



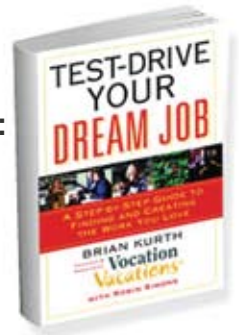
BRIAN KURTH

America's Dream Job Matchmaker

Presents:

Eight Steps To A Successful Career Change

Brian Kurth is an innovative career expert, media contributor, entrepreneur, author and a sought-after speaker. 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). He is the founder of VocationVacations (www.vocationvacations.com), a one-of-a-kind career mentorship company, and Brian Kurth + Company (www.briankurth.com), a career transition and outplacement company.



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Brian has contributed on-air advice on NBC's TODAY Show, CNBC, CNN, FOX News, ABC News, MSNBC and National Public Radio (NPR) and has been featured in articles in O, The Oprah Magazine; The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Globe and Mail, The Times (London), BusinessWeek, Fast Company, Fortune, Entrepreneur Magazine, MORE Magazine, Men's Journal, AARP Magazine and Black Enterprise Magazine, just to name a few.

Brian's three-prong career development strategy emphasizing mentorship, transition and reinvention (MTR) has helped governmental, non-profit and business entities across North America develop mentorship programs, and has been the catalyst for the creation of hundreds of small businesses across the United States.

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Test-Drive Your Dream Job:

A Step-By-Step Guide to Finding And Creating The Work You Love

www.amazon.com

chat with Brian at...



Brian has contributed to:



1 Define What A “Great Job” Is

What are your passions and interests? What activities give you a sense of purpose and satisfaction? The first step in any career transition is the opportunity to explore, experiment and discover your “great job” and what you can do 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 the way of a 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 transition. 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 asking the right questions and building a mutually satisfying relationship. Having a mentor is at the crux of a successful career transition. Whether you are a 50-something CFO or a 20-something marketing manager (and everyone in between in terms of age and career stage), you need a mentor in your desired vocation.

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 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 the online social networking world of LinkedIn, Yahoo!Groups, Facebook, and Twitter to the good, old-fashioned one-on-one interaction with people in the field you are exploring and those you meet through business and university alumni associations.

8 Create A Work/Life Balance

The biggest benefit to a successful transition is increased life satisfaction. The transition process is as much about what you learn on the journey toward reinvention, as the rewards when you reach your destination of having a work/life balance including family, friends, financial stability and physical and mental well-being.

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Computer Programmer Becomes Dog Daycare Owner

Toni Cory, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, was forty-nine and facing the closing of the factory where she had worked as a computer programmer for over two decades. She knew what she wanted to do next — and it wasn't to take a similar job. She wanted to become a dog daycare and kennel owner.



Although Toni had only the slightest idea of what was involved in running this type of business, she began to make plans to buy a piece of property and build a new home with a kennel facility. Toni and her husband put together a business plan and went to the bank for a loan. To their surprise, the bank required they put up all of their money, even their retirement account. The financial risk was high, but they decided to go for it.

In addition to the funding, Toni realized she also needed the chance to get some career counseling and walk in the shoes of someone in the business. She found that opportunity by going on site with an established dog daycare owner in Cedar Rapids, IA. “Before I went there I could only imagine what it would be like,” says Toni.

In October 2006, Toni opened **Almost Home Dog Daycare and Boarding** in Mt. Pleasant, IA. The business has been well accepted in their community and continues to grow and prosper. The outcome has been well worth the challenges.



International Marketing Executive Becomes Hotel Concierge

In 2007, Cory Chacon, New York City, was in her 30's and had spent more than 15 years as an international marketing executive for all the major record labels. During those years, she had traveled extensively and had become intrigued with the hotel business. So intrigued, she decided she wanted to learn more about the hotel industry and career opportunities in the field and what it would take to become a concierge.

With the shift in the music industry, Cory was laid off and began to study hospitality marketing at the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University. But she realized she also needed to be exposed to what it was really like to work in the hotel industry. She wanted to put what she had learned from being a frequent traveler and what she was learning in the classroom into action.

