Explore these in-demand professions

The days of spending an entire career with one company are a thing of the past. According to data published in The Balance: Careers, the average professional switches jobs 10 to 15 times in his or her lifetime, while the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the average employee tenure in 2016 was 4.2 years.

Understanding which fields have a high rate of growth can ensure men and women make smart choices when switching jobs. The following are the top-rated careers, based on data from the BLS, U.S. News & World Report and Glassdoor.

- Mathematician: Mathematicians earn an average salary of $106,000 per year. Mathematicians use statistical theories to help companies in various industries make informed decisions.
- Marketing manager: Marketing managers guide how a particular company or industry presents itself. They also analyze how campaigns and efforts have succeeded or failed to improve market share. A marketing manager earns an average of $85,000.
- Actuary: These individuals employ mathematics and economics to help corporations predict and manage risk in their organizations. The field is expected to increase by 22.5 percent by 2026. Actuaries earn a median salary of $101,000.
- DevOps Engineer: Thanks to the ubiquity of digital technology, professionals who can work with software developers and system operators to oversee code and IT infrastructure are in high demand. These workers can earn $106,000 a year.
- Nurse anesthetist: Several different careers in the medical field are booming, and nurse anesthetist is one of them. These medical professionals administer anesthesia to patients undergoing surgery and monitor vital signs to maintain patient safety. An average salary of $160,000 can entice registered nurses to go through the extra schooling to become anesthetists.
- UX designer: A UX designer is a graphic designer, interior designer or architect who helps improve the usability, accessibility and enjoyment of tangible and digital products based on user experiences. Salaries vary depending upon the specific niche, but can average $90,000 annually.
- Physical therapist: These health care workers earn an average of $85,000 and help people decrease physical pain and improve mobility through rehabilitative exercises.

When considering changing careers, people may want to consider various professions that are currently booming.
Graduation is an exciting time in the lives of students. After years in the classroom preparing for life after school, graduation marks a time when students are finally ready to enter the “real world” and land their first professional job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics advises that earning a college degree can greatly improve a person’s chance of landing a job. The more education a person receives, the lower his or her prospects of being unemployed become. The BLS said that, as of 2014, individuals with a bachelor’s degree could earn on average $1,101 per week, compared to $668 for persons with high school diplomas. Those with bachelor’s degrees had a 3.5 percent unemployment rate compared to 6 percent for those with only high school diplomas.

The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that roughly two million students earn bachelor’s degrees each year. Many others will go on to earn master’s or doctorates before entering the workforce.

As the economy continues to improve, job prospects follow suit. According to a job outlook from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, employers had plans to hire 8.3 percent more new college graduates in 2015 than in 2014. The growth of businesses and the rising rate of retiring Baby Boomers has spurred employment prospects.

Landing a job post-graduation requires diligence on the part of new grads, and the following are a handful of ways to make those pursuits more successful.

- Hit the ground running. It’s tempting for recent grads to take the summer off and have a lax approach to job hunting after all of the hard work they put into their education. But recent grads can get a head start on their competition by beginning their searches immediately after earning their degrees. Create a list of a few target companies you have your eye on, and then tap into your network to find a contact at each company and reach out to that contact directly.

- Focus on a career path. Prospective employers prefer that applicants have some certainty regarding the types of jobs they are looking for. Take a career assessment test or work with a career counselor to narrow down the fields and positions that speak to you. Avoid the “I’m willing to do or learn anything” approach to job applications. Employers may see that as desperation.

- Don’t rely entirely on the Internet. Oftentimes, landing a good job requires reaching out to people in person. In a MonsterCollege survey, 78 percent of job-seekers said networking was a factor in their job searches. Standing out from the crowd may involve physically standing out. Attend conferences or speeches from people who work at the companies you’re investigating. Don’t be afraid to shake some hands and introduce yourself to others.

The next step for many after graduation is to find a job that fits with graduates’ career goals.
How to ace job interviews when switching careers

Millions of people change careers every year. Whereas professionals may have once worked for the same company for the majority, if not the entirety, of their careers, nowadays it’s not uncommon for men and women to change jobs several times before reaching retirement. Changing jobs and changing careers are not necessarily the same thing. Professionals mulling a career change will have to consider a host of factors that men and women looking to change jobs may never have to contemplate. Such factors may include returning to school and lifestyle changes designed to make living on less income more feasible. Professionals changing careers may also need to develop a strategy for handling job interviews. When changing jobs as opposed to careers, professionals can draw attention to their resumes, essentially letting their experience speak for itself. But while experience is often a feather in a job candidate’s cap, professionals changing careers may need to focus more on their futures than their pasts when interviewing for a new career.

