

Career Opportunities

Try These On For Size: *Tips To Put Your Best Foot Forward On The Path To A Meaningful Career*

(NAPSA)—In many ways, finding a fulfilling career is like finding the right pair of shoes. At first glance some seem like the perfect fit, but after time you realize they aren't right for the long-haul. Other times you don't know what you're looking for beyond comfort and stability, but ultimately you realize you need something that taps into your professional passions.

The reality is that finding a meaningful career may not happen overnight. It takes time to learn about what your true interests are and what is sustainable. For those working adults in need of a career change, the stress of the decision can at times seem insurmountable. In fact, nearly three-in-five people (59 percent) are interested in changing careers, according to a recent University of Phoenix School of Business survey. This number is even higher for those in their 30s, with 73 percent interested in changing careers.

"The 21st century economy is ever-changing with the emergence of new technologies, ways of conducting business and innovative positions. There is understandably an increase in interest among many workers who want to find a more meaningful career," said Kirsten Hoyt, academic dean, College of Information Systems and Technology at University of Phoenix. "That's why it's critical for educational institutions to offer career resources aligned with workforce trends to encourage life-long learning and close the gap between education and meaningful careers."

If you've considered changing careers, the first question you should ask yourself is "why?" Did you enter your current career because there were jobs available? Did you think it would provide a comfortable salary? Is your career not what you expected? According to the University of Phoenix survey, half (50 percent) of those desiring a career change indicate they chose their profession because there were jobs available, with only 38 percent actually citing an interest in their current field. Or maybe, like 44 percent of working adults, you are not making enough money in your current position, or you are among the 29 percent feeling a lack of opportunity or excitement, possibly even burnout? Finding out "why" it is that you desire a career change is critical to identify what you're missing and establish a plan to move forward in your career.

"With professionals less likely to feel locked into specific career paths and the average person remaining in the workforce much longer, business professionals will need to be lifelong learners as they bring new knowledge to their career choices," said Rhonda Capron, academic dean, School of Business. "With an ever-expand-



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ing job market, we anticipate that this trend will only grow stronger."

Whether looking to transition into a new profession or advance existing skills to grow within your field, it's important to have a plan to move your career forward. University of Phoenix offers the following tips to help you put your best foot forward on your path to a new career:

1. Consider certificate programs. These programs allow professionals to study multiple subjects and foster diverse skills that will address knowledge gaps in the specific industry you may be considering.

2. Translate current skills. If you work in marketing but are interested in health care, consider taking a marketing position with a health care organization to slowly transition. This will help you demonstrate how your current experience can translate in a new industry.

3. Be entrepreneurial. Find a mentor who you admire professionally to help you grow and find new opportunities within your organization. Talk to as many people as possible doing what you may want to do to better understand the opportunities, requirements and challenges.

If you're considering making the leap into a new career or elevating your existing career, make sure you identify why you want to make that change and establish a plan. Lean on your local education providers for resources and look internally within your own organization and to leaders in your industry for guidance and mentorship. Hone in on your innate talents with additional professional development opportunities and learn how to translate those skills into new positions or added responsibilities. Though it may seem like a challenge at first, finding a meaningful career is possible with a sound plan and a little patience.

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