She got that chance by spending a couple of days on a career mentorship with the manager of a Chicago hotel; and following a career transition plan that combined mentorship with career consultation. She came away even more convinced the hospitality business was the right match for her. With the help of her mentor, she was able to secure an interview at a property owned by the same hotel group and was hired as a concierge at **The Muse Hotel** in the heart of New York City.

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Consultant Becomes Public Relations Firm Owner

Karleen Savage, Boise, Idaho, was a 15-year consulting veteran (mother of seven) and a student going to school for a marketing degree. She realized she needed some focus to determine where she wanted to go in this field and decided to pursue becoming a public relations professional. However, Karleen wanted to "test drive" a career in public relations before taking the leap.

In 2006, Karleen got her "test drive" at a public relations firm in Seattle, WA. During her two-day career mentorship, Karleen had the opportunity to actually participate in client activities and learn about both the creative and business sides of the agency.

The experience helped her make the decision to start her own public relations firm. In 2007, Karleen opened **Code R.E.D Public Relations**, a full-service public relations agency in Boise. "The second week I was in business I got my first client and within the first eight months, I had 18 clients," remembers Karleen. The agency has taken off and has been successful beyond Karleen's expectations. It was definitely the right move for Karleen.



Electrical Engineer Becoming Country Music Songwriter

Bob Paterno was a successful electrical engineer in his 30's in Dallas, TX, when he decided to take control of his life and explore his musical talents – he had been writing songs since he was 14. He continued to wonder what it would take to be a songwriter.

Bob headed to Nashville, TN, to get an insider's look into the world of a successful country music songwriter to determine if he could make a living doing something he really loved. After his hands-on career mentorship in Nashville combined with career consultation, it took a month for Bob to stop listening to the part of him that was telling him, "I can't be a songwriter, that's crazy." When he did, he gave six weeks notice and quit his job in August 2007.

Since then, Bob has been learning the craft of **country music songwriting**. He travels to Nashville every month to pitch songs to publishers and producers and to co-write with other songwriters. "I write about 100 songs per year, and I'm working harder than I ever have. But putting in long hours is much easier to do when you love what you're doing," says Bob.

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Software Marketing Professional Becomes Bridesmaid Boutique Owner

In her mid-forties, Debra Chin, Los Gatos, CA, had spent more than ten years as a software marketing professional. Although successful in her field, Debra became increasingly interested in exploring a new career - a career that would leverage her entrepreneurial spirit and feed her passion for fashion and her interest in becoming a style expert.

Debra began talking with people in the retail fashion business and developing a business and marketing plan. However, she wasn't sure which direction she wanted to take. In 2007, Debra gained valuable insights by spending some time with an expert fashion stylist in San Francisco. She learned a great deal about many facets of the industry, including the opportunities in the bridal fashion industry.

She put this idea in the back of her mind. In 2008, her own experience brought her to the realization that there was a need for fashion conscious experts who could bring style and quality to bridesmaid dresses – dresses bridesmaids want to wear, rather than have to wear. As a bridesmaid, she had a great experience with Bella Bridesmaid, a national bridesmaid-exclusive boutique. When Debra discovered the company offered franchises, she knew she had found an opportunity to combine her financial and marketing skills and fashion sense. In 2009, she opened her own **Bella Bridesmaid** franchise in Los Gatos and is enjoying her new career and the challenging, but rewarding, life of an entrepreneur.



Software Consultant Becomes Yoga Studio Owner



For 15 years, Veronica Cruz, San Jose, CA, had a successful career in software consulting. However, the landscape of the consulting business was changing and the time was right to pursue a path that was more real and inspiring for her. She wanted to explore becoming a yoga studio owner. Veronica had been introduced to the practice of yoga in her youth and years later her love for the practice was rekindled. She began to think about how she could turn her passion for yoga into a lifestyle. With the help of an experienced yoga studio owner in Austin, TX, she was able to get a realistic picture of the good, the bad and the hard realities of the business. "By walking in his shoes I was able to clarify my future direction and understand whether my passion could be translated into a life's work," says Veronica.

Veronica returned to San Jose, imbued with the confidence to turn her back on her long-held career. She threw her heart and soul into opening her own yoga studio. She developed a business and marketing plan, lined up all her credentials, and proceeded to form a team of teachers who embodied the same ideals.