• Showcase how you have adapted in the past. Much of the business world moves at a breakneck pace. That pace has become even faster thanks to advancements in technology that routinely affect how businesses operate. Even if you have never before changed careers, that does not mean you have not adapted to change. Make a list of the changes your employers have instituted throughout your career, highlighting how you adapted to those changes and benefited from them in their aftermath.

• Remain positive throughout the interview. Even if you are changing careers because you’re unhappy and/or unfulfilled in your present line of work, avoid badmouthing that industry and your past employers. Doing so will only reflect negatively on you and raise a red flag with prospective employers. Instead, explain your reasons for pursuing a new career path in terms that excite potential employers about your candidate. The decision to change careers can induce both excitement and anxiety. Maintaining a positive attitude and employing various strategies when interviewing with prospective employers can help make the transition to a new career go smoothly.
Many a night’s sleep has been lost worrying about an upcoming job interview. Questions like “Will I make a good impression?” or “Am I qualified for the job?” can make for a restless night’s sleep on the eve before a job interview. Writing a resume is another aspect of the job hunt that can stoke your nerves. Men and women may pour over job timelines and skill summaries for hours in an effort to ensure they have included the right mix of information to get noticed. Though resume writing has changed considerably over the years, some conventional wisdom about resumes still prevails, and how closely potential applicants adhere to these rules goes a long way toward determining if they earn a chance at an interview.

• Me, myself and I: While the resume should showcase your professional accomplishments, it also should showcase how your skills relate to the job you’re applying for. This way the company understands you have researched the position and are in tune with what they’re looking for in an applicant.

• One document for all responses: A resume is not a static document. It needs to change depending on the job you’re applying to. Although there will be certain information that can remain the same, update the skills and other information based on each position.

• One page is best: Applicants were long told to keep their resumes concise, limiting the document to just one page. However, if your experience is extensive or one page cannot contain a long job history, don’t be afraid to submit a two-page resume.

• Failing to be selective: You need not include your entire job history on a resume, especially if certain past positions you have held are completely irrelevant to the position for which you are applying. Don’t be afraid of job gaps, either. Many of today’s recruiters understand that the changing economy can make it challenging to maintain steady employment.

• Overembellishment: Do not embellish your skills. Always be open and honest on your resume. You may be asked to prove you can perform certain tasks, and if you cannot back up what is included on a resume, you will have wasted your time and the time the interviewer spent discussing his company’s opening with you.

• Imperfections: A resume is a reflection of you, so one with typographical errors or a poor layout is never acceptable. Ensure your resume is as professional and error-free as possible. Have a friend or a proofreader look it over before distributing.

• Paid positions: Internships or volunteer work are perfectly acceptable to include on a resume, particularly for younger applicants who may not have a wealth of professional experience. Include a mix of information on the resume that will reflect your versatility.
Individuals change jobs for many reasons, including greater professional satisfaction, money or a change of location. The financial experts at The Balance say that people change jobs more frequently than many people may think, noting today’s average worker changes jobs 12 times during his or her career. It is not uncommon for workers to change careers several times in a lifetime. The notion that the job a person starts out in directly after graduation is the one that he or she will have for the rest of his or her life or at the very least, several years is no longer the norm. Many younger workers migrate between jobs for greater compensation and fulfillment. Older workers, too, are faced with career stagnation.

A survey from the University of Phoenix School of Business found 59 percent of working adults say they’re interested in taking the leap of a midlife career change. Once the idea for a career change has been planted in a person’s mind, he or she may be anxious to jump right in. However, career coaches and other experts say that it is better to take the transition slowly and confirm that changing careers is truly the path to take. Finding the right time for the transition is equally important. These steps can help professionals as they decide if the time is right to change careers.

1. Research the job market. Look into the industries for the field you are considering. Is it the right time for success in this field? Industries tend to ebb and flow. Do not leave a job only to find the next career has few, if any, openings. Job growth projections are available through resources like the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

2. Assess your likes and dislikes. Another area of consideration is what you like to do. Leaving a job may be based around finding a career that caters to your interests. Make a list of the types of careers you find appealing. To get help, take a career assessment quiz online.

