

4 Steps to Professionally Bring Out the Best of Who You Are in these Tough and Changing Economic Times

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Dealing with these Difficult Times

During these tough economic times, people are being pulled in many different directions – lateral changes and management shifts in various industries, downsizing and layoffs within many companies and the displacement of people in all areas of the country.

Additionally, each of us has internal motivations or “drivers” that create a sense of personal fulfillment; we have a desire to contribute to society in a meaningful way using our talents and to work for a company where we feel valued and supported.

Accomplished Professionals have Many Assets to Draw From

Accomplished professionals are often too busy to consciously take the next step in their lives until a situation arises where they are thrust into a “radical change.” The current banking and mortgage closures are examples of how a person one day has a great job and stable life and the next day his employer is out of business. This presents a tremendous window of opportunity for gifted and talented professionals to examine their options from a holistic perspective – personally and professionally by:

- ✓ Seeing if there is a possibility for a better fit by repositioning oneself into a more viable work situation, or creating the possibility of one for yourself.
- ✓ Creating more balance between work and the other aspects of one’s life, it’s a great time and opportunity to reassess what works for you and what doesn’t
- ✓ An opportunity to express a passion or begin a new creative endeavor where you can be in charge of your future and fate.

Various Tools to Find Your Next Step or New Direction

Taking your next step will require some organization and clarity of what your best opportunities are. Here’s a checklist of your own assets to mobilize and tap into:

- Network – using your intimate knowledge of your market and industry and its operations to look for situations and positions that seem promising and feel good to you.
- Define ways your expertise and a unique skill set can be used to reposition yourself to better reflect your current vision and the direction you want to go.
- Use your accomplishments as a platform to move into something more challenging or stimulating where you can “play a bigger game.”

- Explore other professional horizons, not just limiting yourself to your current industry. Find places to optimize your gifts/talents and expertise – think outside the box!
- Research development possibilities and options for an idea or a passion that you want to manifest and bring to fruition.

The 4 Steps to Successfully Reinvent or Reposition Yourself

1. Make an inventory of all the things you have helped make happen – for your employer, industry, association, etc. What skills, talents and expertise have you demonstrated that are highly marketable and transferable? It can be helpful to update your resume. Forgotten skills come back to the surface when you do this; you are reminded of experience you now take for granted. Don't be shy; you need to be your own cheerleader here! Congratulate yourself on all that you have done, been a part of and accomplished, then put this list aside for the moment. We will use it again in Step 3.
2. In this step it is important to think about YOURSELF – what do you WANT to BE/DO or HAVE? This step is purely about your preferences and personal desires. Do not take anyone but yourself into account. The goal is to write down those things that bring you internal fulfillment and to define what external success means for you. This is NOT a step to be PRACTICAL, it is a step to DREAM.

Write down all of the things you are passionate about. What are the elements that offer internal fulfillment - what brings you joy, meaning, pleasure? Second, what are the criteria for you to have external success – what type of work do you most enjoy doing? On what level do you want to function? What amount of money do you want to make?

Once you have written down both the elements for fulfillment and the criteria for success, then prioritize this list from the most desirable to the least desired. For step 3, separate out the top three priorities from each list.

3. Now is the time to explore the “Convergence” of steps 1 and 2. What is it that you really want to do and how can you combine that with your skills, expertise and talents from step 1? How can you use WHO you are in a way that will create WHAT you WANT? Begin to brainstorm the options and possibilities that come to mind. Once this list is exhaustive, it's time to do some research using your friends, colleagues, network, the internet and any other sources at your disposal to begin to concretize your options. Synthesize the data by putting your mind and gut to work to help focus you in a particular direction that encompasses what's best for you (reflected in the first two

steps), both personally and professionally. You should wind up with a set of “viable options” to explore for your next professional step. Update your resume again to reflect how you want to position yourself going forward.

4. Now, it’s implementation time. This last step is where you create a strategic plan for implementing this new career path. Outline the action steps needed to accomplish this goal using your networks, resources and expertise to facilitate a smooth transition into the next chapter of your professional life.

This process can move relatively quickly if you have time to devote to it. The usual professional can make a transition within a month if they really focus on the steps – both internally and externally. Sometimes, companies will help their employees begin this process while still working in order to expedite their smooth transition. If you “hit a wall”, go back through the process to get clearer and to make sure that each step accurately reflects reality and possibility. Otherwise, there is professional help from peers and other resources. People come up with very creative and fulfilling options for themselves that have never been available as possibilities.

Professional Success Stories of Transition

A non-profit attorney who was highly qualified, yet tired of the daily grind and wanted to focus her energies in some way on Peace. After going through the four steps she decided to create dinner parties for people of various ethnicities to be able to ask sensitive questions of others.

Another example is a special education teacher with 25 years experience who was being laid off and loved music and planning parties of all different kinds. She took this opportunity to make the transition from teaching to writing a manual and creating events to show people how to throw any type of party on any type of budget.

A college professor who was burned out on classroom teaching and writing textbooks but had a tremendous desire to help students “learn how to learn”, shifted her focus to writing books on comprehensive learning. She transitioned into a position facilitating enhanced learning experiences at the local college.

Professional Help is available to facilitate this process for you

If this sounds like it might be helpful to you but you also feel you would benefit from some support to expedite the process, contact me to schedule a complimentary 30 minute Life Strategy Session to help get you launched.

Suzanne Strisower is a Professional Certified Coach, with 30 years experience helping people to focus and realign their lives personally and professionally. She is a published author, lecturer, radio show host, screenwriter and land developer who uses her diverse skills, talents and

expertise to create a fulfilling life for herself. Her educational background includes a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology and she is a credentialed coach through the International Coach Federation. She is currently completing a book "*101 Ways to Find Your Life Purpose*" which will be completed in the summer of 2011.

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