



**DeVry University**  
**Keller** Graduate School  
of Management

**CAREER SERVICES**



# **TRANSITIONING CAREERS**

**WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON.**



**TRANSITIONING CAREERS**

For many job seekers who are currently employed, the prospect of searching for a new job is daunting. If you're feeling a bit stuck in your role and have decided that an internal move or promotion is not going to be the right answer for you, then it's probably time to move on to initiate an external job search.

**BE PATIENT AND WILLING TO EMBRACE CHANGE.**

Transitioning out of a current job can be difficult, though. Regardless of your current professional standing, you should be comfortable with the possibility of taking a few steps back from what you do today and identify the opportunities that will re-engage you at work.

**EXPLORE NEW INTERESTS.**

You don't want to move from one unsatisfying role to another, so avoid changing jobs before you have identified your key abilities and motivations. Take time to evaluate the skills, interests, and values that matter to you. Determine whether you will be utilizing these in a field emphasizing your true interests before making a change.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?	WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN SO ABSORBED WITH SOMETHING THAT YOU LOST TRACK OF TIME?	WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING IN YOUR LEISURE TIME?
Art and design.	Browsing through design magazines, from graphic design to furniture design.	Blogging about design trends.
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3



**GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY.**

Volunteering is a great way to demonstrate skills and abilities that aren't necessarily expressed during your day-to-day work experience. It's also a great way to try a new kind of work and determine if you actually enjoy it before making a more permanent transition. For example, if you're thinking about leaving your corporate job to become a veterinarian, consider volunteering at a local animal hospital first. This will give you a taste of the world you're about to pursue. Plus, you'll get valuable, real-world experience to add to your resumé before investing the time and money into additional schooling.

WHAT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?	HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?
Local museums and galleries are always interested in volunteers.	I could apply online or visit museums and/or galleries in person to inquire about volunteering on weekends.
1	1
2	2
3	3

**REBRAND YOURSELF FOR YOUR TARGET POSITION.**

Frame your existing experience appropriately in a way that matches the ideal job where you would like to transition. Regardless of your current position, you have some skills that can be transferred toward various industries and positions. You might not do the same kind of work in your new career, but your existing experience is still valuable to potential hiring managers.

WHAT CURRENT SKILLS CAN YOU TRANSFER TO YOUR NEWLY IDENTIFIED INDUSTRY?	WHICH OF THESE SKILLS CAN BE FOUND IN THE JOB POSTING(S) FOR JOBS YOU WANT TO APPLY TO?
My graphic and web design skills.	Knowledge of design technique and drawing for blueprints.
1	1
2	2
3	3



**TELL YOUR STORY THROUGH YOUR JOB SEARCH MATERIALS.**

Rebranding yourself means updating all of your job search materials – resumé, cover letter, social media profile – to communicate your value to your ideal industry. Express your passion and desire to learn. You may also explain what actions you’ve taken so far to help make this transition possible (education, volunteering, etc.).

WHICH JOB SEARCH MATERIALS CAN YOU UPDATE	WHAT ADDITIONAL MARKETING TOOLS CAN YOU CREATE THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR NEW IDEAL INDUSTRY OR ROLE?
My social media profiles.	Creative business cards that identify me with my target industry.
1	1
2	2
3	3

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH YOUR NETWORK.**

Reach out to your existing networks. Personal recommendations can help your resumé go further. If you have friends or family members currently in the career you want to break into, ask them if they know professionals in your desired field who would be willing to set up an informational interview with you.

WHO IN YOUR NETWORK CAN YOU CONTACT?	WHAT CAN THESE CONTACTS POTENTIALLY OFFER YOU?
Greg Tunic, the photographer I met at the opening of Main Street Gallery.	Informational interview with his neighbor who owns a photo studio.
1	1
2	2
3	3



**STAY MOTIVATED BY CELEBRATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS.**

Switching careers can be draining, so create a system where you can focus your energy and organize your ongoing progress. This will allow you to stay positive and motivated during your search. Try keeping a journal of your thoughts, notes and accomplishments to stay on track.