Nine months later, Veronica opened the doors of **Downtown Yoga Shala** in San Jose to the Silicon Valley community. "It was a leap of faith, but one done with my eyes wide open and with my heart in the right place," says Veronica.

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An Architect and Air Traffic Controller Become Bakery Owners



In 2005, at the ages of 42 and 30, George Kelley, an air traffic controller, and Paul Holje, an architect, decided it was time to finally figure out what they really wanted to be when they grew up.

Both George and Paul loved to cook, and since there were no bakeries in their hometown of Grand Forks, ND, the idea of becoming bakery owners was very appealing. They spent time brainstorming, doing research and developing a business plan. However, they realized all of this was theoretical. If they were going to commit to transitioning to this new career and reinventing themselves, they needed to see what it was really like to own and manage a bakery. They found an established, successful baker in Portland, OR, who provided hands-on experience and confirmed many of their ideas and steered them away from others.

In May of 2006, they opened **Dakota Harvest Bakers**, an artisan bakery and café in Grand Forks. The community enthusiastically responded. The business went from conception to operation in a year and a half, and, in 2009, George and Paul opened their second location in Grand Forks. Currently, they are looking at regional expansion for Dakota Harvest through franchising options.



Insurance Claims Manager To Become Digital/Video Film Producer

Sandy Huddle, Philadelphia, PA, worked in the insurance business for 19 years. In college, she had dreamed of becoming a television producer and had taken classes. However, personal circumstances caused her to abandon her dream.

In September 2005, Sandy decided she wanted to dust that dream off, but was fearful the television production industry may not be as she remembered....or her interest not as strong. She enlisted the help of a mentor in New York City to provide her an inside look into the industry. She liked what she saw. She enrolled in classes at the Art Institute of Philadelphia and is on target to complete the program in 2010. During this time, she has also gained experience at a local PBS station, worked on some student film projects and squeezed in some writing classes.

Sandy's transition to a new career has been a well-thought out, step-by step journey designed to meet her immediate employment needs while preparing her for a bright new future. Her commitment, determination and patience have paid off. The culmination of her journey is in sight, and Sandy is ready for a new career and a new chapter in her life.

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Supermarket Frozen Food Manager Becoming Brew Master



In February 2008, Mark Peffers, Fishkill, NY, woke up to the fact that he needed a change. He had been in the supermarket business for 21 years, since he was 15 years old, and he was tired of it. He wanted to do something he was passionate about – he wanted to learn how to become a brew master.

Mark decided to take his beer making hobby to a higher level. He began to read books and explore the availability of classes on the art of beer making. He had lots of questions and lots of enthusiasm and needed to find a way to start moving in the right direction. That direction came from an established brew master in New Platz, NY, who spent time showing Mark everything about beer making from “production to tap”. He came away even more excited and convinced this was the career for him.

Career consultation and hands-on experience gave Mark the confidence to begin taking classes and making plans to transition to a new career as a brew master. Less than 18 months after his mentoring experience, his mentor contacted him to offer him a part-time job as his assistant. Mark is on his way to living his dream!



Stay-At-Home Mom Becomes Bakery Owner

Annemarie Spitznagle, Waunakee, WI, a former pharmaceutical sales representative and mother of three, loved to bake and wanted to follow her passion for baking to a new level. She wanted to explore what it would take to become a baker and start her own business.

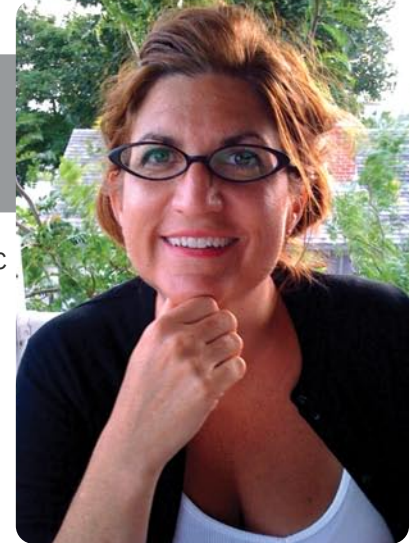
Annemarie began taking classes through the University of Wisconsin and the Small Business Administration to gain some insight into the business side of owning a bakery. She also wanted to spend some time with someone who had opened their own bakery so she could learn from their experience and determine if she was ready to open her own business. She made up her mind after spending a few days walking in the shoes of an established bakery owner in Mt. Vernon, OH. It was just what she needed. She came away with the confidence that her baking skills and business sense were up to the challenge. Classroom knowledge, hands-on experience and career consultation helped Annemarie follow her dream.

