



7 Strategies for a Smooth Career Transition

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Hello there

I want to acknowledge and congratulate you on the fact that you are seriously (or even half seriously!) considering changing jobs or careers because you know you were put on this earth to realize your full potential and not play small.

You may even be contemplating leaving your current job and starting a business on your own or as a joint venture/partnership.

You have decided to take an active part in how your career path evolves, even if it means stepping out of your comfort zone.

You are unlike the many who will do a bit of wishful thinking on Monday mornings as they stare out the train window on their way to a job that doesn't float their boat.

They will say, "Yeah, but it pays the bills".

To that I ask, *"And that's it?"*

The fact that you are actively searching means you are only a decision away from living your life by design rather than default.

I hope you are excited, because I am excited for you.

Go you good (and brave) thing!

I know what it is like to take the initial step; to make a break from what I perceived was security. The process is exhilarating and a bit scary.

From personal experience, I can tell you that your thinking will shift.

You will begin to see opportunities and possibilities whilst others see obstacles, risks and uncertainty that come with changing jobs.

Trust me, we all go through that phase.

In this report you will have hints and tips for making that career move you have been dreaming about as stress free and painless as it is humanly possible.

These include the how-to's and as importantly the "whys" of getting ready to move into your new job, or career.

There will be the odd occasion when you feel "wobbly" and wonder if you've made a mistake.

Know this-you haven't

Until then, keep your eye on the prize.

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1. Where Preparation + Opportunity = Success

You would have realized that by making this decision to change jobs, career paths or even leave your current job to start a business venture, you have put into motion a series of events that obey the Universal Laws.

If it has not been on your radar, now is the time to wise up.

The first thing to get clear about (even before you think about sprucing up your curriculum vitae/resume or brushing up on your interviewing skills) is appreciating how your mind works.

In layman's terms it is about the stuff that goes on between your ears and what I am referring to goes way beyond the intellect.

So I am going to ask why are you changing jobs. It's a pretty simple question.

By the way, making more money whilst an important factor for almost everyone, does not top the list of reasons for employees seeking new opportunities. *So I guess I am preaching to the choir here.*

Unsurprisingly for the rest of us (but curiously not to management), the main reasons most people leave their current position include burn out, no public acknowledgement or credit for the extra effort expended and lack of support when dealing with difficult co-workers or workplace bullying and harassment.

As per the subject heading, one very important aspect to consider is that you are first and foremost in the right headspace.

This is where mental/psychological preparation will determine how smoothly you transition out of your old and into your new career.

Clarity of your decision, or your motivation for change should top your list when planning your exit strategy.

Be honest with yourself as you answer this question.

Do not discount the importance of this process.

Write down your reasons using pen and paper rather than tap away on a keyboard.

There is something refreshingly organic and powerful about connecting with the feelings that drive your motivation through the flow of words as your heartfelt reasons spill onto the page and is given voice.

Now you have before you the most compelling reason(s) for your planned move away from your current position.

Use it wisely.

2. Getting Your Financial House In Order

As a career transition coach, I must admit that if I got a penny for each time someone said to me that they'd leave their job it wasn't for the money, I'd be _____ (fill in the blank).

Some of you who are reading this may still be unsure and are pacing up and down on the sidelines.

Yes, *you* who want to make that transition from your day job to starting a business.

But the spectre of losing the perceived security of a predictable paycheck holds you back.

Having said that, this topic is applicable to anyone who has a job.

Essentially, it is to do with giving your finances its annual health check as it will have a bearing on the timing of your career transition.

Do an inventory and ask yourself, "Do I have a budget", "Do I track my spending" and "Do I know what my assets and liabilities are to the nearest one hundred dollars".

Most people (especially women) have some resistance and aversion to doing this highly personal number crunching exercise.

In part it stems from childhood where the topic of money may not have been discussed in the house and was seen as (secret) mens' business.

To illustrate this point: I interviewed Barbara Stanny, author of "Prince Charming Isn't Coming" some time ago about her experiences with money.

Now remember we are talking about the daughter of Harry Block co founder of H&R Block, the multi million dollar tax and accounting company.

She described how as a child she innocently asked her mother how much money she got to spend weekly.

The reaction of disgust and disapproval from her mother at the mere mention of money drilled home the message that the topic was taboo.

The then young and impressionable Barbara carried this belief that to discuss money was somehow vulgar and best left to men.

Big mistake, especially when her lawyer husband who had a gambling problem squandered her endowment, fled the US and left her with a \$1 million bill in unpaid taxes.

