

MILITARY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT JOURNAL™

MSEJ

July 2016

DUTY CALLS-WE DELIVER

Created by CASY and MSCCN



US Government Work

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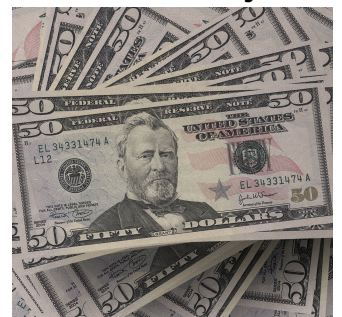
Ask the Expert:
Career Transition
Plan



Online Learning:
Free Skills for Future
Jobs



What Free Costs:
Why We Need
Your Story

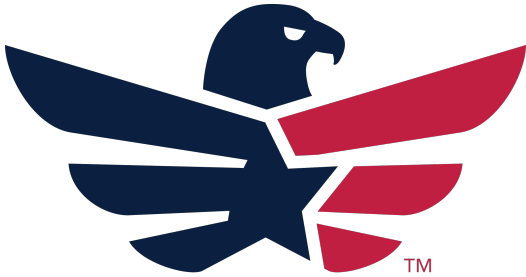


OVER 3,593 APPLICANTS HIRED IN 2016 AND COUNTING!

In the Spotlight

RESOURCES YOU CAN USE.

It's summer!



**TEAM
RWB**

Join your local **Team RWB** to connect with others in your community and participate in their social, physical, or volunteer activities. Visit www.teamrwb.org to learn more.

Team RWB's mission is to enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity.

PCSing with Children?

Sesame Workshop provides a variety of resources to help Military Families during PCS, including "The Big Moving Adventure" App.

Visit www.sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org to access information, play games, and download activities for your kids.



The **Military Child Education Coalition** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused exclusively on the well-being and needs of America's four million military and veteran-connected children, specifically in the areas of academic opportunity and excellence, school transition support, and developmental needs. Our goal is to ensure that every child grows and thrives through good and challenging times in order to be college, workplace, and ultimately, life-ready. Learn more at www.Militarychild.org.

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About CASY & MSCCN

CASY & MSCCN are two nonprofit organizations serving the employment needs of military affiliates.

CASY serves military members and Veterans; MSCCN focuses on military dependents and military caregivers. We are military serving military.

About the MSEJ

The Military Service Employment Journal is a resource guide for military-affiliated jobseekers. The MSEJ is produced for the exclusive use of CASY & MSCCN.

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MSEJ



Training



Employment Services



News and Events





How You Can Help the Military Community

What "Free" Costs

By: Erin Voirol

At CASY & MSCCN, we pride ourselves on providing our services to the military and Veteran community for FREE. But that doesn't mean our services don't have a monetary value. They do, but, because of generous funding and support from our donors and partners, we are able to erase the price tag from our services for our job seekers.

That's how we want to keep it, of course, but it's important that job seekers understand what free services cost and the value of what they are getting. ***And it's equally important that job seekers understand how to help us keep those services free for others in the military and Veteran community.***

So, here's some real-world information on what our services might cost you if you bought them in the private sector:

Resume Writing: A resume package would cost you anywhere from \$100 to \$500, and federal resumes often only START at \$500. If you are looking for executive level work, there's a good chance that \$500 is the minimum you would pay.



I want to be clear—we don't write your resume for you, but we teach you how to write a better resume and we help you edit and update it so that it's targeted to the jobs you want to pursue. With resume writing services, you pay for a resume; they don't share their trade secrets with you. CASY & MSCCN ensure you understand how to write the resume. You know, teach a man to write a resume, and he'll eat for a lifetime.

Career Coaching: Our employment specialists often mentor and coach our applicants as they decide what to do next, what they want, and what they need to support their families. A career coach comes with a hefty price tag; estimates put their charges at \$175- \$200 per hour long session.

Cheerleading: Ok, professional cheerleader pay is quite low in the NFL. \$50-100 a game. Still, one of the traits our successful job applicants regularly commend in our team is how encouraging, inspiring, and just in their corner we are.

But here's the catch—it's only free because our donors have made it so. Do you think it should be FREE for the next Veteran or military spouse who comes along?

