

Career mover

As in, move on—from the industry that's not working for you anymore (or maybe no one's working for *it* anymore). Here's how to start carving out a new job path, whether you're a number cruncher, wordsmith or people person. Illustrations by **Jérôme Mireault**

You used to work in ...

FINANCE

By Celia Shatzman

YOUR NEW GIG ACCOUNTING ADVISER FOR AN ECO BUSINESS

WHY You know how to make tough decisions, you can build solid business plans, and you already have all the basic accounting skills.

HOW TO GET IT:

- 1 Pinpoint your search. "If you look for *green jobs* in Google, there is no shortage of sites dedicated to the promotion of this rapidly growing industry," says Stella Angelakos, a local career adviser. Her favorites: greengigs.blogspot.com, greendreamjobs.com and new-york.greenjobs.net.
- 2 Contact new businesses directly to see if they're hiring. "Basically, every company needs an accounting department, and that is pretty similar from one industry to another," says Judy Harper, director of Green Edge NYC, a social-media site that links people and organizations with an eco-friendly bent. "Most green businesses are still in the start-up stage, so there's a need for someone who can make sure their spending makes sense."
- 3 Look into green construction—it's on the rise

in NYC, specifically in retrofitting buildings to make them more eco-friendly. "For every building that needs to be retrofitted, they have to figure out how much it's going to cost," Harper says. "Engineers can figure out what they have to have done, but someone has to translate that into numbers and make sure they work for the building owner."

- 4 Take a class in sustainability, which you can do while looking for a gig. The New School (newschool.edu) offers a degree in environmental studies, and NYU (nyu.edu) offers several environment-related courses.
- 5 Harper also recommends interning at a green company. "There are a lot of offices that need help," she says. Green companies have to file special paperwork each year, so volunteer to help with this or with budgets on a part-time basis. Search for local volunteer opportunities on idealist.org, justmeans.com and commongoodcareers.com.
- 6 Network at green-industry events. Find out about them at greenedgenyc.org—and arrive well versed in the latest eco news.

YOUR NEW GIG MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE IN THE HEALTH-CARE SECTOR

WHY This industry is thriving. Depending on your former position, you can bring analytical, research, project management or client management skills.

HOW TO GET IT:

- 1 Keep the entire industry in mind: private surgery facilities, and health insurance and pharmaceutical companies. "In today's economy, companies are looking for employees who can save them money," says Angelakos. "Finance folks were trained to do just that, and they were formerly out of reach due to their high salaries."
- 2 Prove your worth. "You can't make up a health-care job [that you never had], but you can accentuate what unites your former position with the one you're applying to," Angelakos explains. "Highlight similar language and responsibilities, and use percentages and monetary values to emphasize growth and profits."



EXIT →

YOUR NEW GIG CONSULTANT FOR AN INSURANCE COMPANY

WHY Your finance skills are easily translated here. Most companies are still hiring consultants—they do the same work as staffers but cost less.

HOW TO GET IT:

- 1 Dive in. “I had no background in insurance, but my experiences in accounting gave me a variety of skills that I could apply anywhere,” says Mez Yoftahie, who made the leap from accounting to consulting for an insurance firm. “You understand what basic accounting means to every company.”
- 2 Put the word out. Yoftahie says the best way to find a consulting gig is either through a headhunter or via word of mouth.
- 3 Do some sleuthing before you go into the interview. “Find out if it’s a publicly traded company and if so get financial statements,” says Yoftahie. “Understand what they do, what the job entails and how you think you can add value to their team.”

YOUR NEW GIG COMMERCIAL REAL-ESTATE FACILITIES MANAGER

WHY The job covers “basically everything involved in operating buildings,” says Jeff Schettino, VP of commercial real-estate firm Giscombe Realty Group. Since you have management, math and accounting skills, it’s a logical transition.

HOW TO GET IT:

- 1 After you determine where you need to build up your résumé, take a class—maybe in green technology. Schettino recommends NYU’s Schack Institute of Real Estate. Then, get certified as a fire safety director—every building needs one (firesafetydirector.com, nyail.com/fsd/what_is.html).
- 2 “Intern at any firm—large or boutique, it’s the same job,” Schettino says.
- 3 Once you score an interview, research all the buildings the company handles. “Understand how they run,” Schettino says. “When I’m hiring I look for suggestions on how to improve the building.”

YOUR NEW GIG BUDGET FORECASTER FOR A NONPROFIT OR CIVIC AGENCY

WHY “You can take a set of raw data and say, ‘Here’s what it all means,’” says Rich Scardina, owner of Atlantic Recruiters. He had a client who jumped from the finance world to budget forecasting for the Parks Department. “At the end of the day it’s working with numbers.”

HOW TO GET IT:

- 1 Broaden your résumé in terms of the skill set you have, and avoid buzzwords that someone outside your former industry wouldn’t be familiar with.
- 2 Start your search online: Government gigs don’t typically use recruiters. New York State posts all its jobs on its website (cs.state.ny.us), and you can find municipality jobs there, too.
- 3 Convince the hiring manager you’re not out of touch. “Make it sound like you were hands-on and in the trenches,” Scardina says. “For a job at a parks department, they don’t need a former CFO.”