

## HOW TO LOOK FOR WORK WHEN YOU WORK FULL TIME

Looking for work while working full time is difficult but not insurmountable. Sometimes people use it as an excuse for remaining stuck. Some of the issue may be based in reality – how to find the time to pursue leads and network without jeopardizing your current job. Some of the issue may be psychological barriers – such as fear of change or a belief that you won't find anything better. Here are some ways to achieve career transition while working full time.

### FINDING TIME

1. **Make A Commitment.** Everyone has a few minutes a day to spend on exploring the next job, even if your work load is high. A small amount of time each day can take you on your journey. For example, one lawyer I worked with had a heavy billable hour requirement but committed to spending a half hour per day to move forward in her career transition. Once she made this commitment, she found that she was able to gather a lot of information and make many contacts within the first month. Her excitement about the possibilities she uncovered, her sense of achievement, and her optimism all helped to ease the strain of making up the work time used to achieve her career transition.

2. **Determine Your Own Pace.** You may have some fear about beginning a search for alternative jobs. Try starting with what is most comfortable for you. Whether it is one contact per week or one per month doesn't matter so long as you keep your promise to yourself. Change tends to snowball once it begins. Pace yourself. When you are ready and open to new opportunities, they will come your way.

### SAFEGUARDING YOUR CURRENT JOB

1. **Ask Trusted Friends.** Ask the friends you trust, under a pledge of confidentiality, to direct you to leads in areas you want to explore or target. There

are no guarantees that word won't get back to your employer; but to the extent that you can, network safely. If you know many people in the field you are exploring or targeting, see if you can be referred to others that you don't know. These may be the people that can help you the most – the people you do know well may have already done what they can to help you. In the meantime, cultivate your relationships with those you don't tell about your transition. When the time is right, these people will want to assist you.

2. **Keep Perspective.** Ask yourself how often people change jobs in your field. Not only will you encourage yourself with this question, but you may also realize that the issue of confidentiality is not the overwhelming issue you thought it was.

### EMBRACING CHANGE

1. **Recognize That Change Comes in Stages.** Change usually follows a predictable pattern. At a certain point, we become aware of the negative impact of *not* changing and begin to think that change could be positive. These general thoughts about change are often met by our fear of change – and our resistance heats up. Sometimes, we are aware that we want to change but somehow feel we “just can't.” The next stage is feeling a desire to make a change but not knowing how. At first we are not even sure we *want* to know how. As the process progresses, we suddenly realize that change *is* occurring. There is still backsliding, but we become committed to the change. Slowly, but surely, it works. The goal in this stage is to increase identification with the new and decrease it with the old. The last stage is “The New Me.” We have incorporated the change into our life and it's become the norm. At this point, we rarely think about it as a change any more and we begin to build on the change.

2. **Review the Changes You Have Made in Your Past.** You weren't born in your current job or field.

At some point you changed schools, became independent from your parents, moved, selected a job, etc. All of these changes involved being out of your comfort zone. It is easy to forget that uncomfortable period. Think about what allowed you to move forward in your life. What kind of support did you have? How can you muster that kind of support right now? What kind of technical assistance did you need? What do you need now? Start putting your answers into action.

### **3. Let Yourself Imagine a Better Situation.**

Can you purposefully use your imaginative side to envision a job that is better for you? Even if you don't have something specific in mind yet, imagine that you are doing something you love to do or several beloved things at one time. Reinforce the image by purposefully seeing that vision first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. This is a powerful tool to program your brain to go past your fears and doubts and aim toward future career satisfaction.

When you focus on what you can do and start doing it, you may find that your energy increases – even in a burnout job. You may find a greater ability to draw boundaries at your current job as you move through your transition. This is part of the process of divorcing yourself from your current job. While you don't want to fail to meet expectations altogether, you may decide that the consequences of not meeting billable hours or other requirements in the short run are worth it in the long run. Just make sure that the quality of work doesn't suffer so that you are in a good position to ask for a reference or recommendation.

It *is* possible to look for work or for a new career while working full time!

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