

# Networking

Business acquaintances, friends, family, and their contacts can be helpful in giving encouragement, insights and information about specific job openings. Use contacts. Ask everyone you know to keep looking for you as you move toward change. You do, however, have to be willing to ask others to help. You may be surprised to find what a valuable resource you have in all those people you see and work with every day. Don't overlook folks you know in other locations and from earlier times. Let your network help you in this process.

Good luck, as you enter the new opportunities afforded you by this mid-life career change. There are hundreds of folks who will envy you the chance to make this "new beginning." Make this one of the best events of your life. It's your show! Up with the curtain and on with the Second Act!

# Resources for Career Search

Contact Kirkwood's **Student Development Department** for assistance. Sign up to attend free workshops.

**Occupational Outlook Handbook** – contains clear and useful information including salary ranges, training and educational requirements.

<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos163.htm>

**Occupational Information Network** – provides up-to-date information online about a wide range of careers.

<http://online.onetcenter.org>

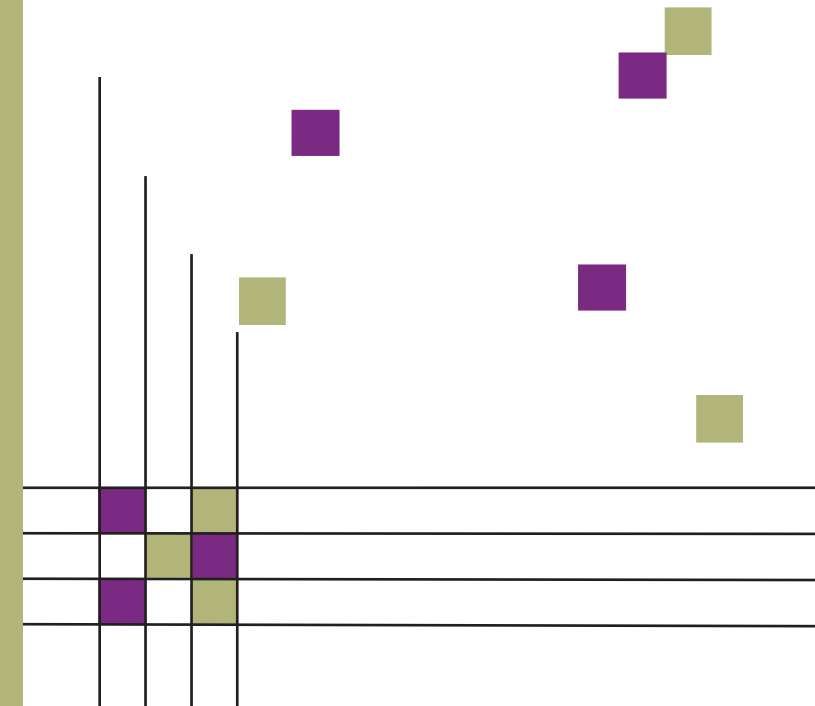
**Job Shadow** – contact someone who works in a career you are interested in learning more about. Ask if you can spend time on the job to learn more about what it entails.

This handout is part of a self-help information series written by the Kirkwood Community College Student Development staff, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. 319-398-5471 or 1-800-332-2055 ext. 5471

Please share this information with family, friends and classmates.

**Kirkwood**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# How to Make a Mid-Life Career Change



Learning to Plan  
for Change

# Making A Mid-Life Career Change

Congratulations! You are the proud possessor of many life experiences and maturity. These are your most valuable assets as you look at making a career change.

## All In This Together

Some of us are choosing a career for the first time in mid-life. Others of us are being dragged kicking and screaming into a career change we do not want. Still others are choosing to change careers and can see the process as an exciting opportunity for growth. We are, however, all in this together. So, what's the best way to proceed?

## Planning and Goal Setting

Start today to map out what you want from this next career and from life. This is not an easy task, but here are some ways to start.

1. Write out your "absolute" requirements for this next job. (For instance: Do you have to work in this state? Must the salary be no less than X dollars?) Evaluate each "absolute" and prioritize them according to which ones you would give up and which ones you could not. Ask yourself, "Why do I need this?"
2. Set some personal and occupational goals that will guide your career search and aid your career change. Goal setting should start with a quiet thoughtful time, thinking through where you want to be 5 to 10 years from now. Consider your lifestyle in all its aspects – family, friends, leisure, achievement, work satisfaction, learning, recognition, health, etc. You may want to seek counseling help as you set your goals.
3. Plan time in your life for the FOUR R's – research, reflection, relaxation and running. Making a career change will take minutes and hours out of every week. MAKE TIME. (You may want to get additional information or assistance on time management.)

# The Four R's

**RESEARCH** as much as possible the impact this new career will have on you, your family and friends, and your life style.

**REFLECTION** and maintaining a thoughtful approach to this change can be a lifesaver. Look for opportunities for growth. Value the excitement of changing. Think about and try to visualize the most positive imaginable \_\_\_\_\_ in this new career. Business executives use this imaging technique to bring success and profits. You can use it too.

**RELAXATION** can be your reward to yourself for the progress you are making. It is also a stress reducer and an essential part of maintaining your good humor, wit and physical well-being. Your new career will fare better if you haven't arrived stressed out and tired. Play and relaxation are important.

**RUNNING** You may feel like you are running in circles as you leave one career and enter another. Careful planning can literally save you miles and hours. What you CAN count on, however, is running – to agencies, to classes, to interviews, to lunch with contacts, to the dry cleaner or wherever life takes you. Plan for these extra activities and for the energy, as well as the time they take. Become a list maker and always allow time and money for extra running.

# Choosing the Next Career

A career search can be fascinating and educational. It should also be a careful and thoughtful process. Feeling rushed or pressured is not a good way to begin. Many of us feel hurried when making a career change. Professional publications and counselors are available to help. Consider seeking professional assistance. Your immediate task though, is to take sufficient time and care to do a good career search. This may take weeks or months. Some of the resources available to you are listed in this brochure.

## Keep a Positive Outlook

Next to your experience and maturity, a positive outlook on life and careers is your best asset in making a career change.

As you move toward new and exciting changes, keep a log or journal of all the new things you are learning. Did you find out that a certain business requires very specific educational degrees before granting an interview? Write it down. Did you learn that, for you, an interview at 4 p.m. is a drag? Write it down. This journal will serve as a monitor of progress and learning even if the career selection or hiring process seems slow. YOU ARE LEARNING A LOT and sometimes you need to remind yourself of this. The journal can also be a way to record the frustrations and puzzles you face. Experienced journal keepers are convinced that the process of recording feelings, learnings and happenings is very beneficial to personal growth. And personal growth is what change is all about.