

Are You Looking to Make a Career Switch?

Here's some advice for those getting started in marketing.

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There was once a time when you expected to stay in the same career path (and usually the same company) for your entire career. That time is gone. Increasingly, people switch careers at least once before they retire. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that about 6.2 million workers, four percent of the total workforce, transferred from one occupational group to another. This so-called "second act" can be an exciting time to try something new.

I've worked in the marketing industry for many years and have had the opportunity to grow professional through different companies along the way. If you're considering marketing as a new career, here are a few pieces of advice:

1. Reflect on your goals

Sometimes, it pays to look back. Reflecting on how you began can help you rediscover goals that got lost when you started your career. Think about the bigger picture and ask yourself these questions:

- Where do you want to end up and what road will get you there?
- Are you looking for the consistency of an in-house position, or do you want to experience the variety of an

agency?

- Do you want to work with consumers or with other businesses?
- Looking to go big, or searching for something small?

When you research potential employers, it's important to do a little research on yourself as well. Assess what you're good at and find an organization that can help you optimize your skills and realize your dreams. Another piece of advice I hold strongly to is this: Never be afraid to be an intern again. Internships can be eye-opening experiences. My internship taught me what agency culture looks and feels like, how companies operate and where my own personal skills fit in.

2. Chase dreams, not jobs

Self-examination doesn't mean putting yourself in a box, in fact, it means just the opposite. A recent study from The UPS Store found that nearly two in five Americans regret not starting the small business of their dreams, and nearly 54 percent of Americans would rather start a business than retire. That goes to show that careers really aren't about chasing money, but about chasing dreams. So, take some time and reflect on what you *really* want out of your career and how the decisions you make now can help your dreams come true.

3. Be open to change

During times of transition, be a friend to change. Keep as many doors open as possible, even if it means relocating. Throughout my career, I've moved nine times. Each time I learned something new, and I can't imagine my career without those transitions. This kind of flexibility will add value to your resume and create rare opportunities to add diversity to your experience.

4. Find a mentor

Oprah Winfrey once said, "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself."

When looking for a new career, it can be tough to believe in yourself and capitalize on your own strengths. A mentor can be an honest voice who identifies ways to improve and areas of great strength. Pick a mentor who has walked the road before you and can provide you with industry-specific advice. Mentors can also be great networking resources. Most of all, a mentor is a trusted voice to listen to rather than just listening to that sometimes overly critical one in your head.

A career change is a perfect opportunity to revisit the dreams you initially had for your career. Although sometimes uncomfortable, change can bring great things to both your professional and personal lives.

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