

Your next career awaits you

Dan Moran, *President*, NEXT-ACT

The new paradigm of career management is described by such words as nimble, resilient, opportunistic, adaptable and open-minded. If you have your own business, are in a dead-end job, know you need a change or are dealing with the remnants of changing business situations, economy or technology, you'll soon experience the new job market. It is one that is challenging and full of unknowns, yet at the same time ripe with opportunities for the future.

Many people are moving toward their goals: a job, business or career they love. This process of pursuing quality of life and achieving happiness is often referred to as re-careering or reinventing. If you're not happy in your job or career, all parts of life are affected — home, relationships, performance, health and more.

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Previous generations didn't embrace changing careers or reinventing themselves. Many toiled at one job their entire working life, even if they didn't like it. The thought of entering a second career wasn't accepted.

Our generation is different. We not only embrace change, we yearn for it, dream about it and take action. We are no longer content with just working for a paycheck; we reach a point where money isn't the number one priority. We are a generation and culture of change and the trends are telling.

People change careers two to five times during their working life. Workers change jobs every two to four years and 20-somethings are changing jobs every 18 months to two years. Loyalty between employer and employee is out.

Eighty percent of baby boomers will not traditionally retire, but will engage in work long after retirement age. Some want to, while others have to, as many 401k's were decimated over the past few years.

More new businesses are born during recessions, including such powerful examples as Starbucks, PetSmart and Microsoft. What seemed impossible to start years ago is not anymore due to technology. Small business fuels the economy and jobs.

Employers seek a person's "fit" to the job, in terms of personality, culture and drive, not just experience or education. Skills developed with Company X are transferrable to Company Y. Companies are accepting of those reinventing themselves and seeking new experiences.

More than 8 million people have found themselves out of work as their company downsized or technology made their job obsolete. They are forced to change to a degree which, for many, may be what they were looking for.

All too common is the situation where one is faced with a career-defining moment, such as a job loss, company sale or other significant event. There are two options: wallow in pity or make lemonade out of lemons. This means commit to finding your true passion, take what you have learned and work at what you enjoy on your terms, where you want and with whom you want.

Quite often, people say, "Dan, you are speaking to me. I get it — now what's next?" Here are four recommendations:

Accept defining moments and deal with them. You can't change history. What happened, good or bad, won't change. Don't get caught up with "what if" thinking. Deal with the cards you've been dealt. You can neither singlehandedly change the economy nor undo personal setbacks that occurred. Move on and put history in the past.

Give yourself permission. Accepting that it is okay to change, strike out on your own or pursue your true calling is critical. Many feel guilt in doing for themselves; others feel anxious or fearful about the unknown. Let it go. Repeat: "It's okay. I deserve this."

Discover your passion, then get a plan. Visualize what you truly love to do, and then pursue it with gusto. It is often said that if you are passionate about what

you do, you will never work another day. The next step is tactical — develop a plan to achieve your goals. Work with a mentor or counselor. Make it simple, detailed and measurable. This is crucial to success. Remember: you cannot manage what you cannot measure.

Commit. With your plan, passion and permission to move forward, commit to it and make it happen. Communicate your plans to others and ask for help when needed. Network, network, network; there is no better way to open opportunities.

Change is good and it is energizing. If you can dream it and visualize it, you can be it. •