

Wisdom from Some of the World's Top Professionals

During these challenging economic times, many people have chosen to reinvent their careers, by choice or necessity. This month, I'll share with you some career development wisdom from some of the world's top professionals, in a variety of careers and professions. Their wisdom, strategies and advice may help you launch a new career or re-direct your current career path. Remember we have challenges, not problems. Now is the time to meet the challenges of this economy and job market. Our goals will take longer to reach and require extreme effort on our part. It will not be easy, but what is the alternative? We are on the brink of new career opportunities in technology, finance, health care and sustainability. Now, let's take a look at some guidelines and strategies from some top professionals and apply them accordingly.



- ***Get out of your comfort zone and learn new skills.***



Celebrity Chef Mario Batali gave himself a true education by moving to Italy and living in a town of 100, working in a small family restaurant for 3 years. When he returned to NY, he knew what he wanted to cook for his American customers. We all can't pick up and move to Italy for 3 years, but what can we do right here in our own country/state/city to learn, grow and improve our careers?

- ***When you have downtime, do research.***

Kimberly Davis Cuthbert pastry chef and owner of Sweet Jazmines Bakery in PA, uses the month of January to research and develop new recipes. We can use our slower times to improve our careers; research, training, courses, on-line, in the classroom, seminars, workshops, travel, writing, publishing and more.



- ***When you see the opportunity, take it.***



Jeremy Shepherd founder and President of Pearl Paradise.com saw an opportunity to deliver service, value and quality by selling pearls on the Internet. He had many doubters among family and friends, but by the age of 33 he built a \$20 million on-line empire. He truly believed in what he was doing. In a down-economy there are many opportunities, because we suddenly have different needs, priorities and values.

- ***When a top professional tells you that you are good, listen to them!***

Early in his career the international shoe designer Manolo Blahnik was studying to design sets and Diana Vreeland, then fashion editor at "Vogue" saw his designs and said "You should do shoes." The rest, as they say is history. Fashion History. Listen to professional feedback about your work, talents and skills. Getting an outside, unbiased opinion can be most beneficial.

- ***Don't let changes in the "climate," change your course.***

Boutique travel agent Heather Lawley left her employer when she saw problems coming and worked out of her home as an Independent Agent for Carlson Travel. Then, went totally on her own to be completely in-charge of her own business. Don't let a bump in the road send you into a tailspin. But rather, slow down and see how to navigate through the challenge. The smooth road is just on the other side of the bump.

- ***Be willing to risk and learn to be persistent.***

Cordia Harrington owned three highly successful McDonald's in Illinois. In their culture, they have a committee for each product that McDonald's uses. Well, she was on the "bun committee." In her participation she realized that it was time to take baking to high-speed baking. She did her research and proposed a new, innovative, high-speed baking facility. She saw a supplier opportunity that no one else had. She interviewed 30 times over four years and was then selected for the enterprise. She had to sell all of her franchises.

The Bun Company is now a \$50 million business and produces 1,000 buns per minute.

- ***Take your previous experiences and roll them into your true passion.***

My colleague and friend Professor Lou Preysz has had an amazingly diverse career; Teaching Assistant, Soldier/Military Officer, Bank Marketing/Personnel Officer, Adjunct College Instructor, Marketing Director, Asst. Vice-President, Sales Manager, Vice-President and Marketing Manager. All of those jobs lead him to a career as a College Professor in marketing and management. All these experiences helped him to become an effective and successful College Professor.

- ***Don't be afraid to break the rules.***

Dr. Patch Adams set out to develop a new approach to medicine that went contrary to conventional procedures. He talks to his patients with humor and humanity. He started the Gesundheit Institute in 1971 to address all of the problems with health care delivery, in one model. The institute does not charge, take insurance or carry malpractice insurance. Adult patient interviews are 3-4 hours long and he does INSIST on house calls.

- ***Take the two things you love the most and blend them together.***

The late William Claxton blended his passion for photography with his interest in music. He went to the clubs and met the artists and then the producers. Producers hired him to shoot album covers. He then grew from album covers to shooting photos of celebrities and actors. Once his work showed up in major magazines his dad said "Look here that is my son." Simply stated, do what you love and love what you do.

- ***Before you do anything, know yourself.***

Take the time to do a self-assessment. Learn about the type of setting or work environments that you enjoy and thrive in. Identify where you do not fit and avoid those jobs or careers. No career is perfect, but the key to career happiness and success is to get as close to the mark as possible. Minimize your time in the areas you do not prefer and spend the most time in the work that truly excites and motivates you.

So, now I'll close with a quote from one of the nicest, most successful professional in America:

"My advice is to keep dreaming, keep searching and reaching one goal after another. Remember, know no strangers we are all related somehow."- Richard Simmons

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