forced to re evaluate your career goals. Whatever the reason, changing professions can be daunting, however with a little planning and soul searching it can be easier than you think.

Change for the right reasons

You may have decided to throw in an advertising job for a career in publishing, or perhaps you've resolved that teaching rather than administration is where you need to be. Whatever the decision, you need to make that you are planning a radical change for the right reasons.

What am I aiming for?

First things first, you need to identify how much you are willing to change your lifestyle. Will the new role offer enough challenge? You may have to work more hours in your new employment, or perhaps you intend to work less, but will have to survive on a lower income. Are you and your family willing to make these changes to achieve your ambition?

Will a career change solve the problem?

Sometimes wanting a drastic change is just a symptom of another issue. Consider carefully whether you are making this move for the right reasons. Are you changing professions for example, because you don't like your boss? Would you still pursue this course if you were able to resolve the problem? Perhaps a temporary arrangement such as a holiday or off-site training for a week would give you the break you need to evaluate your situation objectively. When you have a clearer picture of what is motivating your decision, your next step will be that much clearer.

A new position in the same industry

A move within your industry may perhaps offer what you are looking for. For example, rather than moving from administration in the insurance industry to school teaching, perhaps a career in insurance training is a better move. After all, you can take your wealth of experience about the business with you, which a prospective employer will look at favourably.

The same position in a new industry

Perhaps you need a change from the type of business you are in, but love the work you're doing? Rather than make a more radical move, looking for a similar role to the one you are in but in a different industry might be the key. For example, rather than moving from administration in the insurance industry to school teaching, perhaps a career in administration at a school is the direction you should take? You may not yet know about the intricacies of working in education, but you can bring with you a wealth of transferable skills." ...show your prospective employer how valuable you can be to them"

Making the change

Studies show the average jobseeker will change careers (not jobs!) several times over the course of their lifetime. Is it time to take the plunge? If the answer is yes, then use this 5 step plan to ensure you're on the right path.

Determine your likes and dislikes

Whether you have identified your new career path or not, take a moment to evaluate what you like and dislike about your current role. What excites or bores you? Where do your passions lie? What are your personal interests, and could you find a career in them? Spend some time singling out what you really want; it's the most important step to finding a career you'll love.

Research your new career

Ok, so now you know what your passion is, what motivates and excites you in a job, it's time to work out what career is right for you. How much research you do will of course be determined by the scope of the change you are intending to make?

While you may be aware of the more visible roles in an industry, you may not be as familiar with the myriad of positions around it. For example, you may want to work in radio. You know there are jobs announcing, but behind the announcer there are numerous team members supporting them. Finding a mentor, somebody already working in the industry, can give you the inside track. Understanding the ups and downs of the job can help you clarify whether a position is really the right one for you. A mentor can also help you to understand what appeals to employers in their field.

What can you bring with you?

When you sit down for an interview, you need to be clear about what you can bring to the table. To show your prospective employer how valuable you can be to them, review carefully what transferable skills you have now. Experience in areas such as communication, leadership or planning can be the kind of flexible skills that add weight to your application. You may be surprised how much experience you have already.

Taking on new skills

Taking a course in your new discipline can help you on a number of levels:

- It will help you to understand some of the intricacies of the role.
- It will also show a prospective employer you are committed to gaining new skills and take your new career seriously.

You will of course, gain a qualification that may be critical to moving within your new industry later. If you decide to take on further study, there are a number of flexible options available to you. Alternatively, if you are looking for certification, you don't necessarily have to trek down to the local College or University.

Volunteering may also be a viable option to get some 'on the ground' training, and displaying your dedication to employers. A volunteer position may also give you the inside track on what jobs are available and where.

Set goals

Be realistic about the task ahead of you, and get ready to be flexible about how quickly you can get into your intended field. A good approach is to identify the next best position, or the best springboard for your career change. If you find yourself being knocked back for your ideal role, you can change tactics quickly and start applying for your second choice instead. You may not achieve your ideal position right away, but you can place yourself in the best position to get it next time.