

Navigating a Career Change

Written by: Rosemarie Nelson | September 30, 2015



When does one think about embarking on a career change? Usually, it happens when someone has moved their *cheese*. In author Spencer Johnson's book, *Who Moved My Cheese?*, he representationally depicts the social world as rats in a maze and personal desires--such as a job, relationships, health, spiritual well-being and the intrinsic yearnings of life--as cheese. Each of us has our own cheese, and for the purpose of this blog, cheese is one's career. Most of us try to find roles within an organization that we believe will make us happy. When we get a job, we tend to become attached to it. It is only when we lose or leave a job--through downsizing, performance issues, or because it no longer makes us happy--that we engage in a career change or finding new cheese. Job loss often sparks an internal evaluation of who you are and what you want to do, as well as an external evaluation of why circumstances are no longer operating in the status quo. Thoughts about past job deficiencies run through your mind, such as you were not challenged by the work or you dreaded coming to the office each day. Subconsciously you hear a voice saying, "*There has to be a better way.*" We have all been there at one point or another. Today's business

model dictates for companies that are seeking to remain competitive to engage staff who support change in the global marketplace with open-mindedness. One can hear the “*change is good*” mantra being broadcast. Companies need flexible workers who are not stuck on how things have been done in the past or steadfast in their learned behaviors. The question is, do you want to embrace change and what the future holds in a current or a new firm? Symbolically, would you like to experience some new and tastier cheese? “*Life is no straight and easy corridor along which we travel free and unhampered, but a maze of passages through which we must seek our way, lost and confused, now and again checked in a blind alley. But always, if we have faith, a door will open for us. Not perhaps one that we ourselves would ever have thought of, but one that will ultimately prove good for us.*” wrote celebrated novelist, Archibald Joseph (A.J.) Cronin (July 14, 1896 - January 6, 1981). The key to mentally managing change on your own terms is *preparation*. How else are you going to rise above a large workforce of others who might be looking for their cheese at the same time? Resume rewrites? Industry connections? Head hunters? Back to school? Such twists and turns can be endless and daunting. Looking for instructions on how to read the detailed map or GPS to negotiate the maze can help. As a starting point, it is essential to determine where you are going and where you want to be. Some of us enjoying working in supporting roles or as individual contributors. Others aspire to transition into positions of supervision or management. If you want to elevate your career to the next level, the ***Institute of Certified Professional Managers at James Madison University*** offers two programs--the Foundations of Management (FoM) certificate and the Certified Manager® (CM®) certification—to prepare and qualify you for positions in management or supervision. The FoM certificate offers new managers and supervisors best practices and practical solutions for addressing everyday business challenges. The CM certification offers experienced employees the opportunity to sharpen and validate their interpersonal and leadership skills. Obtaining either designation can help lay a strong foundation for a career in management in any industry. Like embarking on an epicurean adventure with Lankaster cheese, this journey brings ongoing returns on many levels--personal, social and spiritual. When looking at the grand scheme of things, one cannot go wrong by developing their management potential. The new cheese awaits! **Its' as easy as 1-2-3!**

About the Author



Rosemarie Nelson

Rosemarie gained her professional experience by working her way through college with a family, representing private, public and non-profit agencies, crafting policies and procedures to train and develop staff as a legislator, staff member and consultant.