

THE CATHERINE CAREER GUIDE TO

Career Management

Many factors can affect a professional's working life such as completing a degree, economic or organizational shifts, desire for growth and change, and life events. To manage your career successfully, consider meeting with a career counselor to develop a short and long-term strategy, as well as follow the suggestions below as they pertain to your circumstances.

Advancing in Your Career

Acquiring a graduate degree is helpful when seeking to further your career, but in addition, there are many steps you may take in a multi-faceted approach to advancing within an organization.

- Find mentors within and outside your organization to advise you
- Volunteer to take on leadership roles in projects and initiatives
- Seek training in effective communication and leadership
- Cultivate a positive, cordial work culture that includes employees at all levels
- Help others grow in their abilities and give credit where it is due
- Increase your relevance by developing expertise that is vital to the company
- Craft a professional resume that reflects your ability to take on new challenges
- Hone your interviewing skills in order to communicate your potential and capacity for growth
- Keep track of your accomplishments in a career journal
- Be sure that you communicate your development and achievements to those who could help you advance

Transitioning to a New Career

Transitioning to another career track can be seamless or challenging depending upon the degree to which the new profession differs from the former. Employers usually seek candidates with a skill set that is similar enough to the job's requirements that there won't be a significant investment in training. If you are moving into a related career, following these tips should make the shift comparatively smooth.

- Network extensively to create connections with those in the field of choice through your circle of colleagues, professional events, association meetings, and LinkedIn
- Revise your resume to indicate your intention within your professional profile and to reflect the transferrable skills that pertain to the new position
- Create a cover letter that conveys your interest, enthusiasm, potential, and related experience

- Set up or revise your LinkedIn profile to brand yourself in the new professional role. Take advantage of the summary and skills features to help recruiters find you
- Make an appointment for interview coaching to develop effective responses to challenging questions you might encounter

If you are transitioning into an unrelated career, follow the steps above, as well as:

- Acquire experience through as many internships and externships that you have time to complete
- Seek volunteer work if it is available in the industry – Strategic volunteering allows you to test organizations to see if they are the right fit for you, build contacts, and develop skills
- Consider temporary employment, which provides the same benefits as volunteering, only with income, possible benefits, and perhaps permanent placement

Alternative Ways of Working

Entrepreneurship

Many organizations in the metro area offer services to individuals who are starting a business. Contact these agencies for assistance in a variety of areas.

- MN Secretary of State (sos.state.mn.us) Official state site for businesses to register names, select a structure, and obtain legal and tax information and documents
- SCORE (minneapolis.score.org) Provides free mentoring, workshops, templates and tools
- Small Business Administration (sba.gov) Offers training from start up to management, loans and grants, assistance with government contracts, and legal information
- WomenVenture (womenventure.org) Provides classes and consulting, networking with a community of business owners, financial assistance, and resources through its Business Center

Consulting/Freelancing

Consultants are professionals who are considered experts in their field and are hired by a company on a project-by-project basis. Sometimes referred to as *independent contractors*, consultants usually work at a company's job site, but may utilize their own offices for some aspects of the projects. Consultants either find their own work, or may sign on with an agency that will match them with projects.

There are many agencies with specific or diverse needs for consultants in areas such as *accounting, finance, IT, project management, finance, business analysis and management*.

The next page lists websites useful to consultants.

- Consulting Bench (consultingbench.com) A national site for consulting firms that provides an option for searching by state.
- Association of Consultants to Nonprofits (acnconsult.org) A site at which you may register as a consultant and find positions. It also features a blog and calendar of events.
- Association of Consulting Expertise (consultexpertise.com) A nonprofit organization for consultants that allows for registering and finding opportunities, education on best practices, regular meetings and networking opportunities.
- Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal maintains a list of management consulting firms and is available at most libraries.



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