

The Ultimate Guide to Career Pivots:

Successfully Navigating Major Job Changes



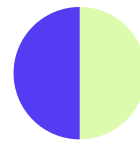
A career pivot is a big move—whether you’re switching industries, changing roles, going from freelance to full-time, returning after a break, or joining a new company. It can be exciting and overwhelming. This guide helps you navigate the shift with confidence, from clarifying your “why” to updating your resumé and preparing for interviews.

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According to recent data:

12% of Canadian employees voluntarily change jobs every year



Half of Canadian job seekers are thinking about a career switch to a new industry or job function within their current field

56% of job seekers have switched careers at least once

1 in 3 Gen Zers and Millennials say they have already switched careers multiple times, and are more likely to change careers than other generations



(Source: Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll 2024 survey; Mercer; prostaffworks.ca)

This isn’t just about updating your resumé. It’s about reframing your story — and we’ll show you how.

Why Canadians Are Changing Jobs

Key Motivators for Job Seekers

- ### 1. Seeking a Healthier Work Culture & Flexibility

Remote work, flexible hours and burnout recovery are driving Canadians to seek roles that support better balance and well-being.
- ### 2. Stalled Growth & No Clear Path

Whether it's a lack of advancement or no clear trajectory, a missing growth path is a major push factor.
- ### 3. Better Compensation

Over one-quarter (37%) of Canadian employers identified better pay or benefits offered elsewhere as the top reason for employee turnover (HCAMag).
- ### 4. Passion or Interest

Many workers are pivoting because they've found a new field or industry that excites them more than their current one.
- ### 5. Industry Shifts & New Opportunities

As some industries shrink due to disruption or decline, others are booming. Canadians are pivoting—some out of necessity, others to seize fresh opportunities in high-growth sectors.
- ### 6. Location Requirements

Relocation to a new area where your industry isn't as prominent or is declining can prompt a career change.
- ### 7. Upskilling & Reskilling

According to a 2024 survey, 60% of Canadians believe learning new skills is essential for career success. Many are pursuing education and training to transition into fast-growing industries. (Businesswire)
- ### 8. Layoffs & Involuntary Changes

Not all job changes are by choice. Around 6-7% of Canadian workers are permanently laid off each year, a trend that continues to impact the workforce. (irpp.org)

In summary,

Canadians making career pivots are largely motivated by the pursuit of better opportunities—whether it's higher pay, enhanced benefits, a more fulfilling work culture or a role that aligns better with their life and values.

I.

Pivoting to a Different Industry (same or similar role/job function)

Thinking about making a switch to a completely different industry? It can feel intimidating, but the payoff can be incredibly rewarding.

How to Showcase Your Experience

Identify Transferable Skills

Communication, project management, leadership, problem-solving, analytical thinking, creativity and collaboration are valuable across industries.

Certifications

Upskill or reskill through online courses and professional certifications, or by attending industry conferences.

Networking

Connect with industry professionals, join associations, attend webinars and build relationships through platforms like LinkedIn.

Personal Projects

Show your passion through side projects, volunteer work or freelancing in the new industry.

What to Include on Your Resumé

Highlight Transferable Skills

Dedicate a section to showcasing skills that align with the new industry.

> Example:

If moving from non-profit to finance, you could say: "Led financial reporting for donors, ensuring accuracy and transparency—skills applicable to investor relations and financial compliance."

Showcase Your Learning

Mention any relevant certifications or coursework you've completed.

Tailor Your Language

Use industry-specific keywords and terminology to demonstrate familiarity.

> Example:

"Collaborated with leadership to produce detailed financial reports for donors, demonstrating skills in financial reporting and compliance relevant to corporate finance."

Emphasize Adaptability

Demonstrate how you've successfully applied your skills in new environments.



How to Talk About It in an Interview

You want to demonstrate that you pay attention to industry news, understand terminology and are aware of current trends.

> Example Quote 1:

"I've always been fascinated by this industry and have spent considerable time learning about its unique challenges and opportunities. My previous work may have been in a different field, but the skills I bring—like problem-solving, strategic thinking and leadership—are highly transferable."

> Example Quote 2:

"This transition excites me because it allows me to apply my skills in new ways. I've done my research and upskilled by taking courses like {X} and attending webinars such as {X}."



2.

Returning to Work After a Long Break

Whether you've taken time off to care for family members, address a health concern or for personal growth, or have been off due to being downsized, returning to the workforce after a long break can feel daunting. But the skills and experiences you've gained during that time can be just as valuable as previous work experience.

How to Showcase Your Experience

Highlighting Skills Gained

Communication, organization, problem-solving, adaptability, resilience and creative thinking are key strengths developed during your time off.

Upskilling

Highlight any online courses, certifications, workshops or industry conferences you've attended.

Networking

Reconnect with your professional network and stay informed about industry trends.

Freelance or Volunteer Work

Use part-time work, freelance projects or volunteering to apply your skills and stay active.

What to Include on Your Resumé

Address Gaps

Briefly mention the break, if necessary, focusing on what you accomplished and learned during that time.

Showcase Relevant Activities

Focus on any activities during the break that demonstrate growth or are professionally relevant.