She continued to work on a business plan and secured a building in Middleton, WI, for the site of her bakery. On February 5, 2010, Annemarie realized her dream with the opening of **Bloom Bake Shop**.

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Marketing Professional Becomes Wine Association Director



Donnell Brown was living in New York City and had worked in marketing and public relations in the communications industry for more than 15 years. But, she was ready for a change. She wanted a career that would be exciting and fulfilling.

Over the years Donnell had become a serious student of wine, earning industry certifications and increasing her knowledge about the many aspects of wine. She began to wonder if she could turn this passion into a career. Not sure which direction to take and in need of some career consultation, Donnell opted to get some hands-on experience in the field.

She was able to spend a few days with a successful winemaker in Sagaponack, NY, who was willing to share valuable insights and guidance. She came away with the realization that, although she did not want to be a winemaker, she definitely wanted to work in the wine industry.

Her mentor suggested she bring her marketing and public relations skills to the industry. Donnell began networking with wineries and exploring opportunities where she could use her skills in the Long Island wine community. She found the right match. In February 2009, after moving to the region to pursue her dream, Donnell became the executive director of the **Long Island Merlot Alliance** working with the wineries to promote their wines.



Nurse Becomes Caterer and Event Planner

In 2008, at 45, Darlene Proctor, Windsor Mill, MD, had been a nurse for more than 20 years. Although quite successful in her field, Darlene longed to pursue a new career that would give her the chance to be more creative. She had always loved cooking, baking and entertaining and began to explore what it would take to become a bed & breakfast owner.

Darlene was already doing some cake decorating and party planning on the side when she decided to get some hands-on experience as a bed & breakfast owner. She went on site with an experienced bed & breakfast owner in Williamston, NC, and got the full picture of the life of an innkeeper. Continuing her research, she sought advice from consultants in the industry and continued to network with bed & breakfast owners.

Darlene ultimately decided, at this point in her life, she wanted to first try her hand at event planning and catering. In 2010, Darlene launched **Party Style Boutique Catering and Events**, a full-service boutique catering and special event planning company specializing in social and corporate events. Darlene continues to work as a nurse while she is growing her business. She is also attending culinary school with the goal of potentially owning a bed & breakfast with a focus on events and catering.

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Financial Services Professionals Become Vineyard Owners

Husband and wife Bill Sweat and Donna Morris had spent 25 years in the financial services industry in Boston, MA. For ten of those years, they had been putting money into what they called their “dream job fund” to be used when the right opportunity arose for them to run a business after they retired. Eventually, they decided to explore what it would take to become vineyard owners.

Savvy business people, they began doing their homework to determine if this was the right move for them and how they might make it happen. Wanting to “kick the tires” before they jumped in, Donna and Bill spent two days being mentored by a successful McMinnville, OR, winemaker. This experience, along with career consultation, provided them the information they needed to make an informed decision regarding their future.

In 2006, Donna and Bill purchased an existing vineyard in Dundee, OR, which they renamed Winderlea, moved to Dundee from Boston and established their LLC – **Winderlea Wine Company**. Their inaugural 2006 vintage was released in the spring of 2008.

Management Consultant Becomes Travel Writer

Craig Zabransky's choice of career had always been influenced by his love of travel. Consequently, in 1998 he accepted a position as a management consultant in the financial services industry because of the global reach of this position and the opportunity to travel. While on a needed sabbatical from this job and his work travel, Craig realized he did not want to return to the corporate world. Instead, he wanted to explore other career possibilities that were solely based on travel. He decided to get some career counseling and quickly realized his future vocation - travel writer.