   • Don’t choose a career based on salary alone. Monster.com says that being financially strategic when choosing a new career is important, but shouldn’t be the only factor. Your personal values, experience and other factors such as family should weigh heavily into your decision as well.

3. Use your network. The notion that “it’s not what you know, but who you know” has some truth to it. Successful job-seekers continually expand their professional contacts. This is achieved by going to informational interviews, attending trade association meetings and reviewing trade publications. Target people who work at the companies where you see yourself, so you can get the inside track about job openings.

4. Get new skills. Learn which skills you have that are transferrable to a new career and which ones you may need to acquire. Take a course or two or sign up for training seminars. Don’t immediately assume you need to return to school before investigating other, less costly avenues. Changing jobs and careers takes effort, but the results can be worth it in the long run.
Women had another successful year in 2015. According to the Fortune 500 list, 2015 tied the record set for the highest number of female CEOs in America’s largest companies by revenue. Twenty-four women, including Mary Barra of General Motors, Meg Whitman of Hewlett-Packard and Ginny Rometty of IBM, made the list. Although women make up 45 percent of the labor force and only 5 percent head Fortune 500 companies, women are making greater strides than ever before. For example, in 1998, just one woman led a Fortune 500 company, according to Pew Research Center. Certain traits could help propel successful women to the top. Here’s a look at some of the ways female professionals can overcome professional hurdles and make their mark.

• Be passionate about what you do. Women who maintain passion about their careers are more likely to overcome any challenges and stand out in the workplace. If your profession is not stoking any passion, explore alternate career opportunities. Recognize your strengths. Today’s professionals are less likely than their predecessors to stick with one company or line of work for their entire working lives. But just because you change jobs or career paths does not mean your past experience is useless. Successful women know what they do best, whether it’s public speaking, writing or making sales pitches. Apply those strengths when looking for a new job or career.

• Know when to ask for help. Even the most accomplished women have limitations. Asking for help when you need it can help you overcome those limitations. To be good at what you do, you first have to learn from others. Sometimes the smartest way to overcome an obstacle is having several hands on deck to provide a boost. Thinking that the work is better left to you alone could be a mistake. Enlist help when you need it and never hesitate to ask for another perspective.

• Make time for exercise. A sluggish body can make for a sluggish mind. Successful people need to be sharp, and exercise can help them maintain their mental focus. According to John J. Ratey, Ph.D., a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, muscles send hormones rushing to the brain where they mix with a substance called brain-derived neurotrophic factor, or BDNF. BDNF plays a role in brain cell growth and learning. Without it, brains can’t absorb new information or grow and learn. Exercise also helps relieve stress, which can make resolutions easier to see and make tasks less overwhelming.

• Go easy on yourself. While many successful people strive for perfection, achieving perfection is unlikely, if not impossible. Successful people often admit to being their own worst critics, but don’t beat yourself up if you endure some trial and error. Mistakes can be a great teacher, so use any you make to your advantage.

• Don’t be afraid to take risks. Successful women are not afraid to take risks. Many may have decided they don’t fit a specific mold and want to affect change. However, calculated risks are different from reckless decisions, and it is important to recognize the difference. A calculated risk may involve starting your own business after learning the ropes in a specific field and testing the waters. Reckless behavior would be opening that business with no relevant experience.

Take a cue from successful women
Though the job market for newly minted college graduates has proven less than ideal in recent years, members of the class of 2014 entered a job market that was on the rebound. According to the “Job Outlook 2014” survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, employers anticipated hiring nearly 8 percent more 2014 graduates for their domestic operations than they hired from the class of 2013. That’s good news for new grads, but members of the class of 2014 should still expect a competitive job market in which companies can afford to be patient as they attempt to find the best possible candidate for each opening. Oftentimes the best candidate, especially for entry-level positions, is the one who combines some experience with a willingness to learn and do whatever it takes to help a company succeed. Many candidates boast such experience and enthusiasm, but there are some additional steps new graduates can take to improve their chances of landing their first jobs out of college.