Recruiter Connect™ (Headhunter services): A percentage of your salary. So, this one is a little trickier. Unless you are a top-tier executive, you are not going to hire a headhunter, and most companies hire their own recruiters. Staffing companies tend to charge the hiring company a percentage of your salary. So, if the company is paying hiring costs, that's money going into the cost of hiring you, but not going into your salary.



And I want to be clear—the average staffing company is working for the employer. CASY & MSCCN are working for the applicant and the employer to make sure that opportunities are mutually beneficial.

Training and Certification: This varies depending on what resources you are using. Our IBM i2 Analyst Training and Certification is worth about \$5,000.

So, let's say you only need one phone call with an Employment Specialist and a quick edit of your resume. CASY & MSCCN have provided you at least \$275 in free services. **That's a pretty good deal for free.**

COST OF SERVICES AT CASY & MSCCN:

FREE

But we need YOUR SUCCESS STORY.

But here's the catch—it's only free because our donors have made it

so. Do you think it should be FREE for the next Veteran or military spouse who comes along?

If you do, and I really hope you do (because we are in this together), then we need your help to keep these services FREE for those who have served their country.

When you land that job, tell us your success story. Success stories provide the knowledge that keeps CASY & MSCCN free for our applicants. Donors and supporters need to see their impact. You can help in just five minutes. Please, tell your story, and keep CASY & MS free for the military community.



From Army Fatigues to FedEx: Bobbi Wells on Opening the Door

By: Emilie Duck

In the Army, Captain Bobbi Wells commanded a supply company responsible for refueling the 3rd Armored Division in central Germany. She loved her work, because it pushed her to move beyond her comfort zone to places she never would have imagined—like jumping out of a perfectly good airplane. As she planned to transition, however, she wondered if she could find an opportunity that would push her just as hard, challenging her notion of what is possible.

Wells found that the answer was "yes" when she took a position with FedEx, where she is now the **Vice President, Safety & Airworthiness, Air Operations**. This role draws on many of the skills she learned in the Army, as well as those she learned from her father, who pushed her to never give herself too many boundaries. As she guides the global Safety & Airworthiness team, Wells sees her place as a part of a larger history of women working in aviation. Though it hasn't always been the easiest path, it's been rewarding and worthwhile; she, like so many before her, just had to "invite [herself] in the door." We were honored and delighted when she offered to share lessons and wisdom she's learned along that journey.

CASY & MSCCN: What led you to FedEx? Where do you see the most similarities and differences in your work in the Army and your work for FedEx?

Bobbi Wells: I participated in a program called ***Training with Industry*** and was assigned to FedEx for a year. I was very fortunate because FedEx was my first choice among the companies participating in the program at the time. I spent a year with the company and loved the way FedEx took care of its people, its passion for service and the high integrity of everyone I met. ***It was the first time I thought I could be part of an organization outside of the Army. I didn't know I would find the same values in a corporation we enjoyed in the service. That was very important to me.***



There are many similarities between the Army and FedEx, at least on the important things. Obviously, FedEx is focused on profit, but that's always on the premise of taking care of our people, ensuring our customers are 100 percent satisfied, with safety as our foundation. ***The brotherhood and fellowship in the Army is unique, but we have a strong feeling of family in every organization I've been in at FedEx. I've been lucky to have the best of both worlds.***

"I truly believe women can do anything. As Henry Ford said, 'whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right.' We all have to believe we can."



Bobbi Wells, Vice President, Safety & Airworthiness, Air Operations

CASY & MSCCN: You believe that it is important for women to invite themselves in the door and see themselves as assets to a team or a position. Many of our readers at MSEJ are female veterans or spouses who are looking for work. What advice do you have for them about how to best invite themselves in?

I sometimes hear women focus on the elements at work that leave them feeling excluded or put at a disadvantage. Everyone, regardless of their situation, has battles to fight. I don't see that as exclusive to any group. However, we can all take advantage of our uniqueness to add value. Every employer wants to hire problem solvers. We all have that ability and bring distinctive strengths to what we do. We should all focus on our strengths – that's how we add value. It's what makes us each special and our organizations stronger. I've always worked in male-dominated fields, and while I know I'm not one of the guys, that doesn't mean I'm not one of the team.

I truly believe women can do anything. As Henry Ford said, "whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right." We all have to believe we can.

