

The New World of Work

In a brilliant book entitled "Job-Shift: How to Prosper in a World Without Jobs," William Bridges says we are living in a jobless society. What you ask? There are no jobs? Let me explain. In the U.S., the concept that we have of jobs has only been in existence for about the last 150 years.

It was at that time that the industrial revolution took us from farms and craft work to "jobs" in the factory. It completely changed our daily lives. It made traditional crafts obsolete and undermined the time-honored ways of interweaving home and work life.

We are now facing another shift -just as transforming. With so much change in our economy and technology, old job descriptions are blurred and organizations must be able to adapt and change on a dime. Old style jobs get in the way of this new world of work in which temporary and contract jobs often make the most economic sense.

What's happening as a result is that many Americans feel betrayed. No longer can you count on a job for life or a paternalistic relationship with your employers. Your sense of security has been shaken. So how can you best deal with this? Let's just take a look at some of the possibilities of how your work may look in the future:

- you can start a business of your own
- you can become a consultant
- you can become an artist
- you can work part-time
- you can create a "portfolio" career performing two or more types of work
- you can work with organizations on a full-time basis under very fluid arrangements with your tasks and working hours and location changing with each project

There are plenty of opportunities that come with this societal change. There are many more career choices open to you. Many of you have shifted your priorities so that you now want more family time or flexibility in your time, the ability to make a difference in your community, the chance to be your authentic self in your work. These options are more available now.

To effectively manage your career you must 1) embrace the concept that everyone is a contingent worker - your employment is contingent on the results the organization can achieve from your work; 2) develop a mindset, and way of managing your career, that is more like an external vendor than that of a traditional employee; and, 3) expect to move from organization to organization more frequently than in the past.

Have you experienced this in your own work life? Do you feel prepared for this change in our society and work? Is there any goal you'd like to set to be more prepared?

Know that you are truly in charge of your destiny – why not create a work life you can love?