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Transitioning to a new career when you're over 55

As a 55+ worker, the workplace dynamic was different when you started your career. At that time, people tended to stay on their career paths once they set course. It was common for people to retire after a career with one employer in one industry. Since then the game has changed. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports workers now average 12 jobs by the time they reach age 52.

If you haven't job-hopped in your career like your younger counterparts are doing, changing jobs can be challenging. Transitioning to an entirely new career in your mid-50s can be downright intimidating. But for many people, it's necessary. Jobs become obsolete, companies downsize, an unexpected crisis, such as COVID-19 decimates industries, or maybe you've simply lost that loving' feeling for your current industry.

Are you 55+ and considering a shift in your career direction? Try putting a thoughtful plan into action. This way, you'll be sure it's what you want, and it'll make your transition easier.

Why are you seeking change?

Ask yourself why you want a new career. Is it because you don't like how your organization is

run or is it because you can't face another day dragging yourself out of bed to do the tasks you once loved to do? If it's the former, you might just want to look for a position in a different organization. However, if it's the latter, you've got soul-searching to do.

It's important to identify the reasons why you want to shift gears because it'll take some work, potentially more education, and you might have to take a step down the proverbial career ladder before continuing to move up. Be sure it's something you truly want before you give up all you've worked hard for.

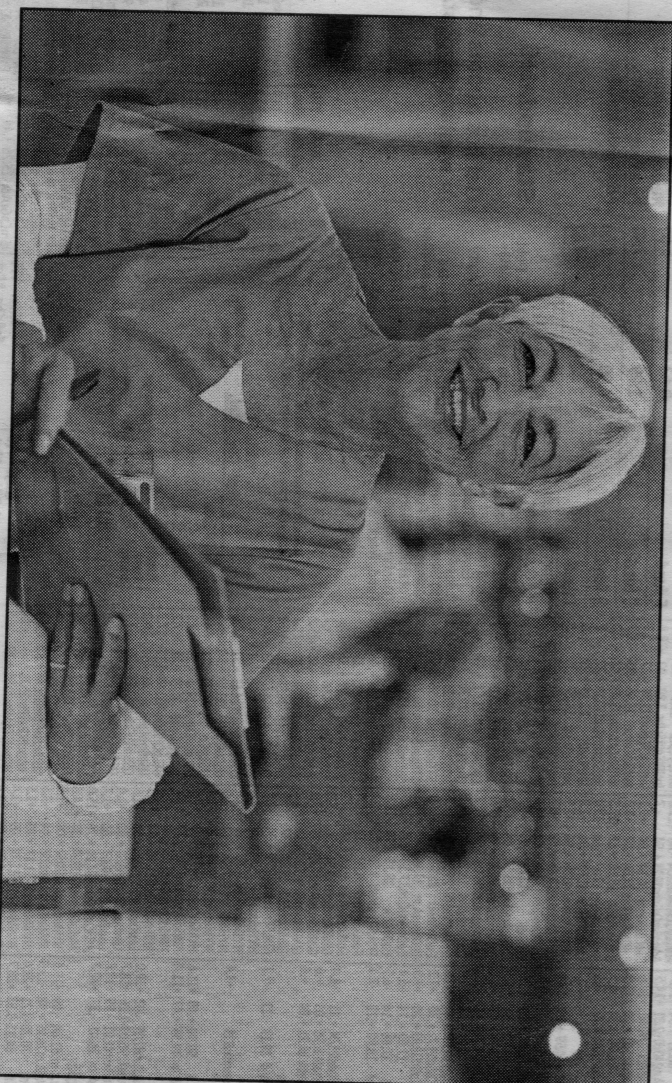
Identify your transferable skills

To kick off your plan for a career transition, list any skills you can take with you. You might be surprised at ways your existing skills can be easily assimilated into different career niches.

- Look at job descriptions in the industry you're interested in and consider how your existing skills or personal attributes can be applied.
- List your soft skills—don't underestimate your value here. Experienced workers, regardless of industry, have already perfected many of the top sought soft skills employers are seeking in 2020.
- Explore job descriptions, dissect what they're seeking, and think about how many of your own skills can be presented to employers to trigger their interest.

After identifying your hard and soft skills, integrate them into your resume. Successful candidates catch an employer's eye in the first six seconds in their resume.

Tip: To increase chances you'll get past those precious few seconds, leave out the extremely outdated "objective" section. While customary when you first started your career, it's no



longer applicable.

Add new tools to your skills toolbox

To position yourself to transition to a new industry, you may need to obtain relevant experience. The reason for this is twofold. You'll have a few shiny new additions to your resume, and it'll help give you the confidence to quit your industry and pursue a new one.

- Look for volunteer opportunities
- Seek out unpaid apprenticeships
- Pursue credentials and certifications

• Take a part-time entry job in the industry
Any type of experience you gain helps propel you toward your goal. Plus, you'll identify any skills

gaps you have and be able to determine how to fill in these holes. In the process, you might even learn a few new things about yourself to help you in your journey. Also, reach out to existing contacts—they may have ideas or be happy to provide you with a reference to help you transition.

If you've been working in your industry for decades, making a big change does come with challenges and can be intimidating. But if it's a change you really want, your age doesn't have to be a barrier.

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