(article continued on page 9)

VETERAN

Success



"Since November 2015, CASY has supported me in my job search. Thanks to CASY tools and coaching services, I found a meaningful career working in Sales and Marketing Industry. Thanks Jenna Weakly for all that you do."

Congratulations, Artis!

Working with a CASY Employment Specialist, Artis found work in the Sales and Marketing Industry.

Sign up at www.casy.msccn.org to receive assistance from one of our dedicated Employment Specialists, access to training, and opportunities to connect with employers who want to hire Veterans.

The Call of Duty Endowment Identifies CASY as

BEST IN CLASS

for Veteran Job Placement



CASY & MSCCN: If you could give current military members advice about growth, transition, and work after the military, what would you say?

Wells: Find a place where you feel at home. Make no mistake, we don't work for free; but if you don't enjoy what you do, in a place you love, then no amount of money will make you happy. Military people are some of the most adaptive people in the world. They have to be. Use that to your advantage. Use your skills at planning and executing the mission to contribute to your company. Your leadership and sense of responsibility will set you apart. Finally, no one understands selfless service like veterans and their families. It's why they do what they do. Teamwork is highly prized in the civilian sector. Make that the mark you leave everywhere you go.

CASY & MSCCN: In our conversations, your father seems like a strong figure and has clearly been an influence on the person you've become. Are there any specific moments when you can recall his influence on you and the great advice you've given?

Wells: Dad was one of the most generous and supportive men I've ever met. He was tough, but was also incredibly kind and

thoughtful. There are two things that he said to me that shaped my concept of the world. First, he never told me I couldn't do something because I was a girl. He had very high expectations of me because he believed I could meet them. He used to tell me I wasn't learning unless I was falling down. I chose the path I'm on because I didn't believe being a girl was a limitation. The second lesson came from a time we were up at the lake water skiing. Some of the boys from school showed up and asked Dad if he would pull them skiing. We were at the age where boys were terrible teases and they'd been picking on me at school. I didn't want him to take them because they'd been so mean and I told him they were bad kids. Dad turned to me and said, "of course I'm going to take them. There's no such thing as a bad kid." It was a great lesson in the value in each and every person. I had this wonderful father who made time for everyone. It was never up to me to decide whether to share him.

Much of my perspective comes from my Dad's belief in the goodness in people.



Bobbi Wells leading her team at FedEx

**Want to learn about opportunities for Veterans at FedEx?
Visit: <http://careers.van.fedex.com/career-programs/>**



WANT TO WRITE?

MSEJ WRITERS GUILD

Contact Jamie to learn more.

The MSEJ Writers Guild provides military affiliates with experience and training in writing and publishing as well as an outlet through which to publish their work. The Writers Guild achieves this mission through training, mentorship, and participation in the publication of the MSEJ.

Writers Guild participants will gain knowledge of nonprofit publishing, work on their writing skills and style, and may publish their work in a national, monthly publication. Participants who successfully complete the program may be asked to serve as volunteer writers for the MSEJ.

**VISIT
MILITARY
RECONNECT**



To learn how to save for and fund your next great adventure



HOT JOBS
for military spouses, caregivers, & dependents



HOT JOBS are updated weekly.



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www.casy.us | www.msccn.org



ASK THE EXPERT

Have Questions? email us:
askus@msccn.org

By Amy Rossi

***Q: I have been doing X career for 10 years now I want to do Y career?
How do I make the change?***

A: If your career move were an equation, it would look a little like this...

$$10x - y = z$$

10x = All the skills and experience gained in 10 years of your current career.

y = All the skills you have gained from x that are required for a career in Y.

z = All the remaining qualifications you are missing.



YOU NEED TO CREATE A NEW JOB SEARCH PLAN.

Most job search text books and trainings have you create a plan, based on an assumption that you will follow the same plan and career path for the rest of your life, and most teach you a basic career plan! Unfortunately, real life isn't like math or science... and most of us don't follow the same career plan for the rest of our lives. But our priorities change, or we decide that our initial career choice isn't right. You probably created a job search plan for your first career, but now you have a new goal and need a new job search plan.

