

## How to make a successful career change

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Making a career change may be one of the most unexpected decisions you may have to make in your life, however, it is possible. According to Balance Careers, “the average person changes jobs ten to fifteen times during his or her career, with many workers spending five years or less in every job” (Forbes, 2018). A lot of factors may end up forcing you to reconsider your career path. When this happens, you need to be able to explore your options and make the right career switch, after all, you do not want to waste more time by making the wrong decision.

Alex Brown<sup>[1]</sup>, is a Zimbabwean Chartered Accountant based at one of the big four accounting firms in the United Kingdom. Ideally, one would associate being a Chartered Accountant with a background in accounting, but this was not the case with Alex. He, in fact, studied Microbiology and Human Physiology. Being a foreign student, he found it difficult to find career opportunities, and when he did find the opportunities, they were not ideal for him. Alex had to go back to the drawing table and re-evaluate his options. He realised there were not as many options in his field as he would have loved, and he had to make a shift in his career.

Alex did his research and found that there were a lot more opportunities in the finance field than there were for the science field. With this newfound knowledge, he decided to begin the transition to accounting. The transition was not easy, considering he did not have a foundation in accounting, however, he persevered and managed to complete his articles of clerkship, ranking 3rd in Zimbabwe. He went on to be headhunted by the firm at which he is currently employed.

Alex’s story is one of the many instances in which one has been forced to make a change in careers due to factors that are beyond their control. When you find yourself in this position, you have to be willing to get out of your comfort zone and find out the options that are available to you. This article will explore the strategic steps you will have to take in order to make that successful transition to an ideal career.

### Do your research

The first step you have to take before anything else is your research. A career change is not something to do hastily, as this is a decision that will determine how your whole life will go. In this regard, you want to surround yourself with adequate resources. These may be in the form of mentors, colleagues, and online resources. These will be helpful in laying out your options for you. Networking with people in different careers with help you in getting useful information on the advantages and disadvantages of being in that particular field. This information will become particularly handy in making that final decision on which path you will follow.

### Evaluate your options

Once you have done your research on the options available to explore, it is imperative for you to evaluate all these options and ensure you are making the right choice. Before deciding on which alternative path to follow, you need to look at the reason why you are changing your career in the first place. You need to ask yourself if the reason you are changing your career is good enough for you to disregard all the resources invested in attaining that qualification. Once you have done this and you are satisfied, you need to look at the available options and narrow them down. The first step to narrowing down your options is to assess the options and ask yourself if you will do well in that field. The last thing you would want is to realise that you have wasted a further four years of your life.

## Assess Yourself

Assessing the success you may have in a field may be difficult to do on your own, however, there are a variety of assessment tools that may be used. There are different online platforms that offer self-assessment tools you can use to identify which areas you would be able to succeed in. These tools may be in the form of standardised tests that assess your strengths and weaknesses and are able to guide you in making an informed decision. Once you have gone through this assessment, you will be able to make a decision that is not only based on your passion but that is guided by your abilities as an individual.

## Find a mentor

An entire shift in your career may only be successful if you have the right mentorship. Once you have identified the career you want to explore, the next step would be to find the right guidance in making a smooth transition. Ideally, you want to find someone who has been in that industry for a long time, who is able to guide you from an informed point of view. This individual would have amassed sufficient experience in the field that will help you in avoiding mistakes that may stunt your professional growth. It is important to identify someone who will give you the right guidance by doing your research on the professionals in that particular field. The person you will choose for that role will either fast track your growth, or leave you in the same place for years, make a good choice.

## Step into your new career

Having set the pace for your transition, the final step is to embrace that career change and start working towards it. Once you have all your resources, there won't be any reason for you to hold back. Changing a career may be a difficult step, but if you have done all the research and have all the information, it may be the best decision you will make for yourself. So before you spend years in a career that is not making you happy or that is not awarding you the opportunities you would like, you may want to consider making a career change. [Here are the options you need to know if you are changing careers in midlife.](#)

## References

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