

What is a Career Pivot? The Complete Guide

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Most people change their career path at some point in their lives. Even if you love the work you do, or the industry you're in, you might decide to move to a different position or business to increase your potential income, and unlock new opportunities.

[Studies even show](#) that most people change careers up to 5.7 times from age 18 to 24, and change it again another 2-3 times up to the age of 34.

In recent years, the concept of the 'career pivot', which involves changing your job to match your evolving priorities and values, has grown more common. Career pivoting offers professionals an opportunity to mitigate growing problems like burnout and job instability, while also ensuring they can pursue the roles that deliver the highest levels of satisfaction.

Career Pivot vs Career Change? What is a Career Pivot?

A career pivot is similar to a career change, with a few distinctions. When you make a comprehensive 'career change', you may look at roles that have nothing to do with your existing experiences in the working world. You could move into a new speciality or industry, switching from sales to software development, or healthcare to finance.

With a career pivot, you don't start again from scratch. Instead, you look at how you can use your [existing hard and soft skills](#) to transition into a different role. You might change your job function with your current employer, moving from a sales representative role to an account manager position.

Alternatively, you might move to a different workplace, and explore job opportunities that align with your experiences, such as moving from sales to customer success.

Why Consider a Career Pivot?

As mentioned above, career pivots are becoming more common in the modern world. We're living in a landscape that's constantly changing, with new, high-demand skills emerging all the time. To thrive and stay adaptable in this space, employees are keeping their options open.

A career pivot can help you refine your career path, based on self-reflection and an understanding of your changing priorities. For instance, it might help you to move into a role with more flexibility, or with a focus on more tasks that you enjoy.

Currently, around [52% of Gen Z and Millennial employees](#) are considering a career pivot, demonstrating a growing focus on flexibility in the working world. The key to success in any career change, is understanding

what drives your decision.

While the reasons for a career pivot can vary, they often fall into two categories:

- **Situational drivers:** Situational drivers are external market forces that have an impact on your career decisions. For instance, changing economic factors, or the talent landscape may push you to rethink your career plan. Organizational changes in your business, such as restructuring strategies, or the rise of new opportunities might lead to a pivot too.
- **Personal drivers:** Alternatively, personal drivers are internal factors that prompt you to seek out a different career based on self-reflection. Your evolving skills, talents, experiences, and preferences in the workplace may convince you to look for a role that's more aligned with your current wants, and needs.

How to Pivot Careers (The Right Way)

If you're unhappy in your current role, feel constantly stressed at work, or believe that you can accomplish more in a different position, a career pivot could be a good idea. It's an opportunity to broaden your horizons and explore new opportunities.

However, pivoting your career, just like making a career change, can be a daunting process. If you've been in your position or industry for a long time, making a significant change create feelings of anxiety. Plus, it's difficult to know for certain whether your pivot will pay off.

If you're planning on changing roles some time soon, here's an insight into how you can perform a career pivot, the right way.

Step 1: Conduct a Self-Assessment

For most professionals, a successful career pivot starts with a significant amount of self-reflection. You need to gather as much information as possible about your current abilities, and skills, and what you like and dislike about your role. Comprehensive self-reflection will help you identify your motivations, passions, and opportunities for successful change.

You can take online assessments to help you, seek advice from career counsellors, or even talk to a mentor to help with this process. Just some of the questions you might ask yourself during a self-assessment include:

- What do you like/dislike about your current role?
- How would you like to change your role?
- What jobs and roles do you find interesting or fascinating?
- Which roles are most relevant to your training or credentials?
- What are your most distinctive skills and abilities?
- What are your biggest accomplishments?
- Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

Step 2: Identify Your Transferrable Skills

While you're assessing your current situation and priorities, it's important to get a clear view of your abilities and transferrable skills. Unlike a comprehensive career change, a career pivot involves drawing on the skills and experiences you already have.

The chances are you'll already have numerous skills you've developed during previous roles that can help you transition into new opportunities. [Leadership skills](#), such as the ability to guide, motivate, and inspire others are relevant in every role. Strong communication, collaboration, and time-management skills are also crucial in a variety of landscapes.

There are even hard and technical skills that can be transferred into other positions. For instance, data analysis skills, knowledge of cloud computing, and lead qualification skills are all valuable in sales, marketing, and customer success roles.

Step 3: Explore the Landscape and Set New Goals

With a clear view of your priorities and skills, you'll be able to start searching for roles that make sense to you and your ambitions. Assess some of the job descriptions posted online for roles you're interested in, and compare them to your own resume.

Research roles you've heard about in your landscape and find out what responsibilities are involved. Using this information, start to set new goals for your future career path.

Start with short-term goals, such as developing new skills to make yourself more attractive to employers in a specific landscape. Then think about your long-term goals, such as which promotions and progression opportunities you want to pursue when you move into your new position.

These goals will give you a clear 'vision map' to follow as you move through your career change and into the next stage of your professional life.

Step 4: Network Strategically

Who you know often matters just as much as what you know when it comes to following a successful career path. Even if you don't have all of the technical skills required to thrive in a new position, the right connections can help you get your foot in the door at a different organization.

Your professional network is an incredible resource for personal growth. It gives you access to people you can use for advice, mentorship, guidance, and education. Plus, the people you connect with can help direct you towards job opportunities you wouldn't encounter organically.

Start by speaking with members of your current network, asking about the job opportunities in their business. Visit industry events and connect with people who might help you to increase your skill set, or explore new opportunities. Maintain connections with the people relevant to your role and your future as

you move into new positions.

Step 5: Develop a Strategy for Lifelong Learning

Finally, part of preparing for and mastering a career pivot is recognizing the need to remain agile in today's employment landscape. Your priorities, the marketplace, and the job opportunities around you will likely change over time. Committing to a strategy of lifelong learning will ensure you can constantly evolve and adapt, no matter the circumstances.

[Consider reaching out to a mentor or coach](#) who can help you hone your skills and develop new ones. Look for opportunities to learn from the people in your new role, and take their perspective into account. Invest in online courses, workshops, and training events.

You could even join a development-focused community like the Hardskill Exchange, to learn from professionals with a variety of hard and soft skills that might be valuable to your future career.

Ready to Pivot in Your Career?

Any career change, whether it's a complete profession overhaul, or a simple career pivot, can be a daunting prospect. But it can also be an incredible opportunity. Pivoting in your career gives you an opportunity to pursue your passions, and find a role that's more suited to your priorities.

It can help you to avoid issues with workplace stress and burnout, adapt to changes in the hiring marketplace, and earn a consistent income.

However, any successful career change requires the right strategy. It involves self-reflection, investing in yourself and your skills, and committing to lifelong growth.

Join the [Hard Skill Exchange](#) today to start learning the transferrable hard and soft skills that will help you navigate any career pivot, or career change.??

HSE Team