Highlight Learning & Growth

Feature relevant certifications, training or volunteer work undertaken during the break.

Brief Explanation in Your Summary Section

If your gap was for a well-known reason (like education or family care), include a brief mention in your summary.

> Example:

"Marketing professional with 8+ years in digital strategy and content development. Recently returned from a career break to raise children and earn digital marketing certifications. Ready to bring new skills and energy to a new team."

Use Your Cover Letter for More Context

If you'd rather not address the gap directly on your resumé, use your cover letter to explain it in a positive and professional way.

> Example:

"During my career break to care for a family member, I completed online certifications and took on freelance projects. Now I'm excited to apply this updated skill set and fresh perspective in a full-time role."



How to Talk About It in an Interview

> Example Quote 1:

- “During my time away from the workforce, I stayed engaged with industry trends by reading {INSERT RELEVANT PUBLICATION} and actively built my skills through online learning, taking courses like {X}. I’m excited to bring these refreshed skills and a renewed sense of energy to this role.”

> Example Quote 2:

- “My career break gave me the opportunity to develop new perspectives and build skills in resilience and adaptability. I’m now ready to re-enter the workforce with a fresh outlook and a strong commitment to contributing effectively.”



3.

Changing Roles/Job Function Completely

Itching to make a BIG career switch or pursue that dream job? Whether you're shifting from Digital Media Manager to Business Analyst, or from Property Manager to Corporate Event Planner, a complete role change can feel daunting yet exciting. It's a chance to leverage your existing skills in a fresh and dynamic way.

How to Showcase Your Experience

Highlight Transferable Skills

Even if your previous role feels worlds apart from the one you're eyeing, chances are you've built valuable skills that will speak to hiring managers. Focus on your creativity, leadership, adaptability and problem-solving abilities.

Upskilling

Take charge of your transition by actively seeking relevant knowledge and certifications. Engaging in courses, mentorships or industry-specific certifications will set you apart and demonstrate your commitment to learning.

Networking

Connect with professionals in your desired field. Learn from their experiences, seek advice and expand your network to understand the ins and outs of your new role.

What to Include on Your Resumé

Address Your Career Change

Briefly mention your intent to pivot, but focus on how your existing skills are relevant and how you'll bring immediate value to the new role.

> **Example:**

"Experienced professional with a background in [previous field] and a passion for [new field]. Transitioning into [new role] to apply skills in [mention transferable skills such as communication, project management or data analysis] and make an impact from day one."

Showcase Relevant Skills & Learning

Highlight any certifications, courses or practical experience you've gained that directly relate to your new field.

> **Example:**

"Completed certifications in [mention relevant training or coursework] to enhance skills in [mention specific area related to the new role]. Gained expertise in [mention relevant skills] through [mention relevant personal projects, mentorship or volunteer work]."

Frame the Pivot in Your Resumé Summary

If you want to address the career change head-on, do so in your resumé summary, focusing on how your previous experience will enrich your new role.

> **Example:**

"Project Manager with 5+ years of experience leading cross-functional teams and delivering complex initiatives. Recently completed certifications in UX Design and Data Analysis to pivot into product management, bringing strategic thinking and creativity to the role."



Use Your Cover Letter to Provide More Context

If you'd rather not highlight the career shift directly on your resumé, your cover letter is the perfect place to explain why you're making the move and how your skills will contribute to the new role.

> Example:

"I've enjoyed a successful career in marketing, but I'm excited to pivot into product management because I'm drawn to strategic problem-solving and user experience. I've completed certifications in UX Design and Data Analysis to ensure I'm equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to excel in this field."

How to Mention It in an Interview

> Example Quote 1:

"I've spent years honing transferable skills like communication, problem-solving and project management, all of which are highly applicable to this role. Through courses like {X} and {Y}, I've deepened my knowledge in {new field} and built a solid foundation. I'm eager to bring my strengths into this new context and contribute fresh ideas."

> Example Quote 2:

"I decided to make this pivot because I'm excited to take on new challenges and apply my skills in a different way. I've been intentional about preparing for this transition, completing certifications in {X} and gaining hands-on experience through {Y}. I'm ready to bring my adaptable mindset and enthusiasm to this role."



4.

Changing Companies After a Long Period

Staying with one company for years provides stability but can also leave you feeling stagnant. A change can reignite your motivation, especially if your current role lacks growth or no longer aligns with your values. Finding a workplace that fits your goals can open the door to fresh opportunities and renewed momentum.

How to Highlight Your Experience

Emphasize Longevity as a Strength

Showcase your commitment, loyalty and the depth of your expertise gained over the years.

Demonstrate Adaptability

Share examples of how you've successfully navigated changes and challenges within your previous company.

Highlight Professional Development

Showcase any training, mentorship or leadership roles you've undertaken to continue growing in your career.

Showcase Transferable Skills

Illustrate how your core skills—such as communication, leadership and problem-solving—are valuable in any setting.

What to Include on Your Resumé

Highlight Longevity & Growth

Prove that your time with one company was marked by progression, learning and increasing responsibilities.

