

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

JOBS SUMMIT



WorkingNation president Jane Oates offered advice regarding upskilling, job hunting, networking, and more during the WSJ Jobs Summit on March 4.

The Q&A was moderated by the Wall Street Journal's Vanessa Fuhrmans, deputy management bureau chief.

The following answers are directed to specific questions shared in the chat.

Question from Stelios:

What resources are accessible, or what advice can you give, for someone looking to find a mentor in a specific field or otherwise?

Answer:

1) a program where you earned a certificate or degree 2) a trade association 3) public workforce system

Question from Lisa:

What is the company you mentioned for career mapping?

Answer:

EMSI at [economicmodeling.com](https://www.economicmodeling.com)

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Question from Nikita:

I apply for many jobs, but I do not get any calls or any interviews. Why does it happen?

Answer:

You are not alone. You can send a follow-up letter saying that you are still interested and asking for what you could do to improve your competitiveness.

Question from Rupali:

How can you pivot to remote jobs?

Answer:

Post-pandemic, it is likely that remote jobs still will be widely available. Letting an employer know that you have the equipment at your home to do your job could improve your chances of being able to work remotely full- or part-time.

Question from Ashley:

I think the quick scan of my resume keeps working against me—too many different job titles. How do I overcome this and break into a new industry?

Answer:

When changing sectors, you might say “I have these skills, but I am looking to grow in a different sector,” and then say why that sector is attractive to you.

Question from Caryn:

If looking for a job in a new country or city, how do you go about networking?

Answer:

When you move to a new area, figure out where the people are in the industry that you’re interested in. Do they attend U.S. Chamber of Commerce events? Other associations? Do companies have community partners where they volunteer? Are there community events they sponsor? Also think about joining a local civic group.

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Question from Veronica:

How can I handle the fact that English is not my first language and I am still learning it?

Answer:

Go to an organization that needs staff in your native language. Check your local Community College. Also check out nonprofits <https://www.voxyengen.com/> and <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/>.

Question from Steven:

It would be good to get some specific information to help those of us making late-career job transitions. There are many here asking about this and ageism.

Answer:

Ageism is real. Many have removed graduation dates from their resumes. Build on your experiences and skills but concentrate on how those experiences and skills will be valuable to the new employer.

Question from Temple:

Here is an actual requirement in job description from today: "The Project Manager should have 10 to 11 years of overall experience (not beyond)." How do you avoid age discrimination?

Answer:

Eliminate some of your experiences from your resume and just use those that are most relevant.

Question from David:

How do you seek out an internship as a mid-career professional who is looking to pivot industries?

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Answer:

Unfortunately, most internships are for those currently enrolled in a school. While there may be some that accept older workers, the staffing firms offer the closest experience.

Question from Brittany:

Looking to move from nonprofit work to a private sector job. Are there skills that would make me more marketable to recruiters outside of the nonprofit world?

Answer:

Nonprofit skills are totally transferable. You might want to think about corporate social responsibility, or get a credential in marketing, corporate communications, or public relations.

Question from Cristina:

I'm a young professional looking to pivot after four years of auditing to go into a creative/design field. They're so different. Any advice on how to navigate this?

Answer:

You should make sure that there are jobs in the creative design field in your area since the industry is contracting nationwide, but clearly digital design and editing is one area that might provide some opportunity. Boot camps have become a popular intense learning choice. Make sure to ask about financing options and placement rates.

Question from Elvia:

What jobs are considered "jobs of the future?"

Answer:

Digital skills drive through many jobs, but areas like cybersecurity, data analytics, green jobs, and logistics are all growing. This WorkingNation story has some more

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information about growing skills and industries. <https://workingnation.com/these-are-the-jobs-and-skills-that-will-drive-the-recovery/>

Question from Jill:

Is volunteering a good gateway to a job mid-career?

Answer:

Volunteering is a great way to network, learn new skills, and potentially meet people who can help you transition while you are helping others.

Question from Sasha:

Any tips on getting over rejection? It's so hard going through multiple rounds of interviews and then getting an impersonal email rejection.