• Gain some relevant experience. While college is the best time to gain some experience that’s relevant to your field, that does not mean you can’t still earn an internship now that you have donned your cap and gown and received your diploma. Many businesses look to recent graduates to fill their internships, as recent grads have years of study under their belts and, because they are no longer enrolled in classes, more flexibility than current students. If the job market in your chosen field is tepid, start looking for internships. These can be a great way to start making some professional contacts, and many people find themselves ultimately working full-time for the company where they first landed an internship.

• Establish an online presence. Another way for recent graduates to get noticed is to establish a positive online presence. Something as simple as creating a profile on the professional networking site LinkedIn can help recent graduates get noticed by prospective employers. Even if you have little or no relevant professional experience, create a profile that includes your education history, interests, accolades or awards you earned while in school and even a brief summary of your career goals. Another way to establish an online presence is to begin a blog. The blog should not be used as a tool to discuss your personal life, but rather to express your thoughts on topics relevant to the career you hope to pursue. Demonstrating an understanding or even just a passion for the industry can be a great way to show prospective employers that you are looking for a career and not just a job.

• Join a professional organization. Other options to network and improve your chances of landing your first job can be attained by joining a professional organization. Many such organizations welcome new members, even those with relatively little or even no professional experience. Your university may even sponsor such an organization and host regularly scheduled forums relevant to your industry. Such forums often feature lectures or talk sessions with already established professionals who can provide advice on landing a first job or internship or furnish grads with industry contacts who might offer similar help. Memberships in such organizations is often free or inexpensive, so take advantage of this opportunity if it presents itself.

• Use the resources at your disposal. Many college graduates are unaware that they have valuable resources at their disposal that can greatly increase their chances of securing a job out of college. The career services office at the university is an invaluable resource that is plugged into the business community in its town or city. Such an office can connect you with fellow alumni, many of whom want to help their fellow graduates establish their careers. A career services office also can help new graduates fine tune their resumes and cover letters so they have a greater chance of landing a job. Parents also might be a great resource in your job hunt. Your parents may have a career’s worth of professional contacts who might be able to help you land a job. Don’t be hesitant to ask your parents for help. Getting a first job out of college is rarely easy, but there are some strategies that motivated grads can employ to greatly increase their chances of finding a job and starting their careers.
People with multiple hobbies recognize there are many great ways to spend one’s time. But even people with plenty of ways to pass their time may find themselves wasting time each day, a phenomenon that seems to be growing. In its 2014 “Wasting Time at Work” survey, Salary.com found that 89 percent of participants acknowledged wasting time at work each day. That marked a sharp increase from a year prior, when 69 percent of workers surveyed reported wasting time at work. Thirty-one percent of workers surveyed admitted wasting roughly 30 minutes per day, while another 31 percent estimated they waste four or more hours, or at least half a typically eight-hour workday, at work each day. Perhaps the most surprising finding from the survey was that 4 percent of participants admitted they waste four or more hours, or at least half a typically eight-hour workday, at work each day. Some people might be wasting time out of sheer boredom, but many may be able to trace all those squandered minutes and hours to inefficiency. For those who count themselves among the latter group, the following tips may help them become more efficient and stop wasting so much time.

1. Make better use of your commute. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the average worker spent 26 minutes traveling to work each day. Some people might be wasting time out of sheer boredom, but many may be able to trace all those squandered minutes and hours to inefficiency. For those who count themselves among the latter group, the following tips may help them become more efficient and stop wasting so much time.

2. Stop multitasking. Information is now seemingly always at our fingertips thanks to mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. While these devices can theoretically allow workers to become more productive, research suggests otherwise. Professor, researcher and author Gloria Mark with the University of California, Irvine says that activity switching and being frequently interrupted, including self-interruptions like checking social media and email, can lead people to develop short attention spans. That inability to focus for extended periods of time can adversely affect efficiency.

3. Embrace scheduling. Schedules can help professionals in much the same way that grocery lists help consumers at the grocery store. When visiting a grocery store without a shopping list, shoppers are bound to forget items, necessitating follow-up visits to the store, and waste time wondering what they need. Without schedules in an office environment, workers may allow time to idle away because there are no deadlines motivating them to complete projects. Taking steps to be more efficient at work can allow businesses and their employees to thrive while ensuring as little time as possible is wasted.