Think of your job search plan more like a vacation plan: it changes each year depending on variables like location, money, time, and current likes/needs. Would you use the same vacation plan every year for the rest of your life? No. Just like any other plan, we update our job search plan based on our current goals, needs, and priorities. Only after you have clearly identified your goal can you create a plan to transition into a new career.

In general, there are 4 types of career transitions that you can make. Each one has a different degree of difficulty and will determine how complicated your plan may be.

CAREER SPECIALIST: You are an ER Nurse you want to be a Nurse, but no longer want to work overnight or weekends. This scenario is pretty easy: search for positions at facilities with better hours, or talk to your current supervisor about schedule modification.



CAREER GENERALIST: You are an ER Nurse, and you want to be Nurse Educator and teach at the local college. Again, pretty easy, look for teaching positions and make sure that you include training you have led in your current position.

CAREER SWITCHER: You are an ER Nurse, but you want to be a special education teacher. This is a more complicated scenario: research what the requirements are for teaching in your state and determine how you are going to get them. Once you've earned them, you can more clearly identify your job search goal (districts in which you want to work for instance).

CAREER Multi-Track or Undecided: You are an ER Nurse; you are burned out and dislike it; you will take anything out of the medical field, or you want to be a nurse practitioner, but need more education. This is the most difficult plan, and requires a Gap Analysis, compromise, patience, and a multi-layered career plan.

So, the short answer is, there is not a clear path or answer for your question. It requires research and a job search plan based on how you want to travel to your new career. Usually the fastest methods cost more, and the more variables (or career choices) you include will increase your research time, cost, and overall transition time. Attached is a smart goal job search plan... if you are still having trouble creating a plan work with your employment specialist or attend our job search training.

**S.M.A.R.T.
Goal**

Parameters

Overall Goal: Since I'm separating from the military, I will search for and I will find a new job in four months.

Job Titles: Logistics manager, inventory manager, warehouse manager or supply manager

Industries: Logistics and warehouse **Location:** York, PA

Search Terms/Ideal Situations: I want full-time work, with a company with over 1000 employees and I'm willing to commute 30 miles.

Action Steps	Questions	Answers
Specific:	Who: Who is involved? What: What do I want to accomplish? When: When do I want to accomplish this goal by? Where: Identify a location. Why: Why do I want to accomplish this goal? How: How am I going to do it?	Who: Me What: I will obtain a new, full-time logistics manager job with a company with over 1000 employees. When: In 4 months. Where: In York, PA. I'm willing to commute 30 miles. Why: I'm separating from the military. How: I will search for a new job.
Measurable:	How will I know that I attained my goal? How can I measure progress?	I will have a new job within 4 months. I will create weekly job search schedules.
Attainable:	Do I have the necessary education, knowledge, skills, and abilities to attain this goal? Do I have the necessary resources to attain this goal? Do I have the time to commit to attain this goal?	Yes. Yes. Yes.
Realistic:	Will the goal meet my financial needs and my work preferences and values? Can I break this goal into mini goals to reach it?	Yes. Yes.
Time-Based:	What is the goal deadline date?	Four months.



Volunteer for Your Career

By: Beth Barter

For military spouses, volunteering is often presented as the next best alternative to employment. If you can't get a job due to a number of circumstances that are beyond your control, volunteering is lauded as a way to fill your time and connect to your new community. But what if volunteering could be more than the next best option? When military spouse and Veteran Beth Barter added the title "MSCCN volunteer" to her career path, she found out just how professionally rewarding volunteering could be.

When we PCSed to Wyoming, I didn't set out to be a volunteer. I had over six years of experience in Instructional Design and I wanted to be able to use those skills. My situation, however, seemed to have other plans. There were no jobs in the area that fit my Instructional Design credentials, and my options felt limited. Commuting 40 miles south to Fort Collins, Colorado just didn't seem feasible because of the winter storms and winds that the area receives, my husband's deployments, and my other commitments. After looking at my options, I decided to devote myself to my family and volunteering. I started by volunteering at my son's school and helping a non-profit that held annual events for female spouses and military members.



Although I made the decision to focus on my family and volunteering, I still kept looking for ways to move my career forward. Over the course of my research, I came across MSCCN and registered for its job assistance services, never dreaming that I was about to find the volunteering opportunity I needed. Additionally, I also signed up and completed all of the free trainings that MSCCN offered; they were my first introduction to Amy Rossi, who would become my future training supervisor. When I completed my training, the employment specialist I was working with mentioned that MSCCN has a Career Corps Volunteer Program—and that a volunteer training position was available.

