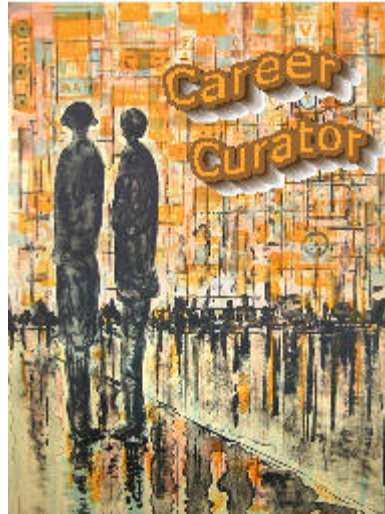




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Are You Experienced?



The title of the first album by The Jimi Hendrix Experience, "Are You Experienced?" is the topic for this month's Career Curator column.

Many people are now engaged in career transitions from one field of work to another. Also, many recent grads are looking to launch a new career. It's that age-old dilemma of "How can I get experience, if no one will hire me?" Now that is quite a challenge, but with strategic planning can be overcome. So, let's explore the diverse ways to get and build work experience for transitional candidates or those launching a new career.

Test it!

Take a skills, interest or personality professional assessment. This will help you decide how to plan the rest of your strategy. Online assessments are not recommended. Seek the guidance of a professional Career Counselor. You will need an explanation of the results of the assessment.

Online assessments may be convenient and affordable, but these instruments need to be interpreted by a career professional.

Put Yourself "Out There"

- As a young man, my Artist Extraordinaire Uncle, Ted Weyhe would hang out at the local bait shop and watch the seniors tie fishing flies.

His tenacity paid off as eventually the sport Fishermen began to teach him how to tie the fishing flies. Not only did he learn the art, but each mentor taught him their own unique style.

Best of all, he did not pay a dime for this education by experts. Find an expert or

experts that do what you want to break into. Strategize how to spend time with them, in-person, by phone or internet. Be clear with them what you want to learn and how committed you are to reaching your goal. Next, is the key element to the process. Humble yourself. Push your ego aside and open your mind to learn from a pro, a master or an expert. Do exactly what they tell you, no matter what. If you must invest in some tools, buy them. If you must sacrifice time off, holidays or vacations, do it!

The Donald-ization Technique

- The next experience builder is that title popularized by Donald Trump in "The Apprentice" or more commonly known as an Intern.

The job of Apprentice dates back to the later Middle Ages and came to be supervised by the craft guilds. Internships are changing and being offered post-graduate, for-pay and not for pay. Some internships now run as long as one year. Many companies post internship openings on their websites. Don't assume that because you do not see a posting that an internship is not available. Ask! With some organizations, they will create or renew an internship program upon request. It all depends on their needs, budget and staffing resources. In negotiating an internship bring clarity as to what you can do for the employer and what you want to learn. In a down economy, more employers are more interested in offering unpaid internships. However, be careful. There are liability issues if you get hurt on the job. They may make you sign a waiver. The absolute minimum time for an effective internship is three months. Six months would be ideal. You must be honest with yourself relative to what skills can you build in three to six months?

Attempt Landing

- Attempt to land an entry level job in your field of choice.

This strategy is all about identifying your transferable skills from your past career(s). You may need professional consulting on how to do this effectively.

Whatever the cost, it is a good investment AND may be a tax deduction.

If you choose to go that route, make sure that your resume reflects your transferable skills that relate to the job you are applying for. You will need a functional resume to market your transferable skills. The best advice is to seek the help of a career development professional. You only have ONE chance to get it right!

Go to School

- Return to school for another or advanced degree.

You have more options than ever to pursue this path. In the classroom, online, classroom/online hybrid, weekend sessions, correspondence courses, public, private, proprietary (for profit) and more. I highly recommend "buyer beware" with this strategy. Three bits of advice: research, Research and RESEARCH. Know EXACTLY what you are getting into, how much it will cost, how long it will take and will it have any value for your career plans? If the institution or program is not tied into any employment opportunities, I'd pass. The program MUST be committed to helping you gain employment. None can guarantee placement, but they should have solid connections in your field of study.

Give Before You Get

- Volunteering in a field that you want to build experience in is another viable option.

Community service can open many doors to help build your network.

Again, research the executives and board members of the organization and decide if they can help you with your career goals and objectives. Of course, you must believe in the cause or it will be obvious that you are there just for self-gain.

The Temp

- Temping is a great way to gain career experience without the long-term commitment of a full-time, permanent position.

Register with a staffing agency in your field of choice. You will find just about every career has a staffing agency....somewhere. You will be paid by the hour and moved from project to project, if you choose. If the employer chooses, they may make you an offer for permanent or part-time employment. If you choose this route, do not list the staffing agency on your resume, list the employer you temped for.

GIVE AND GET

- Gaining or building career-related experience is all about compromises and concessions.

How much time, money, effort, training and work are you willing to invest in building your levels of experience. Some plans will require minimal commitment on your part. Others will be incredibly demanding and require a significant commitment of time and resources. Be flexible and open to the possibilities as you move forward. Keep a positive attitude and remember to ask for what you want. When you align your energy with what the world can offer you, amazing things happen. But, that is a topic for another Career Curator column!

In the end, this all about your happiness and comfort with your life. On-going happiness or daily drudgery?

The choice is yours. The time is now!

Assessment Resources:

The Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)®

Psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions.

The Strong Interest Inventory (SII)®

A personality assessment tool to show how certain interests compare with the interests of people successfully employed in specific occupations.

DISCOVER

Comprehensive, developmental guidance process helps users identify their strengths and needs, make good career decisions, and build a plan based on their personal profiles.

FOCUS

FOCUS will help you develop an accurate picture of your personal strengths, needs, and preferences; and will help you develop a sound career plan, designed exclusively for colleges and universities.

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