

## Making Industry Changes Effectively

As regional sales manager for a major international beverage company, Kristin figured she was doing quite well. But she had finally come to realize there were no new challenges left to energize her, and she had grown weary of the extensive travel her job required. It seemed like a good time to begin looking for a change.

As she prepared her resume, Kristin made sure it highlighted her sales successes in the beverage industry. She felt certain others would recognize her capability and quickly see how she could use those skills to make an important contribution in another industry.

Kristin sent her resume to recruiters, firmly believing they would help her land another sales job in a different industry. She was crestfallen when nobody called. Even those who had previously tried to recruit her for opportunities with competing beverage companies were strangely silent.

Where did Kristin go wrong, and what should she do differently?

She didn't realize that employers usually believe their industry is unique, even when it isn't. Hence, they might only be willing to consider candidates already in it. They're often unable or unwilling to take the time to understand how skills and experience gained in another industry might relate to theirs. They also might not want to take a risk that a candidate from another industry won't easily adapt.

Since the employer is paying a recruiter a substantial fee to find exactly what they want, recruiters aren't likely to consider executives whose skills and experience fall outside the narrow criteria set by their client.

So you have challenges, but they're not insurmountable. When attempting to change industries, you must find a way to clearly translate your skills and experience from your old industry to a new one. Others must quickly understand how they relate.

How can you do this? First, research your target industries by talking with others who are in positions senior to the one you want, as well as those who have made a similar transition. Use your network to connect with these people. When you meet them, emphasize that you're only conducting research and not looking to press them for a job. Describe your skills and experience and explain how you believe they translate to their industry. Ask if they agree, and solicit their advice.

Use them as a sounding board and ask for suggestions and guidance on how best to explain your skills and experience so others would understand them in the context of your new, targeted industry. Ask for referrals to others whose views also might be helpful. As you continue your

research and refine your message, others will begin to recognize how your skills and experience relate to their industry, and they'll begin to feel comfortable that you just might be the person who can use your prior experience to make some needed changes in their company.

Now go take charge of your career!

*Carl Wellenstein is an employment and career strategist located in Southern California and is the author of [12 Steps to a New Career](#). He helps those in mid-career facilitate career advancement, expedite job changes, and pursue new career destinies. These stories reflect actual experiences, modified to protect the identities of individuals and employers. If you have a question you would like answered, contact Carl at [carl@execglobalnet.com](mailto:carl@execglobalnet.com).*