> Example:

"Spent over a decade with [Company Name], advancing from entry-level to senior management, driving initiatives that improved efficiency by 30% and demonstrated ongoing growth."

Emphasize Professional Development & Adaptability

Show how you proactively expanded your skills and knowledge over time.

Showcase Mentorship & Leadership

Highlight your efforts to support the growth of others through mentorship or leadership roles.

> Example:

"Mentored numerous team members, offering guidance and support to help them achieve promotions, navigate complex projects and develop their own leadership skills."

Demonstrate Industry Awareness & Strategic Thinking

Show that you were proactive in staying relevant and introducing fresh ideas.



How to Talk About It in an Interview

> Example Quote 1:

- "I spent over a decade at my previous company, where I progressed from an entry-level associate to senior manager. Over that time, I took on more responsibility, earned advanced certifications and led initiatives that improved efficiency. I'm excited to bring my passion for growth and innovation to a new team and continue evolving."

> Example Quote 2:

- "I'm proud of the work I accomplished at [Company Name], especially my ability to navigate industry changes and continuously improve processes. Joining a new company excites me because it's an opportunity to apply everything I've learned in a fresh context while embracing new challenges and ideas. I'm ready to contribute my experience and adaptability to a team that values growth."



5.

Transitioning from Freelance or Consulting to Full-time (or vice versa)

Whether transitioning from freelancing to full-time employment or stepping away from a structured role to start consulting or contract work, each shift presents unique opportunities and challenges.

Why You Might Be Doing This

Freelance/Consulting to Full-time

Many choose this shift in search of stability—for example, a steady income, benefits and long-term growth opportunities. Some miss the collaboration and mentorship that come with working on a dedicated team, while others are looking for access to established resources and structured career advancement opportunities.

Full-time to Freelance/Consulting

For those seeking more flexibility, freelance or consulting work offers the chance to take control of work-life balance, enjoy creative freedom and work independently. Others are drawn to the variety of working with multiple clients across different industries, or the chance to build their own consulting business or specialize in a niche area.

How to Showcase Your Experience

Freelance/Contract to Full-time

- **Highlight Client Work:**
Demonstrate your ability to manage projects across industries and showcase transferable skills like adaptability and relationship-building.
- **Collaboration Skills:**
Emphasize your experience collaborating with clients, subcontractors and team members.
- **Upskilling & Growth:**
Show your commitment to growth through certifications, training or mentorship.
- **Networking:**
Mention how you built relationships with clients, colleagues and mentors to support your transition to a full-time role.

Full-time to Freelance/Contract

- **Highlight Achievements:**
Demonstrate how your full-time role has equipped you with valuable expertise that translates well into freelancing or consulting.
- **Client Collaboration:**
Highlight how your experience working with teams prepared you for collaborating effectively with clients.
- **Upskilling & Specialization:**
Show your commitment to specialization by mentioning any training or certifications you pursued to establish credibility as a freelancer or consultant.
- **Networking & Business Development:**
Describe how you've expanded your network to build your consulting or freelance business.



What to Include on Your Resumé

Freelance/Contract to Full-time

- **Demonstrate Adaptability & Resourcefulness:**

Highlight how freelancing required you to be innovative and resilient—valuable skills that translate to a full-time role.

- > **Example:**

"Managed over 30 freelance projects across various industries, honing resilience, adaptability and problem-solving skills to deliver high-quality results under tight deadlines."

- **Quantify Your Success:**

Use metrics to showcase tangible results and achievements.

- > **Example:**

"Increased client revenue by 40% through strategic marketing campaigns and data-driven decision-making."

- **Tailor Your Resumé:**

Customize your resumé to match the skills and experiences required in the full-time role.

Full-time to Freelance/Contract

- **Demonstrate Expertise & Independence:**

Show how your full-time experience enables you to manage projects independently and deliver quality results.

- > **Example:**

"Used 8 years of corporate expertise in [previous field] to launch a successful consulting business, providing tailored solutions to clients."

- **Quantify Your Success:**

Highlight specific achievements and measurable results since transitioning to freelance or consulting.

- **Tailor Your Resumé:**

Focus on skills relevant to freelancing, such as client management, marketing and strategic planning.

- > **Example:**

"Built a steady stream of contract work through networking, referrals and expertise in [mention skills]."



How to Talk About It in an Interview

> Example Quote 1:

- "Freelancing has taught me to be resourceful and resilient. I've managed diverse projects, met tight deadlines and built strong client relationships. I'm excited to bring that entrepreneurial mindset to a structured, collaborative environment where I can continue growing."

> Example Quote 2:

- "As a consultant, I developed strong communication and problem-solving skills. I'm eager to apply those strengths within a team, where I can contribute consistently and learn from others."

Career pivots are big decisions.

But they also represent the exciting potential to grow, learn and thrive in new environments. Whether you're switching industries, re-entering the workforce after a break or stepping into a new role, embracing change can unlock the career path you've been searching for.

If you're ready to make your next move, take action today — start updating your resumé, polishing your LinkedIn and exploring resources on the [Altis blog](#) to help guide you through the process. We're here to support you every step of the way as you navigate your career pivot.



Questions?
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