



Finding Your Career Niche

If you're one of the many who have been laid off from your job due to the struggling economy, it can be difficult to look for any kind of silver lining in the very dark clouds. However, this may be an opportunity for you to step back and ask yourself, "What do I really want to do as a career for the rest of my life?" While you're getting back into the **job market**, use this time to assess your career goals and dreams, and decide what steps you need to take to meet them.

Here are some tips to help you get started.

Write it Down

Start by writing down where you want to see yourself in the next five years. Be sure to include the position or department you'd like to be in, and a ballpark for the salary you'd like to be earning. Then, write down the steps you will need to take to achieve these goals - and do it in great detail. Next, go along the list and mark a star by each area you feel you have already achieved or are strong in, and a minus for the areas that you need to concentrate on improving. Then ask yourself "What steps do I need to take to strengthen these areas?"

Making a Change

If your list and goals do not coincide with the path that you're on right now, perhaps now is the time to make that change. Would now be a good time to go back to school? Study for new licensing? Look into a new industry? It can be scary and not always monetarily possible to do all of these things in this economy, so do your homework before you set out on a completely new path. Keep in mind that it may also be necessary to take a less-than-desirable job to pay the bills for now while you decide what to do, and there is nothing wrong with that!

Honesty is the Best Policy

While you're assessing your **career goals**, be sure to be honest with yourself, and with your decisions, so that your choices will enable you to find a career that enables you to provide for your needs, but that also provides you with long-term satisfaction.