



Executives in Transition: Maximizing Success

Finding success in your career transition can seem daunting. In the third article of the Future of Work series, Charlene Bergman discusses strategies to make the most out of your search by determining your value, finding focus, and learning to promote yourself confidently.

For executives between roles, there is no standard playbook to follow and no set of instructions that will lead you directly to your next position. For people who are accustomed to having their days filled with meetings, conference calls and reports, the unstructured world of the job search will seem quite foreign. The search plan you build will be your own, catered to your career interests and complete with as much detail as the search requires. But there are certain over-riding themes that can guide you in the process.

Attitude: Adopt a sales mindset

We are not all traditional salespeople and some of us frankly cringe at the thought of having to promote ourselves. But the simple fact is that you have value as a professional, and it's necessary for potential employers to know this if they are going to hire you. The first building block in your job search, therefore, is a sales mindset—and it starts with embracing the attitude that you are valuable, as well as feeling comfortable sharing your worth. Attitude is not the same as personality. We're not all natural extroverts, but we should aim to articulate our skills and experiences in a coherent and convincing manner, one that goes far beyond the resume or bravado.

Take the time to curate your personal brand with a positioning statement that explains why you are qualified and unique. Detail it in your executive bio and employ it in social media. Rehearse and test your ability to explain your expertise and soft skills using tools like the STAR method (situation, task, action, result) that can help you give clear and concrete answers to interview questions.

Focus: Position yourself in the market

Now that you're ready to take on the world, let's zero in on where you want to concentrate your energies. Your personal brand, however strong, is not going to resonate with every opportunity in the job market and you'll certainly go down some paths where there is little or no fit. Maybe you know finance, but a role that gets into actuarial tasks is beyond your current skill set or interests. You need to position yourself relative to the industry sectors, job responsibilities and required skill sets in the market. Your value proposition has to bridge your personal brand with roles that either need to be filled or can be created for you. All other things being equal, your chances are best in evolving, growing sectors or progressive companies where opportunities are more likely to pop up.

Organization: Plan your time and activities

The road that leads to the next position will be different for everyone. But to manage your time productively, you'll need a plan that lays out the practical tasks in sequence and fits them into your calendar. Your plan is your guide and it's also how you'll measure your progress. You can't plan success but you can plan the activities designed to get you there and then evaluate your progress on the basis of what's within your control.

Also, don't forget personal time, including hobbies, exercise and sleep. Volunteering or other interests should also be scheduled into your day. All of this helps you maintain balance and order in your life amid the uncertainty that comes with a job search. In addition, you should allow time to identify and pursue continuous learning opportunities, recognizing that this is also a time for personal and professional growth. Making an effort to expand your skills and explore your interests can better equip you to take on a new role or even learn about a new career direction altogether.

Network: Get in the loop

After all the preparation and planning, it's important to remember that your next job offer will come from someone who appreciates your personal brand and your value to prospective employers. To get in front of that person, it helps to network with a purpose. Partner with an executive recruiter, a mentor or a coach. Join an "in transition" peer group with like-minded people who have similar goals and will provide essential support. Also recognize that the contacts with the most promise may be two or three degrees of separation from you. Arrange as many coffee meetings as you can, since they are face-to-face, efficient, inexpensive and only minimally imposing on other people's time.

Networking also has a social aspect and we are, after all, social animals who thrive on personal interaction. Share your journey with others, stay attuned to their needs, compare notes, and be a referral source for others if you can.

What next?

You will find an opportunity that's right for you. Unfortunately, no one can predict exactly what it will be or when it will happen. But with the right attitude, focus, organization and networking, your journey will be more fruitful, and also more rewarding along the way. In the next article we will discuss the advantages of interim roles and the skill set required to become successful in these increasingly attractive roles.

Recommended for you:

Discover the power of interim roles in today's emergent agile workforce. [Learn more.](#)