

# CAREER CHANGE: BUILDING ON YOUR PAST

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If you have been out of the labor market for some time or are looking to make a career change, the thought of re-entering the job market can seem daunting. It is important to realize, however, that you can still engage in a productive, rewarding job search even if your work history is dated or you don't have a formal work history at all.

Success in re-entering the job market or changing jobs comes down to two things:

1. developing the right attitudes about your abilities, and
2. organizing an effective job search.



The key to success is preparation. Preparation means learning to recognize past experiences, talents, skills, abilities and volunteer work that can help “sell” you in today’s labor market. Life experiences will be your most valuable resource to turn into tangible assets. It means translating “life skills,” then becoming a confident potential employee. Maturity and life experiences are pluses many employers are looking for.

## Think About Your Experiences

As you begin to prepare for your job search, take a few minutes to think about your past experiences. Specifically, take some time to:

- List all the places you have been and things you have done.
- Recall how you have used your spare time. Note which activities, as well as past jobs, you enjoyed and which ones you disliked.
- Record important experiences in school, at home, in prior jobs and as a volunteer within the community.
- This information will be useful as you determine the type of work you would enjoy most.

## Market Your Experiences

Through the years, you have developed a variety of skills which could pay great dividends in today’s job market. Your challenge is to identify these skills and relate them to job skills for which employers are looking. Brainstorm by making a list of those experiences.

## Plan Your Future

You may be able to increase job possibilities if you receive training in a specific field. It may be that you can update or acquire new skills by taking some short courses at an area community college, technical college or community-based organization.

## Want More Information?

For additional information, download a copy of UT Extension Publication “W 936-B Finding Work – Career Change.” To learn more, connect with an Extension agent by contacting your county Extension office.



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