



Glain Roberts-McCabe

sat down with Roundtable Member, **Susan Hallsworth**, Associate Vice President of Partnership Development and Donor Relations at Kids Help Phone, who shares her perspective on making successful transitions.



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I am considering shifting to a new industry that is very different than my current one. What advice do you have for making a successful transition?

"Change is the Heartbeat of Growth"

Good for you for considering a change. As others have said, "Change is the Heartbeat of Growth". Change can be hard but you can do it! There are several phases to pivoting into a career in another industry: Preparation, Application, and Keep Going.

Preparation

The Preparation phase is really your runway before you start applying to job openings. It comprises a couple of steps – self-assessment and industry assessment and learning. These steps can take as much or as little time as you want, though, I suggest, *the more time you spend self-reflecting and learning the more successful your transition will be*. Assess who you are now, your values, your core competencies, your passions, where you want to be in the future and what will be fulfilling and meaningful to you. Do a self-assessment of your strengths and what you love to do. Identify the skills and experience you have and that you really want to embrace. Then do a deep dive into the industry you are thinking of moving into: Identify how your skills, experience and passions are transferable to this industry, how is the industry evolving and what the future could look like for you.

One of the best ways to identify how to transfer your skills to another industry is talk to others in the industry.

Ask people in your network for introductions to have informational interviews. Then ask each one of these people for an introduction to someone else. Effectively, you are being a professional investigative networker to prepare for the next phase of transition – applying for jobs.

Try to live and breathe the industry. While reading industry publications is a good start, immersing yourself in the industry by joining or volunteering at association events to network and

learn is even better. Grow your personal network by introducing yourself to industry practitioners on LinkedIn. (You may be surprised how generous people are with their insight!) These activities will help you to build your network to draw on for more informational interviews.

“...you may want to consider taking a course to gain accreditation or learn new skills.”

Through your informational interviews, identify what skills and certifications prospective employers are looking for and get to know the industry standards and lingo. Additionally, to help build your qualifications and/or differentiate you from other candidates, you may want to consider taking a course to gain accreditation or learn new skills. Sometimes the courses that are best in class for the industry are not open to non-practitioners. In this case, consider asking someone in your network who has taken the program if you can read their course materials.

Continue to assess yourself and be confident that this is what you want to pursue. As you build your resume to apply for jobs in this field, work to highlight your relevant skills and experience. During some of your networking meetings, you may want to consider asking for feedback on your resume to help you prepare for applications. You may also want to ask about any interview questions that you should be prepared for.

From those industry practitioners you meet with, consider building an informal personal board of advisors. As you network and apply for roles, these people can have an important insight such as background on the hiring manager and what success looks like for the role, knowledge of the organization's culture, etc.

Application

As you apply for jobs in the industry, think about how to demonstrate your transferable skills and experience as well as your knowledge of the sector. Customize your cover letter and

resume to highlight relevant successes and indicate how they are applicable to this opportunity. When you have an in person interview, consider proactively preparing a presentation to demonstrate the thinking that you will bring to the role.

Keep Going

Congratulations! You have successfully secured a role in the new sector. Don't stop your hard work of personal growth! Keep going by pursuing certifications which will help you to continue to learn and succeed in the industry. Invest in memberships and volunteer your time to support the industry and others. Go back to your personal board of advisors and your network to say thank you and share your learnings. These informal team members may be seeking your thoughts soon.



Susan Hallsworth is the Associate Vice President of Partnership Development and Donor Relations at Kids Help Phone. She has been leading Kids Help Phone's corporate development portfolio nationally for close to 5 years.

Susan pivoted her marketing and relationship-building skills to the not-for-profit sector following more than 15 years in the consumer packaged goods and marketing agency world.



Glain Roberts-McCabe is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.