

Career Transitions in a Challenging Employment Landscape

By Susan Commander Samakow, PCC, CPCC

Whether starting a career, searching for career advancement or launching a business, there are so many options, we frequently don't know where to begin.

In our constantly changing world, career transitions can be quite challenging. Where we used to travel a specific path to further our business aspirations, today it's more like embarking on an off-road expedition. There are so many options on this journey that we frequently don't know where to start.

Yet the responsibility is still up to you to chart your way. No one else is going to do it for you. So whether you are starting a business or launching a job search in this demanding landscape, here are a few tips to help you along the way.

You Take Your Skills With You

Whether you are launching a new company or looking to move vertically or horizontally within your current company, every experience that you have had prior to this counts. You do not leave your skills and capabilities behind along with your old position. People forget this. They approach something new as if they are starting out from the ground floor all over again. The work you're seeking may be new, but your skills and competence have been building as you have grown.

Approach this career transition with confidence. If something you are interested in is new and requires additional skills, take a class to increase your expertise or do whatever it takes to help you continue to move forward in your developing career.

Stay Positive

Mindset is an important part of the path to success. Be aware of your "self-talk," the conversations you are having with yourself. What is your internal dialogue? Is it optimistic or negative? Self-talk will have a big impact on how you view things, and a positive outlook and attitude work better than pessimism and self-doubt.

In a very competitive market like the one we're in now, we cannot be successful at everything we attempt. I want to stress how important it is to be resilient in this environment.

Learn from any failure you've experienced instead of dwelling on it. Get feedback whenever you can from family, friends and trusted business associates to help you with future possibilities. Embrace the career process, bumpy though it may be, instead of fearing it or feeling anxious about it.

Remember: Fear will block you. You want to remain clear and focused to be creative and to think "out-of-the-box," especially in this market.

Be Productive on a Daily Basis

Always stay focused and be proactive. Treat this transition process like a job. Give it structure. Your personal "job" is to make calls, do research, and network each and every day. This constant, positive activity creates a healthy pattern greatly contributing to your ability to be proactive as you take command of your life.

Often, my clients want to meet by the phone. Even so, I get dressed professionally instead of taking a call in sweats. I feel professional, more positive and it makes a difference in my attitude.

Research

What research do you have to do to get the information you need to keep moving forward in your career transition? Do you have to speak to anyone? Do you have to get information from the Internet, professional magazines or other sources? What do you need to do? Narrow down your sources and targets and make this information work for you.

Target the Roles That are the Best Fit for You

Identify skills that you can apply to a variety of business roles. Match your strengths, interests and values to the needs of the organization or organizations you are pursuing.

If you are looking to start a company yourself, know that there will be a lot of hats for you to wear. What skills do you have that bests

suit what you want to build? What areas do you need to develop further? Are you in a position to bring in others who can fill some of the roles you will need? Answering questions like these are key to any successful new business launch.

Be Enthusiastic

Approach everything you do with enthusiasm and vigor: it goes a long way! In real estate sales, the mantra is "Location, location, location! When it comes to your career path, your mantra should be "Attitude, attitude, attitude!"

For example, I was recently working with a client who went through the interview process and had just obtained a position with a top law firm. Like the other candidates, she had the skills, strengths and educational requirements necessary. She also had a limited amount of relevant experience, but she didn't let that stop her! What the hiring partner told her was they remembered her enthusiasm, and that made her stand out among the group of candidates competing for the position.

The moral of the story: No matter what the challenge, you can meet it!

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Ask Susan about her coaching packages and the Stress Reducing techniques she teaches: EFT (Tapping) and Breathing Exercises.