

Transitions and Taking a Leap: Switching Sectors and Leveraging Your Contacts

What should you keep in mind throughout your career?

- Let change be your friend! Be adventurous and take risks.
- Not everyone's career path is linear and that is okay.
- If you have a passion, follow it. Share your interests and passions with others—they may know of opportunities that could advance your career.
- Know yourself—take the time to figure out what you really want.

When is it time to move on?

- Make sure you're still being challenged! If you feel like you've learned everything you possibly can from your job, it might be time to move on to something new.
- When boredom strikes, move on—you should be excited to go to work every day.
- If you are not being treated fairly or equitably, leave—there are plenty of people who will see you for what you are worth!

Where should you begin?

- Start by being open-minded. You never know what opportunities will arise, so don't be afraid to be adventurous and take risks!
- Think about what your overall goal is and keep that in mind when pursuing new opportunities.
- Education is important—if you are looking to switch sectors, going back to school could help make a smoother transition.
- Highlight your competency in the skills that are important across all sectors, like critical thinking, communication, and problem solving.
- Make sure your application fits the sector that you are applying to, not the sector you're coming from
- Network!

How can you expand and leverage your contacts?

- Start with your network and see if any of your contacts can connect you to someone in the field that you are looking to transition to
- Explore relevant professional associations and networks, as well as your alumni network
- Set up some informational interviews! Reach out to current employees and learn more about their day-to-day experiences. Just reading a job description will not give you the same insight
- If you do go back to school, your professors and peers can be great resources

How can you overcome transition challenges?

- Imposter syndrome is common when switching sectors, so remember your worth
- Bring your past experience to your new position—you were hired because you bring something new to the table. Use that to your advantage!
- Different sectors will have different work environments, so be ready to be flexible and adapt
- Success in organizations of different sizes often requires different tactics: make sure to advocate for yourself in larger, more bureaucratic organizations and employ your communication skills in smaller, mission-driven organizations