I digressed, but necessarily so to bring home the point that it is imperative you know your financial baseline before you contemplate any move away from your current job.

3. Stocktake Your Skill Set

On this topic the spotlight is on you.

Specifically it is about you conducting an inventory of your skills and abilities that will be transferable to your next job.

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: Because this will become the basis of your resume that probably has not been updated since you landed your present job.

We get complacent and do not add to and **grow** that list of skills we have picked up in the meantime.

You now want your *curriculum vitae* on steroids.

It is astounding how many people dismiss and discount what they already do very well (with confidence and high competence).

And with that narrow perspective they diddle themselves out of a pay raise or promotion.

Case in point: If you can skillfully navigate your way through a spreadsheet, you would be in demand during “show and tell” presentations.

Your ability to produce graphs, piecharts and tables will be a godsend to your time poor upline manager or supervisor.

Let's approach this skill set stock take in a logical and sequential manner:

- 1) List your current tasks
- 2) Next to it, list what skills you use to fulfill that task
- 3) Rate how well you execute that skill (1-I could do that with my eyes closed; 2-I do that reasonably well; 3-It bores me and I am not very good at it)

Here are some examples of transferable skills to get the cogs in your brain working:

Meticulous record keeper, fluent in a second language, confident presenter, multi tasker, patient when training new staff, highly approachable, calm in a crisis, good at repairing equipment, connector.

When you have honestly assessed your current skills and scored yourself for that skill, you have before you a snapshot of your strengths and weaknesses.

Again, this is valuable insight that you can take to your job interview in preparation for the inevitable interview question, "What do you perceive to be your major strengths and weaknesses?"

Got it?

4. The All Important Cover Letter and Resumé

I have a confession to make...in my previous life as the chief research scientist of a hospital unit, I was responsible for vetting applicants to fill highly technical positions in a medical research laboratory.

A mountain of cover letters with and without a resumé attached would sit on my office floor.

I despaired at having to read and trawl through some real doozies!

I was fortunate to have my highly competent senior research assistant expedite the process.

As you put together this very important set of documents, please realize that a human will be reading it.

Humans like to interact with polite and considerate fellow humans and will make up their mind on the first meeting, even if introductions are made on paper.

I am fond of saying that you only have one chance to make a good first impression. Rather tautological, but you get the picture.

How then are you going to present yourself and ensure your application stands out from the crowd.

- 1) Individually address each requirement in the position description
- 2) Offer examples in your current role to demonstrate your level of experience relating to that point
- 3) Highlight your point of difference i.e., why should you be hired over all the other applicants
- 4) What have you done that is significant in your field
- 5) What awards, citations or formal recognition have you received (If you are reluctant to do this because you feel that it somehow means you

are bragging and big noting yourself, then Huston we have a problem)

You need coaching to get you past this self limiting belief

- 6) Tie in all your skills into core competencies that are applicable to as many facets of the job as possible
- 7) Note to Gen Y's-please do not use phone text abbreviations. You are not talking to your friends (about ur gr8 w/end lol) but looking to catch the attention of a potential employer for all the right reasons
- 8) By all means be creative in putting together your cover letter and resumé but don't be gimmicky-I once received a job application in a glass test tube. Needless to say, I did not appreciate broken glass all over my desk and fortunately did not shred my fingers when opening the envelope.
- 9) And lastly don't fib when putting together your cv (your employer will find out and karma is a you-know-what)

5. It's Showtime:

How to overcome performance anxiety at the interview

It's not exactly the Spanish Inquisition but for some people who are about to face their interview panel, it may as well be.

I have been on both sides of the table and trust me when I say that the person who asks the questions is in control of the meeting.

You have been short listed from a large field of candidates and your online or paper application was compelling enough for the panel to want a closer look at you in person.

They want to know if your talents, skills will contribute to their organization's growth and wellbeing.

Our communication is only partially verbal; a significant amount is visual and then by scent (don't laugh, it is true).

Have you ever sat next to someone with poor personal hygiene at a meeting?

Did that make it harder to get into a conversation with them if they had bad breath or had not showered for a couple of days?

I rest my case.

Before the BIG Day

Research your new company.

It pays to do your homework so get hold of their Annual Report and note the names of people with clout within the organization.

Shamelessly name drop senior managers and people in key positions during the interview if it is appropriate.

The BIG Day

Time management

Arrive early especially if you are unfamiliar with the location.

Turning up late and looking flustered speaks of a disorganized and perhaps unreliable person.

Dress for success

I don't need to tell you that personal grooming tops the list.

As you are answering their questions, some panel members will be giving you the once over.

