

## **BRIAN KURTH'S EIGHT STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITION**

### **1. *Define What a "Great Job" Is***

What are your passions and interests? What activities give you a sense of purpose and satisfaction? The career transition process gives you the opportunity to explore, experiment and discover what a "great job" means and how to pursue it.

### **2. *Address Fear***

Financial instability, family disruption, giving up an identity, failing at something new. These are all fears that may stand in your way of successful career transition. The biggest thing you can do to get past these fears is to meet them head-on. Bring these deepest fears to light and examine them with reason; talk about them; play each one out to its most irrational end. What is the worst thing that could happen?

### **3. *Create an Action Plan with a Timeline and Goals***

Pursuing the ideal career is less a leap than a series of incremental steps that move you closer to your goal. What is critical to reaching that goal is making sure the steps you follow are the right ones. An action plan is needed. If you make a list of all the things you need to learn and do in order to realize a great new job, you will have mapped out a plan for moving ahead. A knowledgeable action plan provides you with the power to forge ahead.

### **4. *Find a Mentor***

Inspirational, experienced, realistic, forthcoming and optimistic. A good mentor is all of these things and eager to help someone else get started. Recruiting a mentor who is a good match for you requires following a plan of action, asking the right questions and building a mutually satisfying relationship. Having a mentor is at the crux to a successful career transition. Whether you are 20-something, 30-something, 40-something, 50-something or even 60-something, you need a mentor in your desired career.

### **5. *Test-Drive A New Job or Career***

There's no better way to learn than by doing. Test-driving a new job with a mentor provides a hands-on experience that has the potential to change your life. This is the opportunity to learn as much as possible about the job, how you feel about the day-to-day activities and what it takes to succeed. The volunteer mentorship experience gives you the required personal and professional due diligence you need prior to making a career transition.

## **6. Create Your Professional Brand**

Your professional brand (including a professional biography, in addition to your resume) separates you from your competitors and colleagues. Professional branding is not about building a persona. Instead, it is a way for you to maximize your key passions, attributes, skills, strengths and values - and use them to differentiate yourself in the workplace.

## **7. Network, Network, Network**

You need to reach out to people with similar interests and goals. Additionally, you need to do your homework and access resources ranging from LinkedIn, Yahoo!Groups, Twitter, etc. within the online social networking world, to the good, old-fashioned one-on-one interaction with people in the field you are exploring, as well as business and university alumni associations.

## **8. Establish Thresholds**

The biggest benefit to a successful career transition is increased life satisfaction. It is important to understand how much risk, challenge and uncertainty one can tolerate before the life satisfaction goal becomes blurred by the process. The career transition process is as much about what you learn on the journey as the rewards when you reach your destination.

*Brian Kurth is a former "Dilbert" who worked for the phone company in Chicago. After realizing there was more to life than telecom calling plans, he founded VocationVacations ([www.vocationvacations.com](http://www.vocationvacations.com)) in 2004 and has become a leading career transition expert and career coach. He is the author of *Test-Drive Your Dream Job – A Step-By-Step Guide To Finding And Creating The Work You Love* (Hachette, 2008). Brian has appeared on CNBC, CNN, FOX News, MSNBC, NBC's TODAY Show and National Public Radio (NPR), and his career advice has been featured in articles in Fortune Magazine; Men's Journal; The New York Times; O, The Oprah Magazine and The Wall Street Journal, just to name a few.*

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## SUGGESTED BOOKS

Bridges, William. *Managing Transition: Making the Most of Change* (Da Capo Press- Perseus, 2003)

Bronson, Po. *What Should I Do With My Life?* (Ballantine Books, 2005)

Buckingham, Marcus. *Now, Discover Your Strengths.* (Free Press, 2007)

Freedman, Marc. *Encore: Finding Work That Matters in the Second Half of Life* (Perseus Books, 2007)

Grabhorn, Lynn. *Excuse Me, Your Life is Waiting*, Charlottesville, VA (Hampton Roads Publishing Co., Inc. 2000)

Kurth, Brian. *Test-Drive Your Dream Job: A Step-By-Step Guide to Finding and Creating The Work You Love* (Hachette – Business Plus, 2008)

Leider, Richard and Shapiro, David. *Whistle While You Work: Heeding Your Life's Calling*, (Berrett-Koehler, 2001) and *Something to Live For: Finding your Way in the Second Half of Life* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008)

Sedlar, Jeri and Mines, Rick. *Don't Retire, REWIRE!* (Alpha Books, 2007)

Sher, Barbara. *Refuse to Choose* (Rodale Books, 2007)

Stone, Marika and Howard. *Too Young To Retire: 101 Ways to Start the Rest of your Life* (A Plume Book, The Penguin Group, 2004)