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Job Seeker Resources

Looking for a new position or exploring a new direction in your career can sometimes be stressful and frustrating, but it's a little easier to handle if you have the right resources at hand. Here you'll find interviewing tactics, industry-specific resume and cover letter writing advice, and more.



Accounting, Finance, and IT: Three Steps to Help Control Your Career

[Jim Wong, CPA \(Inactive\)](#) posted on 1/27/2014 10:14:00 AM

If you are a finance, accounting or IT professional, chances are you didn't do a lot of "what should I do with the rest of my life?" thinking when you finished your degree.

Your analytical approach to numerical and statistical data, and your logical thinking and attention to detail probably landed you in fields such as banking, insurance, civil service or stockbroking, IT, or maybe you aspired to partner up at a large firm.

Finance and accounting majors don't tend to have a "the world is my oyster" approach to their careers, as do those who graduate with Liberal Arts degrees, and that's not a bad thing. Too many choices can sometimes lead to frustration, or uncertainty, as well as a delayed start to steady employment.

But what if, after 15 or 20 years, you find yourself in a rut? How should senior finance, accounting or IT professional take control of their careers, and engage in the type of 'self-exploration' required to get themselves out of it.

The goal, is to be in control of any new directions on your career path, and to be the one actively instigating job transitions, rather than leaving those decisions to your board or, even worse, your new CEO.

Forbes.com contributor Lisa Quast suggests [running yourself through a self-evaluation plan](#), similar to what CFOs and other leaders ask junior staff members to do for annual performance reviews.

Quast outlines three steps you can take when attempting to shake yourself out of stagnation, and onto a new path.

Carve out "me" time to contemplate where you want to be in your career. We are all busy, and once you've risen to a certain level in your career, we just seem to get busier. But Quast recommends taking your self-evaluation out of the office, and away from distractions. "Try sitting down with a cup of coffee (everything's easier with coffee) outside of work, such as on a week-end morning when you're energetic and clear-minded," she says, adding "Your career and personal development is well worth the effort, so don't skimp on the amount of time you allow your-self to write your self-evaluation."

Honestly consider your strengths and weaknesses. "Brainstorm a list of your strengths and the tasks or skills you enjoy the most." And don't be afraid to consult a career coach, or a trust-ed peer for feedback. The most important thing is to let go of your ego. "Improvement areas might include time management skills, speaking in front of groups, leading projects or even improving processes."

Research what it will take to be successful. Great leaders [realize that they still have lots to learn](#). "What knowledge, skills, education and experience are necessary" for you to make a move? Quast suggests you "Analyze and determine any gaps between where you are now and where you want to be. Do you need any additional training or education? Are there any other skills you'll need to acquire? Write these down, as these will become the actions within your career development plan."

Making a career change isn't easy, especially when you've been gainfully employed for many years. But that doesn't mean it's impossible. Spend the time and energy required to go exploring, and allow yourself to veer off the beaten 'career' path. It will be worth it in the end.

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