

## THINKING ABOUT A CAREER CHANGE? STEPS TO MAKE IT A SUCCESSFUL ONE

Making a career change usually means investing both your time and money. As with any investment, it's important to be informed before you make it. Before you make a career change, here are steps you can take to increase your chances of success. If you would like to meet with a career specialist at SCCC, call 206.934.4383 to make an appt.

### 1. Decide If You Need a Career Change

Before you begin thinking about making a career change you have to decide whether you actually need one. You may just need to find a new job, not an easy task, but certainly simpler than an entire career makeover. You may want to consult with a career consultant to help you process your options.

### 2. Assess Yourself

If you decide a career change is in order you will need to evaluate your values, skills, personality and interests using self assessment tools, often called career tests. Self assessment tools are used to generate a list of occupations that are deemed appropriate based on your answers to series of questions. Having a career specialist to help you taking various assessments and discussing your outcomes and options is best.

Make an appointment with one of our staff at 206.934.4383 to start this process. You may opt to take free online tests (there are many), but information is only useful when you know what do with it and how to use it in order to make informed decisions about your career choices.

### 3. Make a List of Occupations to Explore

Look over the lists of occupations generated through your use of the self assessment tools. They are probably rather lengthy. You want to come up with a much shorter list, consisting of between five and ten occupations. Circle occupations that appear on multiple lists. Circle occupations you may have considered previously and that you find appealing. Write these occupations down on a separate list titled "Occupations to Explore."

### 4. Research the Occupations on Your List

For each occupation on your list, you will want to look at the job description, educational and other requirements, future job outlook, advancement opportunities, and current median earnings.

### 5. Continue Narrowing Down your List

Pare down your list of possible occupations based on what you learned from your research. For example, you may not be willing to put the time and energy into preparing for an occupation for which an advanced degree is required, or you may consider the earnings for a particular occupation inadequate.

### 6. Conduct Informational Interviews

At this point you should only have a few occupations left on your list. You now need to gather more in-depth information. Your best sources of this information are people who have firsthand knowledge of the occupations in which you are interested. Identify who they are and conduct informational interviews with them.

[http://www.wa.gov/esd/guides/jobsearch/strategy/interview\\_informational.htm](http://www.wa.gov/esd/guides/jobsearch/strategy/interview_informational.htm)

### 7. Set Your Goals

By now you should have decided on one occupation you want to pursue. It's time to put a plan in place so you are taking steps towards a job in that field, but first you will need to set some goals. Do you need more education or training? Do you need to complete an internship? Do you need to change the focus and format of your resume? Do you need to network with professionals? Do you need to obtain a certification or license for this new career?

### 8. Write a Career Action Plan

Now that you have set your goals, you will need to decide how to reach them. A career action plan will help guide you as you pursue your long and short term goals. The more questions you ask and the more you expand your support network, the better your career action plan.

### 9. Train for Your New Career

Changing your career may mean you have to undergo new training. That could take the form of earning a degree, doing an internship or taking courses to learn some new skills. How will you pay for it? Part of this may mean creating a budget also.

#### Career Exploration Resources:

\* <http://www.wois.org> (site key: PTW307)

\* <http://www.careerbridge.wa.gov/>

\* <http://www.workforceexplorer.com/>

\* <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>