Challenging times in the financial services industry resulted in Craig being laid off from his job in New York City. He knew this was his chance for change and decided to explore travel writing further. He traveled to Ft Collins, Colorado, to spend time with a veteran travel writer learning the in's and out's of the profession.

“He provided me with a plethora of resources, cited his own examples and most importantly taught me how I needed to diversify my income. The two days allowed me to decide if travel writing was the right career for me. It was,” says Craig. Today, Craig is a **published travel writer** and is living his dream job. He has happily replaced his old corporate business card with one he designed himself and bears this message: “Writing tales of travel and adventure to inspire others to take and make adventure in their lives.”

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IT Account Manager Becomes Artist/Promoter/Curator



In January 2010 during the worst recession in US history, Robert Vo, San Francisco, made a bold decision to quit his eleven-year career in the IT industry. He had reached a point in his corporate job where there were no interesting challenges, and he felt unfulfilled and burnt out. After going through intense career evaluation, he decided to create a challenge for himself which would leverage his passion for the arts and take advantage of his many years of photography experience. He made a conscious decision to jump head first into the art world with the goal to become an artist, promoter and curator.

Robert rented a studio; started networking with people in the art community; led the SAS Curating team to put together a group show and began writing reviews for ArtBusiness.com. He was enjoying what he was doing, and he knew he had made the right career decision. "But I needed to take it to the next level from a business/monetization perspective," shares Robert. He needed some career counseling and hands-on experience. He traveled to Los Angeles to spend some time with an artist/gallery owner which proved to be the perfect catalyst to help him solidify his strategy to successfully transition into the art world.

With this experience, Robert was able to put the final touches on his strategy to turn his artistic avocation into a monetized vocation. He built his **website** from the ground up; developed Photo-Print-Tile-Paintingz (P.P.T.Pz), a new and unique technique which involves digital deconstruction of a digital image and physical reconstruction on a brightly colored canvas, and started showing his work to the right people.

Just over a month after his mentorship, Robert was able to lock down a solo gallery show at Market Street Gallery for July 2010, which is impressively quick for any artist. Needless to say, Robert is making a major positive impact on the San Francisco art scene. His artwork is on display and available for viewing at his studio, GETBIZI Studio, or on his website.

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Financial Services Marketing Professional Becomes Comedian and Corporate Humorist



By the time she was in her thirties, Sue Burton-Kirdahy, Marshfield, MA, realized her passion for her successful career in the financial services industry was waning. Changes in her company provided the impetus for Sue's decision to leave her position and explore new careers.

Sue first decided to explore what it would be like to be a television producer. She started networking, scheduling informational interviews and experienced a hands-on career mentorship at a television production company in New York City which made her realize this wasn't the job for her.

Her interest in comedy sent her in another direction. She connected with a motivational humorist, who gave her sound advice and guidance. Sue also spent two more days in New York City being mentored by a stand-up comedian, learning what goes into becoming a comedian. This experience felt right and a good fit for her talents and personality.

Through networking, career consultation, hands-on experiences and self-exploration, Sue discovered not just a new career but a calling. Today, she is happy and fulfilled with her new "portfolio career" which includes working as a corporate humorist, **stand-up comic and speaker**.



Financial Services Professional Becomes Shoe Designer

Charles Turner has worked on Wall Street in the financial services industry for more than 15 years. He has had an interest in the design of men's footwear for much longer. So, in his mid-30's, Charles decided to pursue a path that would help him discover if becoming a shoe designer was a viable second career.

He enrolled in a shoe design course at the Parsons School of Design in New York; started taking graphic design classes online; apprenticed with skilled custom shoe makers; and did market research on the industry.

The defining moment came when he spent some time with a New York City fashion designer/buyer. "She served as my mentor reviewing my portfolio and encouraging me to go for it...I would have buyers," says Charles. It was the final bit of affirmation he needed. He now had the confidence to take what he had learned about production, design and business and create his own line of footwear.

In 2007, Charles successfully launched **C.Everette**, a contemporary men's footwear company focused on luxurious ready-to-wear boots. Although Charles has continued to keep his job on Wall Street as his company grows, his goal is to ultimately transition totally to his dream job.