Answer:

Rejection is a real issue, especially now when job searches are so impersonal and you rarely get feedback. Just remind yourself that the right job is out there.

Question from Tracy:

How can you stand out as a marketing or marketing communications manager in a location that is saturated (Twin Cities area, MN) with many highly-skilled, seasoned applicants?

Answer:

Try building your personal brand through a work-themed blog, using your experiences to inform and educate others while you are building your reputation. If that is not for you, how about helping a local nonprofit improve its communications and collecting data on it to share with other potential employers?

Question from Karen:

What is the best way to highlight soft skills that could enhance what you can offer a company that might hire you?

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Answer:

I think you can demonstrate your soft skills by using a project that you did in a previous job that highlights teamwork and problem-solving.

Question from Robin:

Any suggestions for people who have been in a CEO/President positions and are now looking for their next position after pandemic closure?

Answer:

If you are looking for a new CEO position, I would send your resume to a local search firm or join a CEO organization like the [Women's Business Collaborative](#) to network.

Question from Robin:

For an older person looking for a job, any suggestions as to ways to show you are energetic and ready to add even more value to a company?

Answer:

I think especially for older workers they should talk about how their experience is relevant for the listed job. In terms of energy, perhaps give some examples of what you've done in your community while you have been searching for a job.

Question from Lori:

Once you get the certificate or training, how do you get hired if you don't have the years of experience that they are looking for?

Answer:

Many employers would accept relevant study, especially if it included work-based learning in lieu of formal work experience. Also think about volunteering for a nonprofit in an area related to the job you are looking for (helping with PR, marketing, etc.).

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Question from Anusha:

Will part-time studies help to get you to a new industry? Will it be considered at par with full-time by employers?

Answer:

Look for an employer who will respect your continued education and either help you fund your education or allow you to do some studies as a part of your workday.

Question from Jill:

What tech skills do you need for health care administrations?

Answer:

You can make yourself a stronger candidate for health care administrator by building skills in billing and coding software, electronic records software.

Question from Mary:

Can you name some institutions that offer certifications that are well respected?

Answer:

It's hard to answer institutional questions, but make sure the program is accredited and ask about work-based learning such as internships or apprenticeships.

Question from Jiacheng:

Any advice on how to do networking/cold emails?

Answer:

Cold emails are always hard, but try to make some personal connection, such as "I see we both went to college in Boston," or "We have a common love of the Boys and Girls Clubs."

Question from Nick:

What is the best way to break into a new industry when most/all jobs require some industry experience?

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Answer:

When breaking into a new industry, it is critical to articulate the relevant transferable skills. For instance, "While I have not worked in the insurance industry, I think my customer service skills and my attention to detail would be real assets."

Question from Joanne:

I have not worked in several years, as I was a caretaker. My history is B2B sales. Business development in a now defunct industry. I am 64.

Answer:

B2B skills are transferable. Helping a client identify business operation needs, and solving for those stated needs, is problem-solving at its best. In terms of a pause, you might want to be honest and explain your situation at the 50,000-foot level.

Question from Liyu:

How do I address my 14-year career gap due to raising kids?

Answer:

I think admitting that you chose to stay at home so that you could raise your children, followed by a description of why you are choosing to go back for this job opportunity and how you have prepared for it, is the right way to explain your pause.

Question from Danielle:

What would you recommend to give value to past entrepreneur/self-employed experience?

Answer:

I think entrepreneurial experience is an asset for any job. Customer service, adapting to any business need, and understanding all aspects of a business are all great skills. And you could fill in particulars about the alignment of your business with this job opportunity.

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Question from Weijia:

When trying to switch industries, what's the best way to apply if we might not necessarily have all the industry expertise? Is it better to apply directly online or try and network with someone in that company?

Answer:

I always think networking is more efficient, if it is possible. It gives you inside information that might influence what aspects of your resume to prioritize. If there isn't a clear-cut way to do that then I think learning as much as possible about the company and the job gives you some information to customize your resume and cover letter.