Before I agreed to be a volunteer, I researched the program and the position to make sure it would be the right choice. I was already volunteering locally, and wanted to make sure that the position would

add something that my current volunteer work was not: a means to keep my work experiences current and to expand my skills while still being able to dedicate time to my family. MSCCN's Career Corps training position allowed me to do just that.

I have been fortunate to be a volunteer trainer with MSCCN for the past year and a half. My volunteer position with MSCCN has exceeded my expectations; as a trainer, I was provided the opportunity to work with eLearning Articulate Storyline software and have designed courses such as "LinkedIn® 101" and "Plan Your Job Search."



Volunteering with MSCCN gave me the opportunity to become familiar with eLearning Articulate Storyline software, a skill that I will take with me to my next location. As a training volunteer, I also wrote informative articles, providing tips for veterans and military spouses searching for employment, while keeping a flexible, volunteer work schedule I could design around my other commitments.

As a MSCCN Career Corps Volunteer, I was able to maintain my Instructional Design skills while also gaining knowledge and expertise that will help me be competitive when applying for jobs at our next location.

"...the position would add something to my life that my current volunteer work was not: a means to keep my work experiences current and to expand my skills while still being able to dedicate time to my family."

I was also able to gain these skills while working as a part of a larger training team that encouraged and supported me. My supervisor, Amy Rossi, was very welcoming and supportive of my goals. She invested time at the beginning to get to know me and always provided me with resources that I needed, while also allowing me creative control on projects. ***As I look for future work as an Instructional Designer and using my eLearning Instructional Design talents, I know that I will be better prepared not only in terms of my résumé, but also in terms of the work that I will produce.***

Although I did not set out to be a volunteer while we were stationed in Wyoming, I am grateful for the experience. As I refined and furthered my Instructional Design skills with MSCCN, I also learned that volunteering can be more than a way to support an organization that you are passionate about; volunteering can also be a strategic move for a job seeker to apply current skills, develop new talents, and expand her network as well as her professional references. ***Volunteering can be more than the next best option—it can be a catalyst for further developing your career.***

Congratulations to Beth Barter, CASY & MSCCN's Outstanding Volunteer!



A Veteran and military spouse, Beth has volunteered in CASY & MSCCN's training department since November 2014.

During her time at CASY & MSCCN, Beth has been an integral part of the training group. She always provides sound advice, has developed live and self-paced trainings, and is an amazing team player.



LINKEDIN® 101

ARE YOU
LINKEDIN® OR OUT?



Using LinkedIn® to Improve Professional Opportunities



Amy Rossi, Director of Communications & Training, praised Beth's commitment to our military community and CASY & MSCCN, noting that ***"Beth has been an exceptional asset to our organizations and the military community we serve. Her dedication to our mission is equal to that of full-time, paid staff. Not only did Beth excel at the tasks she completed, but she also exceeded our expectations by going the extra mile with every project she worked on."***

Beth will receive a certificate of recognition as well as a small token of our gratitude for her support of our mission.

As Beth finishes her time with CASY & MSCCN, she will be looking for paid training opportunities. Connect with Beth through her LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/norabbarter>.

100%

OF CAREER CORPS
PARTICIPANTS
WHO COMPLETE
THE PROGRAM
FIND
EMPLOYMENT.

JOIN OUR TEAM OF CAREER PROFESSIONALS

- ARE YOU A MOTIVATED PERSON WHO CAN MEET DEADLINES AND WORK VIRTUALLY?
- DO YOU HAVE EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS?
- DO YOU THRIVE IN A FAST-PACED ENVIRONMENT?
- ARE YOU AN OUTGOING AND ACTIVE NETWORKER?
- DO YOU WANT TO BE PART OF A FAST GROWING, MILITARY-FOCUSED NON-PROFIT?
- DO YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR SKILLS FRESH AND GAIN NEW ONES?

VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.MSCCN.ORG/WHOWEARE/CAREERCORPS.HTML](https://www.msccn.org/whoweare/careercorps.html)

S P O U S E S U C C E S S

"Action is the foundational key to all success."
~Pablo Picasso

Congratulations, Kim!

