



Transitions – Being Open to Change Can Create a Real Career Opportunity

One thing in life we can count on is change. How many times have we heard that, but do we actually believe it?

The following is a true story of a Weatherhead alumnus, Jessica Worny Janicki, and her story of transition and change. It is just another example of how passion transfers into opportunity. Jessica's story is a classic example of networking, but more importantly, it's an example of being passionate about what you do with your career.

Jessica transitioned successfully from a career in consulting to one in career counseling. Ironically, Jessica chose this profession because she enjoyed seeing people identify their passion and link it to a career.

As a counselor for Weatherhead, Jessica helped many MBA candidates land the right opportunity. When it came time for a planned relocation to Toronto, she took stock and took her own advice. From a coaching perspective, I want to share the execution strategy that landed Jessica an opportunity at the University of Toronto's Career Center. Although this is Jessica's story, her execution strategy and words of wisdom can be applied to your situation.

Fortunately for Jessica, she knew she was going to be in Toronto for one year and had time to prepare. She first **revised her resume** and had several colleagues and advisors look it over to ensure that her message was clear. Second, she turned to her **professional association** network. Jessica is a member of the MBA Career Services Council and identified those schools that were also members.

Next, Jessica identified two schools where she would start her inquiry: the University of Toronto and York University. These schools were chosen because Jessica either had a contact or felt there was an opportunity to get an informational interview.

After identifying some target schools, the third thing Jessica did was her **homework**. She researched the schools, their programs and career offices, as well as their deans. Jessica knew that the director for the University of Toronto's Career Center was recently published in *Business Week Online*. Strategically, Jessica knew that this article was a way to make a connection.

Once prepared, Jessica inquired about **informational interviews** with her contacts at the University of Toronto and York University and set up interviews with both contacts. She explained her reasons for being in Toronto, but rather than bring up the idea of career opportunity, she stressed her **desire to reach out professionally**.

At best, Jessica felt that she would strengthen her relationships, find out about local organizations and on a personal note, information about various neighborhoods. There was only a remote possibility to identify career opportunities, and at best, they would be short-term subcontract opportunities throughout the year.

Unfortunately, Jessica's York University contact had to cancel at the last minute. This did not discourage Jessica, because she knew that her contact was doing her a favor by holding the meeting and she knew she would be able to set up another meeting down the road.

The University of Toronto was a different story. Within 30 minutes of the meeting, Jessica began to realize that she was being interviewed for a position in the center. The position was available because someone was leaving for maternity leave and another colleague was taking leave of absence. When the director saw the level of her career knowledge, her passion for career development, her knowledge of the University of Toronto and the preparation that she put into her resume, Jessica had a verbal offer before she walked out the door. Naturally, these types of opportunities do not happen often, but Jessica's story is a great example of being prepared, reaching out to other professionals, sharing knowledge, and being passionate about your career.

In parting Jessica wanted share some words of wisdom on transition for any alumni who may be going through a similar experience.

1. Be aware of your own conflicting emotions. Address them.
2. Be flexible.
3. Keep an open mind.
4. There is always something you don't know.
5. Don't let fear drive you.
6. Don't keep score – sometimes you give and sometimes you receive.
7. Life is about choice – choose wisely.
8. Know yourself.
9. Express who you are – you feel better for it.
10. Follow your passion.

Eric Lutzo earned his Masters of Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Eric is the founder of Forward Thought, a coaching and leadership development practice. (www.forwardthought.net)

Email: Eric@ForwardThought.net