

ER | ELENA RAILEANU
CAREER COACHING

your career change guide

PIVOT WITHOUT STARTING OVER

How to find your transferable skills, test a new direction before you leap, and tell a career-change story employers believe.

“I’m too old to start over.” “I don’t have the right degree.” “Nobody will hire me without experience.” I hear these every week from people who want a new career. Most of the time, they’re not true.

A career change rarely means starting from zero. It means translating what you already know into a new language, testing the new direction before you leap, and building a bridge from where you are to where you want to be. This guide shows you how.

In this guide

1. Get clear on what you’re moving toward
2. Find your transferable skills
3. Test before you leap
4. Close the gap without starting over
5. Tell your career-change story
6. Get hired by people, not job boards
7. Your 90-day pivot plan

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1. Get clear on what you’re moving toward

“I just want out” isn’t a direction. Before you choose a new field, write down:

- The parts of your current work you enjoy and want more of.
- The parts that drain you and you want less of.
- What you need: income, flexibility, stability, purpose, growth.
- Two or three roles that seem to fit, based on what people in those jobs actually do all day, not just job titles.

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2. Find your transferable skills

Every job builds skills that travel. The trick is naming them in the language of your new field.

If you've been a…	You've likely built…
Teacher	**Training design, presenting, managing stakeholders (parents and administrators), data-driven progress tracking**
Nurse	**Decision-making under pressure, patient communication, process compliance, coordinating across teams**
Retail manager	**Hiring and scheduling, budget and inventory management, customer experience, sales targets**
Hairstylist or salon owner	**Client relationship management, small-business operations, marketing, sales**
Military service member	**Leadership, logistics, operations planning, working under pressure**

Take a job posting in your target field and highlight every requirement you've already done in some form. You'll likely find you match more than you thought.

3. Test before you leap

Don't quit your job to chase a career you've only read about. Run small, low-risk experiments first:

- **Informational interviews.** Talk to three to five people who do the job. Ask what they love, what's hard, and how they got in.
- **A small project.** Volunteer, freelance, or take on a side project in the new field.
- **A short course.** Try an affordable online course before committing to an expensive degree or bootcamp.
- **A stretch assignment at your current job** that touches the new area.

> INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW ASK
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> "Hi Daniel, I'm a teacher exploring a move into corporate training, and I noticed you made a similar switch. Would you be open to a 20-minute call? I'd love to hear what helped you most."

4. Close the gap without starting over

- **Bridge roles.** Look for a job that sits between your old field and your new one, like a nurse moving into healthcare technology, or a teacher moving into education sales.
- **Move inside your company first.** Internal transfers are often easier because people already trust your work.
- **Get targeted credentials.** Choose the one certification employers in your new field actually list in postings, not every course you can find.
- **Build proof.** A small portfolio, a case study, or a volunteer result can outweigh a missing title.

5. Tell your career-change story

Hiring managers worry a career changer will be unsure, slow to learn, or back in their old field in a year. Your story should answer those worries before they ask.

> A STRONG PIVOT STORY
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> "For 10 years as a teacher, my favorite part was designing lessons that helped people learn fast. Over the past year I've completed an instructional design certificate and built training for two local nonprofits. Now I want to do this full time in corporate learning, where I can combine my teaching experience with my new skills."

Notice the structure: what you loved, what you've done to prepare, and why this move makes sense. On your resume, lead with a summary that names your target role, and list relevant projects before older, unrelated experience.

6. Get hired by people, not job boards

Career changers rarely win on paper against applicants with direct experience. They win through people who have seen what they can do. Spend more time on conversations than on applications: informational interviews, industry events, online communities in your new field, and referrals from anyone who can vouch for you.

7. Your 90-day pivot plan

1. **Weeks 1 to 2:** Define what you want more of and less of. Shortlist two or three target roles.
2. **Weeks 3 to 4:** Map your transferable skills against five job postings.
3. **Weeks 5 to 8:** Hold five informational interviews. Start one small project or course.
4. **Weeks 9 to 10:** Rewrite your resume and LinkedIn for the new target. Practice your pivot story.
5. **Weeks 11 to 12:** Apply to bridge roles and internal openings, and ask for referrals.

ready for your next step?

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Book a strategy call with Elena

One-on-one help with your interviews, resume, salary negotiation, or next career move.

Book your strategy call

Sign up for the next networking session

Two hours, live, with a small group. Practice real conversations and leave with scripts you can use the next day.

Save your seat

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