

Ten Steps to a Successful Career Change



1. Evaluate your current job satisfaction. Keep a journal of your daily reactions to your job situation and look for recurring themes. Which aspects of your current job do you like/dislike? Are your dissatisfactions related to the content of your work or the people with whom you work?
2. Assess your interests, values and skills through self-help resources like the exercises in *What Color is Your Parachute*. Review past successful roles, volunteer work, projects and jobs to identify preferred activities and skills. Determine whether your core values and skills are addressed through your current career.
3. Brainstorm ideas for career alternatives by discussing your core values/skills with friends, family, networking contacts and counselors. Visit career libraries and use online resources like those found in the Career Advice section of job search websites.
4. Gather information on several fields of interest and identify a few targets for in depth research. Reach out to personal contacts in those arenas for informational interviews.
5. Read trade magazines or journals related to your field of interest.
6. Shadow professionals in fields of primary interest to observe work first hand. Spend a few hours job shadowing people who have jobs that interest you.
7. Identify volunteer and freelance activities related to your target field to test your interest e.g. 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 in your current job which would pave the way for a change e.g. 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.
10. Consider alternative roles within your current field which would utilize the knowledge you already have e.g. if you are an Accounting professional, consider moving to a different role in your department that allows you to use your skills in a different way.



"It's never too late to be who you might have been."