After working with one of our newest Employment Specialists, Kim was hired by her local military hospital!

Here's what Kim had to say about her experience with MSCCN, "I received assistance writing and formatting my resume and preparing for the interview. I learned how to format a resume so that it would stand out and how to include key words as well as interview Dos and Don'ts.

My Employment Specialist was inspiring and always made follow-up contacts."

Need help with your job search? Visit www.msccn.org and sign up for our career assistance services and access to our job board where companies want to hire you!



Thanks to our partners at USAA for supporting our mission and the military and Veteran communities we serve.

CASY & MSCCN Recognized as Businesses of Honor

On June 16, 2016, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch commended CASY & MSCCN for their "generous support of those who have served in our country's Armed Forces."

The Post-Dispatch, with support from Ballpark Village, H.E.R.O.E.S. Care, Daugherty Business Solutions, and the St. Louis Business Alliance for the Troops, highlights businesses and nonprofits that support our country's heroes as part of their Stories of Honor Initiative.



Deb Kloeppel, Founder and President, CASY & MSCCN, and Rear Admiral Dan Kloeppel, USN (Ret.) Founder and CEO, CASY & MSCCN, were present to accept the awards on behalf of CASY & MSCCN.



You can learn more about Stories of Honor at <http://upickem.stltoday.com/engine/Welcome.aspx?contestid=197285>.

Refuse to be anything but successful.

Social Media/Work from Home/
Interview Techniques to Land the
Job/Targeting Your Resume for
Maximum Impact /Job Search/
Resume Assessments

CASY & MSCCN offer live and self-paced training.

Make Volunteering Work for You

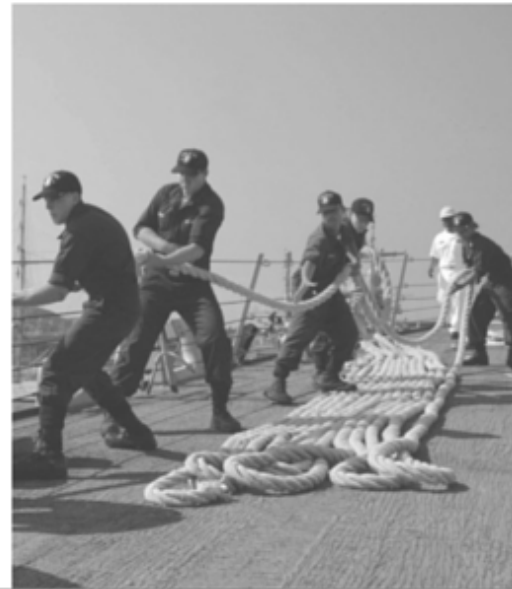
By: Jamie Boyle

As military spouses prepare for their next PCS, they also speculate about the job prospects at their next location. Despite their skills, knowledge, and abilities, they know their options may be limited, and that someone will undoubtedly encourage them to volunteer as an alternative. These casual recommendations to volunteer can be frustrating for spouses who want to work toward their own career goals. While you can expand your skills and learn from any opportunity, all volunteer options aren't created equally. When you're volunteering your time without compensation, it's important that the opportunity is mutually beneficial to you and the organization.

Before you commit to any volunteer position, make sure to define what motivates you. If you are looking for a way to fill your time or to give back to a community, move forward and accept the volunteer position that best fills those desires. ***But if you are looking to leverage a job opportunity or develop professional skills to build your résumé, you need to be selective when considering volunteer positions so that you can negotiate and make sure you are getting what you need out of the opportunity.*** To truly volunteer for your career, make sure you:

-Identify opportunities that align with your career goals. While this recommendation may seem obvious, it's important to seek out opportunities that match what you want to be doing if you hope to turn your volunteerism into a job. I love animals, but being a volunteer dog walker (I've done this) won't give me the





Veterans & Transitioning Military Members

Learn about CASY's Hot Jobs

HOT JOBS are updated weekly.

experience I need to become a project manager. Write down your career goals, and if the opportunity doesn't further them, find something else that will.

-Volunteer in an organization related to the industry you hope to join. If you want to be a veterinarian, you can't volunteer to be one, but you *can* volunteer with an organization that gives you experience in a similar setting while networking to gain contacts in that field.

