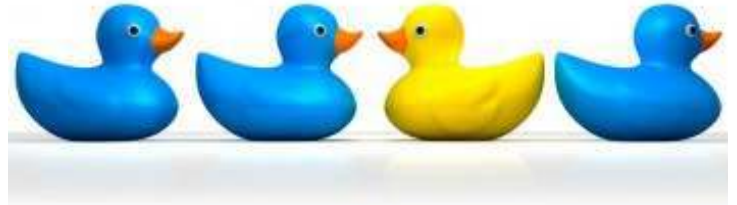


5 Best Practices for Career Reinvention

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Hering

Career reinvention does not happen overnight. The process involves a variety of steps to help ensure that you're moving in the right direction and have a clear idea of how to get there.

Workers considering such a journey can optimize their chances for success—and feel less overwhelmed—by taking heed of the tried-and-true guidelines listed below.



Evaluate the present

The first thing all prospective [career changers](#) must think about is what is fueling the desire for reinvention. Getting to the heart of what is undesirable about one's current situation can prevent similar scenarios from reappearing in the future. Is it the industry or the job that's problematic?

Reflection may make you realize that you still like what you do but that you'd probably be happier doing it somewhere else, in which case a job change would be the next step. On the other hand, if the field itself no longer feels like a good match, [switching careers](#) may be the best option.

Introspect

The next question (and it's often a difficult one) is, "What should I do instead?" While some career changers may have a clear idea of what field they'd like to enter, others feel lost.

Unsure where to start? Consider this advice from Joel Garfinkle, author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*, "Use your past to guide your future. The best career reinventions center on [finding your passion](#) in life. Look back at your past and think about times when you really were happy. What activities did you enjoy? Use this as inspiration for your career reinvention."

Other good options include working with a career coach and taking skill/personality assessments (some are free online). Discovering which strengths and behavioral patterns keep emerging can offer clues about which careers may prove most satisfying.

Gather knowledge

Once you've found some interesting career possibilities, get all the information you can. What does a typical day involve? What salary might be expected? What type of education or training is necessary in order to get hired? What is the market for employment? The U.S. Department of Labor's [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) can be a good starting point for Internet research, but also try to talk to people in the positions to which you aspire.

Take action

Still excited by the prospects now that you know what is involved? Gather the courage to make a move—big or small—by perhaps sending out resumes or taking a night class.

“Don’t wait until you have all of your ducks in a row to take the first steps toward reinventing your career,” Garfinkle says. “You may not know your final destination, but hesitation can result in lost opportunity. Those first steps are often the hardest. Too often we’re worried we’re heading in the wrong direction. However, remember—two steps forward and one step back is still one step forward.”

Be patient

Finally, resist the urge to give up out of frustration. Everyone deserves to find fulfilling work, and persistence will ultimately yield results.

“Reinventing your career can take time,” Garfinkle notes. “Although there may be instances of people having serendipitous moments of enlightenment where they know exactly what their new life’s purpose should be, for most of us the journey of discovery takes time. Don’t get discouraged. Keep your mind open to possibilities, and don’t immediately discount any opportunity until you’ve really given it due consideration.”

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