

## THE CATHERINE CAREER GUIDE TO

# Career Transitions

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

### **Re-entering the Job Market**

Returning to the job market after an absence requires dedication, patience and persistence, but it is very helpful to have current training in your field of choice. Highlight your educational pursuits early in your resume, and:

- Address any gaps in your resume by adding volunteer work or other projects that will illustrate current skills
- Network extensively by setting up informational interviews, attending networking meetings, and renewing contacts
- Be willing to accept a job that may not be at the same level than the one you previously held
- Volunteer strategically to build a network, refresh your skills, and add relevance to your resume
- Obtain current training in technology
- Brush up on your interviewing skills
- Create a cover letter that addresses your intention to return to the workplace with an appropriate explanation addressing your time away
- Consider temporary assignments and work-to-hire positions

### **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

## **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

## Alternative Ways of Working

**Temporary Staffing Employment** - Workers from a variety of industries may utilize a staffing agency to place them in jobs or “assignments” which can last from one day to several months. Staffing agencies offer on-the-job training and experience that new graduates can use to build their resumes and marketability. Many agencies provide benefits such as insurance, retirement plans, and paid vacations to employees who have met certain time requirements. In addition, this option may lead to a permanent job if the client finds that the temporary worker meets the needs of the company.

**Freelancing** - A freelancer (also referred to as a contractor or subcontractor) secures her own work, and may or may not do the following: withhold her own taxes, provide her own equipment, provide quotes for a job that has a termination date, and invoice the employer. Freelancers essentially generate business through several marketing venues, such as referrals, websites, brochures, and business cards. There are also websites that will match a freelancer with a project. Generally, the best way to secure work is through referrals, as freelance websites tend to be very competitive, which keeps fees low.

**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](http://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](http://minneapolis.score.org)) provides free mentoring, workshops, templates and tools
- Small Business Administration ([sba.gov](http://sba.gov)) offers training from start up to management, loans and grants, assistance with government contracts, and legal information
- WomenVenture ([womenventure.org](http://womenventure.org)) provides classes and consulting, networking with a community of business owners, financial assistance, and resources through its Business Center



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Career Development Center

[www.stkate.edu/career](http://www.stkate.edu/career)

651-690-8890

*St. Paul Campus*

Coeur de Catherine 210

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