WHAT SYSTEMS CAN YOU IMPLEMENT TO TRACK YOUR EFFORTS?	WHAT ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARD YOUR NEW ROLE CAN YOU RECOGNIZE?
A spreadsheet to keep track of contacts I've approached.	I have already approached several existing contacts, which have led to new contacts that I've connected with on social media.
1	1
2	2
3	3

**A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITION TAKES TIME. BE PATIENT.**

If it's a move you believe in, then it's worth the wait. Don't be afraid to start slow. Even one small step in the right direction can make a big impact. Stay motivated and focused on the end goal. And most importantly, don't give up. Remain confident in your decision.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP FOCUSED ON YOUR LONG TERM CAREER GOAL?	WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAY MOTIVATED WHEN WORKING TOWARD THAT GOAL?
Volunteering will keep me focused.	Finding a mentor who will give me feedback and share success stories will help motivate me.
1	1
2	2
3	3



**ONCE YOU COMPLETE THESE IDEA-GENERATING EXERCISES, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO MOVE FORWARD.**

Reflecting on your answers in the previous exercise, create a list of five action steps to get started. Make sure that each action item addresses areas you've identified for growth. Create a mix of short- and long-term actions that are **SMART**: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

**For example:**

**Specific:** *What exact action will I take? "...I will reach out to 5 people in my network to explore potential informational interviews."*

**Measurable:** *How will I know whether or not I have achieved or completed this action? "I will set up three conversations."*

**Attainable:** *Can I accomplish this action in this amount of time? "Three conversations" is more attainable than "Apply for 200 jobs."*

**Relevant:** *Will this action bring me closer to my goal? "...to uncover potential contacts for future opportunities."*

**Time-bound:** *When will I take this step? "This week..."*

**Example action statement:** "This week I will reach out to my network to generate three conversations that lead to potential contacts for future opportunities."

**1** S: \_\_\_\_\_

M: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_

T: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Action Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2** S: \_\_\_\_\_

M: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

R: \_\_\_\_\_

T: \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Action Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**3** S: \_\_\_\_\_  
M: \_\_\_\_\_  
A: \_\_\_\_\_  
R: \_\_\_\_\_  
T: \_\_\_\_\_  
Final Action Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4** S: \_\_\_\_\_  
M: \_\_\_\_\_  
A: \_\_\_\_\_  
R: \_\_\_\_\_  
T: \_\_\_\_\_  
Final Action Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5** S: \_\_\_\_\_  
M: \_\_\_\_\_  
A: \_\_\_\_\_  
R: \_\_\_\_\_  
T: \_\_\_\_\_  
Final Action Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6** S: \_\_\_\_\_  
M: \_\_\_\_\_  
A: \_\_\_\_\_  
R: \_\_\_\_\_  
T: \_\_\_\_\_  
Final Action Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Identify coaches and mentors.** Build a community that will advocate for you. These individuals should be able to help you identify shortcomings and offer constructive feedback. Ideally they'd be in a position to help connect you with others who can help you achieve your goals. Every person has his or her own learning style, so identify the type of mentor who best fits yours.

You may find different types of mentors:

- **The counselor.** Seek out individuals who excel at things you want to learn and ask for guidance. They make themselves available to give advice because they thrive on helping others succeed.
- **The example/model.** Look for people who are living the life you envision for yourself, then ask them how they accomplished it. Try to find the underlying values that drive their work and think about which ones you might implement for yourself.
- **The listener.** Avoid looking for someone quiet and passive. You need people who are active listeners and aren't afraid to ask detailed questions so you can benefit from mentoring.
- **The promoter.** Look for someone who reminds you of your greater purpose. A promoter knows that valuable contributions can come from anyone, and he or she can help extract great ideas out of you.
- **The go-getter.** Look for people who set high standards for themselves and who push you beyond your comfort zone. Instead of pushing back against their high expectations because you're afraid to fail, seize the opportunities and try to live up to them.

Focusing on these relationships will help prepare you for the success you want to achieve. Once you've identified what you bring to your ideal career, you'll be ready to set yourself up for success pursuing opportunities that may enhance your skills or give you the chance to pursue an entirely new career with a new employer.