



In-Between Days: Making the Most of a Job Transition

By Mandy Willingham

Surviving the transition between jobs can present numerous challenges. Whether you're looking to advance within your current profession or forging an entirely new career path, the days between your old and new job can be full of uncertainty. Here are some suggestions to help you make the most of this busy and potentially beneficial time.

Try to minimize stress.

Changing jobs can be one of life's most anxiety-ridden events. Tremendous stress can result from leaving an old and familiar workplace and stepping into a largely unknown professional future. While your present situation may seem unstable and the possibilities for your new career may be unpredictable, you can minimize stress by making sure certain necessities are in order.

- Confirm your eligibility to continue benefits like life and health insurance and unused sick or vacation pay from your previous employer.
- Make a reasonable budget that enables you to continue covering your expenses yet allows you to live comfortably for the weeks or months until you begin your new job.

By covering the basics, you can help reduce your anxiety over the unforeseen future. This will help to increase your confidence and allow you to concentrate on the present. In addition, reducing your stress can help you maintain a more positive outlook—something that is essential to a successful job search!

Make a list of your goals and priorities.

Whether you're moving on from your chosen profession or looking to move ahead in your current industry, making a list of your personal and career goals and priorities is an important key to getting what you want in the future. Write down what you hope to gain from your new job.

Of course everyone is hoping to increase his or her salary and benefits, so try to identify your *specific* compensation requirements. In addition, consider whether you have any preferences in terms of the size and environment of your next workplace. And think about the amount of time you are willing to invest in a new firm or company. Identifying and prioritizing your career goals will help you to form a clearer picture of what you require from your next job.

Do your homework.

Having knowledge on the current job market can be a great advantage. And there are countless career resources at your fingertips, from trade publications and books on specific jobs and industries to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics' site, www.bls.gov, which features the latest on everything from "Earnings by Industry" to forecasts for various occupations.



Even sites with industry-specific blogs like Judged.com, an online resource for attorneys, can give you an insider's perspective on various aspects of a particular profession. Finally, don't forget about some of your most valuable resources: your friends and family. You may gain helpful insights if you talk to them, especially from people who have recently experienced their own career transitions.

Take time to reflect.

Self-reflection can be helpful both for evaluating your previous job and envisioning your new one. Consider both the successful and the challenging aspects of your former job. What was particularly rewarding or difficult? What were you most proud of regarding your previous job performance? Is there anything you would have liked to improve? Taking time to consider your previous work can help you identify what you'd like to gain from your next career opportunity.