-Pick up and ask for projects that will allow you to develop the skills you need. Once you are in the right setting, be vocal about what you hope to learn in the volunteer position. Pitch ideas for projects you can complete that will help the organization while also helping you to reach your goals. That's not to say that as a volunteer you won't have to complete tasks that don't directly relate to your goals, but you can build the skills you want by selling them as an asset to your organization.

-Publicize your experience. Have you found a volunteer opportunity that enhances your skillset? Make sure to include it on your resume and in your LinkedIn® profile if you are actively looking for work.

-Know when to move on. If you are TRULY volunteering for professional purposes, then you have to know when it's time to move on. Focus on the volunteer opportunity and do good work, BUT do not let it replace your end goal of finding a job. Revisit your career goals regularly to make sure that you stay focused.

Only you can decide whether volunteering is right for you and why you want to volunteer. If volunteering is part of your career strategy, ensure that your volunteerism will lead to the skills and the job you want.



Free Skills for Future Jobs

By: Jamie Boyle

Thanks to 21st century learning technologies (and 20th century web technologies) education no longer occurs only in the schoolhouse or the library. Now education can happen anywhere at any time, a welcome shift for job seekers in an ever-changing job market. *If you are motivated, do your research, and budget your time wisely, you can learn a variety of skills—and many of them are even free.*

Modern Job Seekers, On the Move: In the past, employees envisioned staying with a company for a lifetime. This vision, however, doesn't ring true in the current job market. According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) study, young baby boomers held over ten jobs by the time they turned 48, far more than their parents. This trend has only expanded; according to BLS's 2014 tenure findings, the average person stays in a position for 4.6 years, with 25-34 years olds' tenure in a position capping at 3 years. This means our skill sets need to be more varied and flexible than before.

With all of these job market changes, there are also new expectations for job seekers. Increasingly, employers are incorporating assessments into the interview process to ensure that applicants have the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to do the job.

So, what do you do if you learn you will have to demonstrate a skill through practical implementation? Identify what you are going to be assessed on, and learn it. QUICKLY.

Free Learning in Practice: After our last PCS, I applied for and interviewed with a government contractor for a technical writer position. The position was related to healthcare, and I was transitioning my career from higher education.

After the initial phone interview, they called to set up the first in-person interview. I asked what to expect, and was glad I did. The HR representative explained, "There will be a panel interview, a writing test, and an Excel activity." That's all they would tell me, despite my prodding.

At that point, I had probably used Excel a handful of times. I knew slightly more than nothing, but had never used a formula, built a chart, or anything more complicated than entering and sorting data.

I was pretty sure that wouldn't cut it. I had two days to learn everything I could about Excel.

So, to Google I went and typed in, "Learn Excel."



Microsoft Office tutorials and Youtube videos became my nightly viewing options. I watched every video I could. I practiced. I got down the basics and a passable knowledge of some of the more complicated features.

When I walked into the interview, I was no Excel ninja, but I knew my way around a function or two—and I was invited back for a second interview.

Free online resources got me through the assessment so that I could sell my more marketable skills in the second interview; but without my research and practice, I wouldn't have made it through the door. I ultimately accepted the position, where I did have to use Excel, but not to the extent that the initial assessment had required.

Where You Should Look: I'm not suggesting you can become an orthopedic surgeon by watching online tutorials. However, depending on your job goals, free online resources can help you learn the skills or knowledge necessary to transition to a new field or make yourself more marketable in your current field.

Want to learn to code? Codecademy offers free courses on SASS, SQL, Java, and other coding topics to help you build a website.

MIT OpenCourseWare provides free courses on a variety of topics.

Salesforce's Trailhead, which we discussed last month, is a great resource if you want to gain familiarity with Salesforce.

Have a love of languages? Try out Duolingo, where you can begin to learn 18 different languages, and test your proficiency knowledge.

Are you a Veteran who is interested in interactive learning and certification without the cost? Check out Coursera, which has a partnership with VEC so that Veterans can take free courses while also gaining credentials.

These free resources, and others like them, have the advantage of allowing you to explore a new subject or career field without investing capital in the unknown. Whether you need to learn a new skill or think you may want to learn one, research the free online sources you can use to gain knowledge. Happy Learning!



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