



Aspyrre Transition Workbook

Career Steps One and Two: Discovery

The following chart breaks career transition into three major steps. This workbook will walk you through steps one and two. Once you have completed all the exercises you will have the information you need to develop a strategy and solid tools for success.

Step 1: Internal Discovery

- Big Question: What are the key elements that would need to exist in my ideal job?
- Big Task: Discover the points where your core values and personal strengths intersect.
- Output - List of Ideal Job Parameters.

Step 2: External Discovery

- Big Question: What opportunities exist in the world that would be a good fit for me?
- Big Task: Ask questions and get out of your "assumption zone"
- Output: A clear target job objective and a solid understanding of what the "hiring" powers are most interested in.

Step 3: Strategy and Execution

- Big Question: How do I want to approach my job search?
- Big Task: Prepare materials (resume etc.) and develop plan.
- Output: Action and generation of interesting opportunities.



EXERCISE # 1 - "IN MY ELEMENT" STORIES

DESCRIPTION: Write 10 to 15 stories of moments when you felt like you were "in your element". You were proud of yourself because you knew you were doing well at something, AND you were also enjoying yourself, feeling energized and happy.

You will be able to use these stories throughout the career change process:

1. To define your "ideal job" parameters
2. To create accomplishment / value statements for your resume
3. To form into answers which you can use in response to behavioral interview questions

How to get started:

Think of times when you were truly feeling happy and productive in a work setting. Write a brainstormed list of several of these moments to get started. If you are having trouble, look at what you have on your list for what you loved most about your jobs or, you can move outside of your professional realm and think of personal projects you enjoyed working on. Once you have thought of these times, write a short paragraph about each one.

Analyzing the Stories:

The stories you wrote provide you with "points of data". Each story is a reflection of you at your best, doing something you enjoy, and doing it well. Look for themes in the stories and pull out 6 – 10 components that you see show up more than once. Here are some questions to consider:

1. What skills were you using?
2. Do you notice anything about the environment you were working in?
3. What kinds of people, places or things were you working with?
4. Is there anything consistent about how you were interacting with others in the story, or how you were approaching the work?
5. What values are showing up in your stories?

Pulling out your Core Job Parameters:

With your stories in mind, pretend you had the opportunity to go to a "Job Store", and hand them a list of "Requirements" for your ideal job. You don't need to know the name of the job, or what industry you are working in. All you need to know are the most important components of the job. Here are some examples:

1. I need to work in a synergistic team environment
2. I need to play a leadership role
3. I need to have measurable objectives and clear end results, so I can feel a sense of accomplishment
4. I need to be in an open, creative environment so that I don't feel boxed in
5. I need a strong mentor for a boss
6. I need to have freedom – no boss or a hands-off boss

Use what you learn from this exercise and your other self-discovery work to fill out the Ideal Job Model on the next page.



IDEAL JOB MODEL

Boss	Physical Work Environment	Type of Company
Income Range	<p>Top Work Activity and Value Parameters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ 	Size of Company
Work Schedule		Location / Travel
Time spent alone vs. with others		Community / Culture
_____	_____	_____

Top Five Possibilities to Consider	What do I need to know about this option?



EXERCISE # 2 - INFORMATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

DESCRIPTION: Get as much information as possible about what it's like to be "in the shoes" of someone who has already walked the path you are considering. This enables you to choose whether or not it's the right path for you, and plan more effectively, since you'll know in advance what others have learned from experience.

What are Informational Conversations?

In order for you to understand how to position yourself for a job, you need to know what it is like to be in that job. The best way to do this is to talk to people who have a job that is similar to what you are targeting and ask them questions about what it is like to be in their shoes. If you talk to five different people, they will share different stories and perspectives, and this gives you several powerful advantages getting in the door:

1. You will have insight into paths to that type of position that differ from the traditional path, and this reduces your chance of getting discouraged by what you perceive to be the barriers to entry.
2. You will be able to talk as if you "know" what it's like to be in that position, which will give interviewers additional confidence in your ability.
3. You will understand the needs and problems that arise in that position with more clarity, which will enable you to present yourself as someone who can meet those needs and solve those problems.
4. You will have a reality check about the challenges that come with the position, so you prevent yourself from escaping from one situation only to end up in a similar one.

Use the information interviewing handout for ideas of questions to ask during your conversation. Use the specific question networking technique to find people to talk with.

As you have conversations and learn about the experiences of others, you will find yourself getting more interested in some options and less interested in others. Eliminate or back burner the options that you lose interest in and narrow the ones you want to focus on to no more than three. For each of the three options you want to focus on, fill out the career transition readiness form.



INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

Job Search Situation	Recommended Strategy
I have no idea what I want	Self discovery exercises to determine skills, interests, and talents
Want to learn what a job entails	Information Interviewing
Want to know what's available in the market	Web research / networking
Want to learn what it's like to work for a company	Information Interviewing
Want to learn more about a particular career path	Information Interviewing
Not getting bites for jobs using traditional methods	Create a supplementary "pipeline interviewing" initiative and target potential future bosses
Don't know who to call	Specific question networking
Uncomfortable selling yourself	Get a coach, friend, or support group to help you create a strategy that will get results and also fit your personality

Real Information Interviews:

- Are with the person who has the job you want to have – NOT with the boss or manager of your target job.
- Are about the story of the person you are interviewing – NOT a current or potential job opening.
- Are about the story of the person you are interviewing -- NOT about you or your qualifications.

Basic Steps:

1. Ask yourself what 3 – 4 key things you most want to understand.
2. Determine what kind of person has direct experiences that will shed light on your question.
3. Create 5 questions that will pull out what you need to know.
4. Use your network to find 1 – 3 people to start with.
5. Schedule a 20 minute phone interview.
6. Respect your time limit.
7. Ask if you can call back later if any more questions come up.
8. Ask if they know anyone else you can interview.
9. Send thank you note and keep this person in your network.
10. Change your questions and target "interviewee" as you learn.
11. When to stop: You know what kind of job you want.

Example Information Interview Questions

What you want to know	A good information interview question
What's the job like?	What is a typical day like, or maybe two different recent days?
Are the bosses micro-managers?	What has been your biggest challenge with management?
Is this company worth working for?	How long do you expect to stay at this company?
How long are the hours?	What kind of hours do you work; how do you handle deadlines?
What are the hidden down-sides?	What two things do you like least about the job? What surprised you?
Will I get trained?	How did you learn what you needed to know?
How influential is this job?	What do you do when you aren't getting the cooperation you need from other departments?
Do I qualify for the job?	What job were you in before this one? What were the three key things that made it possible for you to move into this job?
How much does it pay?	Do you feel you are paid fairly compared to industry averages?
What is the career path?	What do you plan on doing next?



Specific Question Networking Technique:

Get very specific about what piece of information you need, and ask in a way that gets the brain focused on just that piece of information. You will be able to get to information and contacts quickly this way unless people hold back. People will only hold back if they are suspicious of how you will use the information, so be up front about your agenda.

Ask yes or no specific questions about the information you need:

Do you know anyone who _____ (ie: works at an aerospace firm)?

- If yes, would they be willing to provide you with the e-mail address so you can ask a question? (make it easy – and tell them exactly what you’ll be asking)
- If no, do they know anyone who might know someone who _____ (ie: works at an aerospace firm)?

NOTE: Many people avoid this exercise because they assume no one would want to talk to them. If you approach the conversation with integrity, people are usually delighted to talk with you because it gives them an opportunity to be valuable by doing something completely self-indulgent – talking about themselves!

If you find that people are not responding positively to your overtures, ask yourself if you are being clear about what you are asking for. If you have a secret agenda that these people will help you get a job in any other way than by sharing their story with you, then they will pick up on that need and feel uncomfortable.

This milestone is one of the most critical keys to success in this program. If you find yourself avoiding it, please bring it up in your coaching group for discussion!

To achieve this milestone, you must have five informational conversations and share the results with your coach or in your group.

Conversation 1: With whom: _____

About what: _____

What I learned: _____



Conversation 2: With whom: _____

About what: _____

What I learned: _____

Conversation 3: With whom: _____

About what: _____

What I learned: _____

Conversation 4: With whom: _____

About what: _____

What I learned: _____

Conversation 5: With whom: _____

About what: _____

What I learned: _____



Career Transition Strategy Readiness Check

Most people approach career transition without enough clarity about the position they want to move into. This creates several problems, including:

- People “pigeonhole” you based on what you used to do
- People you network with don’t know how to help you
- The only path available seems to require starting over

The obstacles listed above are not inherent to career transition; they come from not knowing enough about the new position you are moving into, and therefore not being able to speak clearly about your goals, and show the parts of yourself that are relevant to achieving those goals.

Here’s what you need to know *before* redoing your resume:

1. The name of the job I want to transition to is usually called _____ or _____ or _____

The key thing that distinguishes between someone who excels in this type of position and someone who just gets by is:

The ten main things people ask for when they are looking for someone to fill this position are: (include about 10 bullets)

At first it might seem like you could never qualify for such a position, but when you pick apart your background with the parameters of your goal clearly in mind, you will be surprised how many of your skills are transferable, and how easy it could be to pick up the few things you are missing.

Once you have answered the questions on this form, then we will have the information we need to rewrite your resume, and create an effective job search strategy. Until then, the most important thing you can do is gather information until you are clear. Have fun with this, and don’t worry about the next steps until you have the information you need! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.