



5 Ways People Sabotage Their Career Changes

And How a Coach Can Help

Quick List

1. Not having a clear plan.
2. Not working daily to find a new job or career.
3. Not looking for opportunities before making the change to update or add new skills.
4. Panicking and reverting to the old job because you feel you cannot have what you want.
5. Limited beliefs or core values that say you cannot have the job you want.

1. Not Having a Clear Long-Term Plan

Depending on how quickly you want or need to change careers, just saying you want a new career and applying for random jobs is not enough. Job and career changes require planning, research, realistic expectations, and preparation.

A career coach can walk you through the process, map out time frames and tasks, and help keep you moving toward the goal.

2. Not Working Daily to Find a New Job or Career

If you are unemployed, you should treat your job search like work and spend approximately 4 to 6 hours per day looking for a job. If you are currently employed, aim to spend about one hour per day preparing for your new career.

This time may include networking, researching companies, strengthening your social media presence such as LinkedIn, volunteering, and preparing for the environment of the job you want.

For example, if you currently work in an office and want to transition to farm work, start looking for practical clothing and tools you may need in that next role. Budget-friendly options such as thrift stores can be helpful during a career change.

A coach can help you understand networking trends, research a company’s “why,” search for job openings, and stay accountable and motivated.

3. Not Looking for Opportunities to Update or Add Skills Before Making the Change

Career change often requires daily action, including reskilling or building relevant experience.

For example, if you are a dental hygienist who wants to become a veterinary technician, you may already have many transferable skills. However, you may not have experience with the clients in a veterinary office: the animals. Volunteering with an animal shelter once a week for six months could help you learn whether you enjoy the field, understand industry language and expectations, network with local veterinarians, and strengthen your resume while benefiting your community.

Time should be allotted to add skill sets before making a career leap. This might include taking an online state test, completing local college classes, earning certifications, or finishing a degree.

If these steps are delayed until after quitting your current job, they may create additional costs that are harder to manage without income. A career coach, especially if contacted before you leave your current position, can help you navigate the timeline, prepare financially, and leave your current role in a way that protects future references.

4. Panicking and Reverting to the Old Job

Reverting to safety often means applying only for jobs in the same field you have been trying to leave. Keeping the old job field active “just in case” can prevent you from believing you are capable of moving into the new career field.

It is like losing 40 pounds but keeping all the clothes that no longer fit. You may be telling yourself that you expect to fail.

Many people fall back into the same type of job they just left, never taking the steps needed to move forward. They become defeated, feel trapped in the old way of doing things, and begin to believe they can never have the job they really want.

Look before you leap and plan your departure.

A career coach can help you navigate this process from wherever you are. A coach can help define short- and long-term goals, create a clear path to your destination, provide realistic timelines and expectations, challenge limiting beliefs, and keep you accountable for moving forward.

5. Limited Beliefs, Believing the New Career Is Unobtainable, and Giving Up Too Soon

Having a realistic time frame is critical to success in a career change. Expecting to significantly shift your employment in 2 to 3 weeks is usually not realistic.

Building a new network, developing new skills, preparing financially, and giving your support system time to adjust to the career change all take time.

A realistic career change goal is often 6 months to 1 year.