

Big change, small steps: How to switch industries

If you want to work in a different sector, you're not alone. Many of us want to change industries, but it can be hard to know where to begin.

Over a third of New Zealanders (38%) would consider working in a different industry to where they are now, SEEK research reveals.

And there are three key reasons holding us back from making the change – experience or qualifications, money and difficulty.

SEEK's Resident Psychologist Sabina Read shares how to tackle each of these barriers so you can make the career change you're aiming for.

If you're doubting your skills or experience:

"When we're feeling unsure, under-confident or overwhelmed, it's easy to do nothing and practice unhelpful procrastination strategies, all the while hoping things will change," Read says.

While avoiding the issue helps alleviate some discomfort in the short term, it doesn't create the meaningful change you want. "Worry won't bring new options, but tangible small actions will," Read says.

1. **Get informed**

"Learn about what's required to succeed in other industries by checking out the qualifications, skills and experience on job listings that interest you," Read advises. If you're not sure what career pathway interests you, explore these possible career pathways.

2. **Take small steps**

"Work out what steps can you take today, tomorrow and each week to bridge the gap between where you're at now and where you want to be," Read says.

3. **Make connections**

Now is a good time to revisit your resume to work out what skills and knowledge you already have that other industries will value. Short courses and self-directed learning can then help fill gaps in your qualifications or experience.

If money is holding you back:

"Financial considerations are a reality for most of us, however it's useful to ask yourself the cost to your wellbeing and life satisfaction of staying in your current industry or role," Read says. "If this

doesn't feel feasible, what cost-cutting and budgeting adjustments could you implement to ensure the career change will work out?"

1. **Go slowly**

"Gradual exposure to your new career may be the best way to begin," Read says. "Can you explore your future industry as a side hustle while you continue to earn reliable income in your present job?"

2. **Explore all your options**

If you need to save so you can study, draw up a budget and stick to it. You may need to [ask your boss for time off](#) to undertake a short course or investigate whether you are eligible for a scholarship.

3. **Think of the long term**

Your income may initially take a hit if you change sectors but there are ways to [stretch and boost your finances](#) to make sure a career change is financially viable.

If it seems too overwhelming:

Changing sectors requires effort and sometimes it can feel like too big a task but Read advises to reflect on your past successes.

1. **Acknowledge changes you've already made**

"Reflect on the steps it took to get your current role," Read says. "If you've had the gumption, drive and focus to get there before, you'll be able to get there again."

2. **Feel the fear, then focus on the outcome**

Change can be scary. Sometimes our short-term discomfort with change means we just don't act – then we're dissatisfied in the long-term, explains Read. One of the best ways to conquer your fear or reluctance is by having a clear idea of the outcome. Will changing careers give you more fulfillment, more money, more flexibility? By keeping this in mind, it's much easier to start to move towards your goal.

Thinking about changing careers can be overwhelming, but with the right planning and mindset, you'll soon be ready to switch sectors.

And there's plenty you can do make the change more real in the meantime, Read adds.

"Any change is easier and more effective when we act in alignment with the new identity we want," she says. "So, for an industry change, it can be powerful to ask yourself what you would do in your new role. For example, How would an [Architect] think and act today? What would they prioritise, learn, read, explore and talk about? Who would they spend time with and where?"

“When we start to think and act in ways that we associate with our next career move, we tend to edge closer to the goal in practical and achievable steps. And that not only gets us closer to making the change – it can also be rewarding in itself, too.”

*Independent research conducted by Nature of behalf of SEEK, interviewing 4000 Kiwis annually.
Published February 2023.*

Read more:

- [6 tips for starting a new career from scratch](#)
- [3 of the best templates for making a career change](#)
- [Considering a new job? Use this checklist to prepare](#)