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Expert Advice for Changing Careers in 2011

Would you like a new career this year?

Tag Goulet



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I recently put out the word that I was looking for experts' best career change advice for 2011, and received over 150 replies from career coaches, authors, experts, and career changers throughout North America -- all offering advice for Sun readers.

I'll include more advice in future columns. For now, here's a selection of the experts' best tips to help you change careers in 2011.

Decide What You Want

"What do you find yourself noticing and talking about? What articles are you reading in magazines or blogs? What people fascinate you? Your curiosity about work, jobs, and industries

can signal the career change that's right for you!" -- Darcy Eikenberg, ACC, founder of Red Cape Revolution: Bring Your Superpowers to Work, www.redcaperevolution.com

"Ask your closest 10-20 friends or associates to email the top 3 things they see in you, quality, strength, talent, etc., and put their answers in a grid. You'll be amazed at what begins to show." -- Jillian J. Davis, creator of career change consultancy JoyBirds -- Wake Up to Work You Love, www.jillianjdavis.com

Get Experience

"Volunteer or get a part-time job in the industry you're interested in ASAP! You will gain real-life insight into your new career path and see where the best growth opportunities are, and this experience will help you demonstrate your commitment to the career change on your resume." -- Sara Sutton Fell, CEO/Founder of FlexJobs, www.flexjobs.com

"As a career changer, short-term, project-based assignments -- volunteer, temporary, or contract -- allow you to develop new skills, contacts, and tangible results that can have an immediate impact on your resume." -- Jennifer Fishberg, professional resume writer and career consultant, Career Karma, www.careerkarma.net

Network Effectively

"The best time to increase your network is...today. Starting now, get involved in groups such as professional associations, charitable organizations, or even sports leagues. Step into leadership roles and make your expertise known." -- Kathryn Ullrich, author, Getting to the Top: Strategies for Career Success and associate director of Alumni Career Services, UCLA Anderson School of Management

"Start calling your former colleagues and friends and take them to lunch. Not that I want you to pack on the pounds, but if you've been hiding in your office or behind your desk lost in the glow of overhead lighting, it's time to break out of your routine and reconnect with people who are willing and able to help you plan your next career move. If you don't ask, no one will help you." -- Lisa Kaye, CEO, www.GreenLightJobs.com, HR consultant for companies such as OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network)

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Your Opinion Matters

Did you make and keep your New Year's resolutions?

- I made one and so far so good.
- I made several and have kept them all.
- I made several but have only kept a few.
- I made several but haven't kept them.
- I made one but couldn't keep it.
- I don't believe in resolutions; I didn't make any.

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"Affiliate quickly with acclaimed experts in your new field. Host them for lunches and conversations. Hire one as a mentor/coach. Every hour and dollar you invest in building professional associations with industry magnates will jet-propel your new venture." -- Bill Lampton, Ph.D., President, Championship Communication and author *How to Make a Sizzling First Impression*, www.commlampton.com/store

Find Opportunities

"Two words, Google Alerts: Set up an alert for any and all of your potential career targets. It's an easy way to learn about opportunities and breaking news on topics, people and companies that interest you." -- Nancy Collamer, career coach, author and speaker, MyLifestyleCareer.com

"Large companies have more jobs but smaller companies have more openings. Once you've identified what you do best, focus on those smaller organization who need doing what you do best. They are more open to career changers than large organizations." -- Richard S. Deems, Ph.D., WorkLife Design, www.worklifedesign.com and co-author *Make Job Loss Work For You*

Stand Out From the Crowd

"Embrace social media. You need to stand out from the rest of the pack, so establish yourself as an expert. Create a facebook fan page for your field of interest, get on twitter and talk with others. And, most importantly, BLOG. Your new boss will Google you, so you might as well give him/her something amazing to find!" --Bethany Mooradian, www.QueenoftheRandomJob.com work at home information site

"Showcase professional testimonials on your resume. Choose the strongest two or three sentences from a manager's recommendation letter or a LinkedIn recommendation and place them in the summary, or as a bullet in your career history. 3rd-party testimonials add instant impact!" -- Lauren Milligan, resume expert and job search coach, www.ResuMAYDAY.com

Don't Wait to Be Unafraid

"Quit waiting for the 'right' time. As time goes by, making a big change doesn't get easier, less scary, less risk, more certain, easier to plan. It gets harder. So the right time is now: start doing something that sets you on the path to change." -- Dr. Matt Hall, Agile* Geoscience Ltd. www.agilegeoscience.com (Matt moved from a highly-paid job as senior geophysicist at a big Calgary oil company to start his own small business in rural Nova Scotia)

"Rather than first trying to build the courage to overcome fear, step forward in spite of the apprehension. This act is what strengthens our courage and enhances self-trust." -- Kelly Tobey, Integrative Transformational Processing Facilitator, www.kellytobey.com

Finally: "Never listen to people who try to discourage you from pursuing your dream career and tell you it is too risky. By discouraging you, they're just trying to validate their decision not to be courageous enough to try." Dan Nainan, a former senior engineer for Intel, now a professional comedian who has toured the world, www.nainan.com

Tag Goulet is co-founder of FabJob.com, a publisher of books on how to get started in a dream career or business. Contact Tag on Facebook at www.facebook.com/tag.goulet or visit the FabJob website at www.FabJob.com.

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