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Deciding to leave a job is seldom an easy decision. However, it’s a more common decision than many people may know, as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the average worker holds 10 different jobs before age 40. People change jobs for a variety of reasons. Some do so because of better opportunities elsewhere, while others simply need a change. Regardless of what’s motivating a job change, leaving a place of employment can elicit various emotions, including some that may contribute to negative thoughts about a current employer. But it’s always best to leave a job gracefully, which can pay dividends down the road. The following are seven strategies people can employ as they leave their jobs to ensure those exits go as smoothly as possible.

1. Watch out for social media. It’s best to keep resignation plans to yourself and off of social media. You never know who is reading your posts, and bad-mouthing a soon-to-be-former employer can lead to hurt feelings and poor references. Resist the urge to rant about what’s making you unhappy at work or brag about a new position to your social network.

2. Play by the rules. Your employer may have a plan in place for how the company prefers resignations to be handled. The standard two to three-week’s notice is a guideline. Visit with human resources if you need more information, such as whether or not a resignation letter or other documentation is required.

3. Speak with your manager first. It’s respectful for your immediate manager or supervisor to learn of your departure first. This gives him or her ample time to put a plan in place to fill your position. The more notice you can give, the more goodwill you’re building on your way out the door. Schedule a meeting for this purpose; do not make it an informal chat by the water cooler. Resist the urge to quit via email or text. Resigning requires face-to-face communication. Present a concise letter of resignation as well. Don’t call out colleagues or air your grievances in the letter.

4. Announce your departure. Work collectively with your manager and other higher-ups to decide how to best handle the announcement to other employees.

5. Train your replacement and prepare final assignments. Volunteer to train or assist with getting your replacement set up. If you have any outstanding projects or documents, be sure to tie up any loose ends before leaving. Leave behind instructions or a guidebook if you think it will help your replacement perform their duties more effectively.

6. Keep the momentum. It can be tempting to phone it in as you near departure day, but this is inadvisable. Do your job to the best of your ability up until you say your goodbyes.

7. Pack on your own time. Cause as little disruption as possible by packing belongings before or after office hours. Respect the working environment, recognizing that your coworkers still need to get their jobs done. Quitting a job can be full of mixed emotions. Just be sure to time it correctly and leave in as positive a way as possible to maintain a strong professional network.
Finding work after 50

Unemployment isn’t easy for anyone, regardless of their age. But unemployed men and women over 50 may find it especially difficult to find work. Whether it’s a byproduct of age-related discrimination or any of a host of additional variables, jobless older workers often struggle to find work. In a 2016 analysis of government figures, the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis at the New School estimated that the jobless rate for workers 55 and older in August of 2016, six years after the Great Recession, was nearly 9 percent. At the time, the national jobless rate hovered around 5 percent. Unemployed men and women over 50 who are struggling to find work can consider the following strategies as they look to rejoin the workforce.

・ Revisit your resume. Unemployed men and women over 50 have no doubt updated their resumes to reflect their most recent professional experience. But they may need to trim some of the fat in regard to their work life 10 or more years ago. Today’s hiring managers may only be concerned with recent experience that illustrates skillsets that are relevant to today’s jobs. Men and women over 50 may consider their experience from 20 years ago invaluable, but if that experience does not meet the specific needs of the jobs they’re now seeking, then they should remove it from their resumes so hiring managers can quickly access the more relevant information from their work histories.

・ Embrace 21st century job hunting. Finding a job in the second decade of the 21st century is unlike job hunting in decades prior, and wholly different from how men and women over 50 looked for jobs upon beginning their professional lives. Networking can mean the difference between unemployment and landing a job. Go to job fairs attended by hiring managers and join professional organizations that host events where professionals in your field can gather.

・ Turn your age into a positive. Men and women over 50 should accept the likelihood that their new managers and/or hiring managers will be younger than them. When interviewing for a job, men and women over 50 should make an effort to showcase their enthusiasm about working with and learning from younger colleagues, while also noting their desire to commit long-term to a company. Some hiring managers may surprise older applicants, viewing them as potentially more reliable than younger workers simply looking to gain some experience in a particular industry before moving on to the next opportunity.

・ Make use of your existing down time. Another strategy unemployed men and women over 50 can try as they look for work is to make better use of their existing downtime. Enrolling in online courses can give prospective employers the impression that applicants over 50 are both tech-savvy and willing to learn new things. Each of those things can help men and women over 50 overcome any unjustified, tech-related stigmas that hiring managers may attach to older job candidates. Finding work after 50 is not always easy, and job seekers may need to adjust their approach before they can get back in the workforce.
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