Are your nails trimmed, hair neat and tidy?

Are you appropriately dressed to do business?

Ladies, go the corporate look unless you are in the entertainment industry then anything goes. Gentlemen, leave the novelty tie for Christmas

Please, no overpowering after shave or perfume.

It can put panel members off, they won't know why, but they know they won't like it/you.

Yes, sometimes when it comes down to 2 very strong performing candidates, the panel will go with their subjective reasons

Body language

A firm handshake and meeting their eye is always a good start.

Memorize the names of your interview panel as you are being introduced. Formally address them as *Mr* or *Mrs* or *Ms* surname

If you have your arms and legs crossed you will appear defensive.

You will give the impression that you have something to hide or lack self confidence.

Neither will leave a good impression

Maintain eye contact when answering their questions but do not give them the unblinking death stare.

It is disconcerting and they will secretly wonder if you harbour dark intentions.

Active listening

Don't rehearse your answers to the point that you have not heard their question and are just dying to give your spiel that may be totally unrelated.

Don't ramble, cut to the chase. Verbal diarrhoea is a turn off

These are busy people who are not interested in your family history unless it is relevant to the question.

What else

Mock interviews

These are always a good way to get the nerves settled.

Make it as close to the real deal as possible including dressing as though you *are* speaking to the panel

Creative visualization

A week before the big day, mentally rehearse the interview every morning.

See yourself doing really well and staying calm, poised and able to answer with clarity and succinctly.

Then go for it!

6. Salary Package Negotiations: A Game of Poker

This is usually the last thing on your mind; you know the bit at the end of an interview that went swimmingly well until the subject of the “money thing” reared its ugly head.

I take my hat off to anyone who has the confidence to carry this part of the conversation regarding remuneration with the interview panel members as smoothly as the rest of the interview.

The majority of hardworking, highly skilled and competent people feel they let themselves down at this crucial stage of negotiations.

The reason is because we have been taught to be self effacing; we mistake accepting compliments and praise for arrogance and conceit.

The cultural conditioning dictates that we do not “talk ourselves up” especially in Australia where “The Tall Poppy Syndrome” demands that we downplay our achievements.

Understand that you will be paid what you think you are worth.

In this current economic climate your employer sees your worth in terms of profits generated for the company.

I'll say it again: You will be paid what you think you are worth.

Unless you articulate your worth in the context of increased profits for your prospective employer, they are not going to structure a salary package that reflects that.

If you have difficulty in asking for what you want, then my advice is that you do what is required to improve your sense of self worth or self esteem.

Can and will you take this step?

It is a game changer and Executive Women Coaches can help you.

"The most important Million Dollar Habit you can develop is the habit of deliberately building your own self-esteem and self-confidence on a daily basis.

The more you feed your mind with positive words, pictures, and thoughts, the more positive, confident, optimistic and unafraid you become.

The more you like yourself, the better you do at anything you attempt.

The more you like yourself, the less you fear failure and rejection.

The more you like yourself, the less you worry about short-term setbacks and obstacles.

The more you like yourself, the greater courage and resilience you will have to face the inevitable ups and downs of life.

And the more you like yourself, the more it is that you will persist until you succeed.

*Self-esteem is everything". **Brian Tracy***

7. The Curve Ball You Didn't See Coming: Your Boss's Counter Offer (Please don't go)

So your farewell speech is written and you are looking forward to a new adventure.

What you have not counted on is your boss making a last ditch offer to get you to stay.

What do you do now?

According to Hays Recruitment 2011 Salary Guide, 30% will accept their current employer's counter offer and stay on for another 12 months.

If the carrot includes a whopping great payrise tied to more responsibilities it will pay for you to take time out and remind yourself why you are walking out the door.

If it is a time sensitive offer, be aware that the pressure applied to make a quick decision is definitely not in your best interest.

I take this (verbatim) quote from Nick Deligiannis Director of Hays Recruitment, *"If no commitment is made to address the issues that lead you to leave in the first instance, then in the interest of your career advancement it might be best to thank your boss for the offer and move on"*.

As tempting as the last minute counter offer may sound, the ball is in your court to decide.

Re visit the reasons you wrote down and whether staying does or does not clash with your highest values.

In your heart of hearts you will know what the right decision is for you.

Contact Executive Women Coaches for a consultation

If you have found this report helpful in getting clear about your next career move, imagine how much quicker you will be in getting to your career goals with the support of a career transition coach.

I promise you a no BS discussion about how best to achieve what you aspire to and what is required to get there.

Act now to book your no obligation meeting, simply email
office@executivewomencoaches.com