

Your Career Search: It All Depends on You

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Many people have marketable assets and skills but fail to go after the right organization and job titles. Job hunting has changed more in five years than in the last fifty years combined and it is a very competitive situation. However, you have the unique opportunity to identify what you want out of the search. Pursuing the right goals is an important part of the process and will help you avoid wasting time.

Surprisingly, many people pursue the wrong job titles. Clarifying transferable skills can help reposition a candidate for different goals, and sometimes for much more advancement than previously thought possible. Regardless of your current or most recent position, think of yourself as one of a kind and present yourself accordingly.

We have all seen career fields change dramatically over the past decade and areas that once offered great opportunity have become financially confining with limited growth possibilities. Career fields change at a much faster pace than most people realize and taking a narrow view of yourself can be a major mistake.

There are about 22,000 different job titles in use today, but 95 percent of all professionals fall within one of several hundred career specialties which are usually in significant demand. Defining your career goals can improve your chances of finding roles that are abundantly available.

Some concrete advice for career development:

- Create your own development plan.
- Set goals, be proactive and seek advice.
- Update, and tailor your resume to address your target position.
- Improve your image and presentation skills, be professional and courteous at all times and look and act the part.
- Ask for advice and find ways to network.
- Keep an open mind — look for opportunity, not title.
- Choose an opportunity by the quality of the organization, and the job content — compensation should be the last consideration.
- Update skills and education based on market demand; be flexible.
- Be open to relocation — recognize the impact on opportunity and compensation.

A story comes to mind that captures the spirit of this situation. Years ago, the people of a small remote town periodically faced problems and challenges. Each time there were difficulties, town leaders sought guidance from a wise old man who lived alone in a cave. His advice was invariably helpful and not surprisingly, town leaders came to believe the old man knew all there was to know. One day a teenage boy decided to prove that the old man was not as wise as the leaders thought. He would ask a question that could not be answered. The boy's plan was to go to the old man with a live bird in his hand and ask whether the bird was alive or dead. If the old man said the bird was alive, the boy would crush it. If the old man said the bird was dead, the boy would open his hand and let it fly. The boy went to the cave and asked the old man the question. The old man thought for a while and responded, "It all depends on you."

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The changes and challenges we face are not abstractions, but realities that teach us every day. The future won't just happen — it will be shaped by what each of us does today, tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. It is a time of extraordinary opportunity. The question is: what will each of us decide to do?

Locations Nationwide:

Oak Brook, IL	Atlanta, GA	Minneapolis, MN	Philadelphia, PA
Emeryville, CA	Burlington, MA	St. Louis, MO	Pittsburgh, PA
Irvine, CA	Nantucket, MA	New York, NY	Houston, TX
Denver, CO	Bethesda, MD	Toledo, OH	Seattle, WA

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