

CREATE A STRONG PLAN BEFORE A CAREER CHANGE

Summary: Thinking about making a major career change? Make sure you have the proper plan in place.



Question: I am a 40-year-old professional who has been laid off twice in the past 18 months from engineering posts in the technology industry. Is it too late for me to switch careers and go back to graduate school or will I face an even harder time obtaining employment in a new industry?

Answer: It is never too late to change careers, but the key is to choose carefully or you could end up not gaining any marketability, even with a graduate degree. First, identify targeted employers and the marketable skills you would like to develop or enhance.

As a tech-industry engineer, consider transferring your computer skills to another industry. Just about every type of organization, from health care to professional services to security, needs technical specialists: people like you, with computer savvy to maintain their systems. Rather than making a total change, consider how you might parlay existing skills into a new arena.

In the interim, keep up with the latest technological advances or you could face the added problem of obsolescence. In the current competitive job market, even the best and the brightest are forced to stay on top of developments, use their contacts to uncover job openings and polish their presentation skills to stand out in interviews.

- See **Changing Careers in Your 30s and 40s** for more information.