New Year, New Opportunities

Welcome, 2017! After a year filled with ups and downs, it's easy to think about the big "C"…*change*. We might want to change things about our appearance, whether it is a new haircut or color, a new outfit, or a new fitness routine. We might consider things like buying a new house, car, or planning a vacation. Or, we might be thinking about a new opportunity, such as a new career or job change.

Making a change can be daunting, challenging, and even exhilarating. Below are five aspects to think about as you work through the decision making process:

1. What exactly is it that I want to change?
2. What about my current situation is making me unhappy, stressed out, etc.?
3. What do I like about my current situation and what about it would I not want to change?
4. If I woke up in the morning and a miracle happened, what would be different about my current situation?
5. On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is low and 10 is high, how motivated am I to work through the change process?

I hear a lot of talk at the beginning of the year about people wanting to start on a new job search or change jobs. To that end, this month, I'm featuring ways to work through the prospect of a new job search with the help of two accomplished professionals in the field.

New Year….New Job?

by Mary Beth Barrett-Newman, 2nd Career Consulting
Whether it's learning a new skill, finding a new job or growing within your current position, *focusing on why you're considering a change* and *what you need to do to get there* rather than the goal itself, will increase the probability that you'll be successful with this resolution.
Why are you considering a change? Are you bored, want more responsibility, feel underpaid, no longer interested in the industry, or don't like your boss? A thoughtful approach to answering this question is critical.
Do you need to leave your current organization to accomplish this? For example, if you've never managed people, but would like to, this may be easiest to accomplish at your current organization where you've already proven yourself. After getting some managerial experience under your belt, you'll be more a more attractive candidate to other employers.

If after assessing your current situation, you've decide to make a move, start by creating a list of your transferable skills and what you can bring to another employer. Scour job opportunities online and look at the skills, expertise, qualifications listed. These should be what you emphasize in your resume, LinkedIn profile and cover letter. Putting the "equal sign" between what you've done and what an employer is looking for is the key to a successful job search.

What do you need to do to find that new opportunity? Certainly having a solid resume that focuses on your quantifiable accomplishments and a robust LinkedIn profile are important tools, but what else is required? Again, take a look at those on-line job postings. Do you have the education, certifications, software and/or systems knowledge required? If not, is this something you can acquire at your current job, or take classes or exams to attain? If you see consistency across employers and job postings, adding these to your resume will increase the probability you'll be considered for a position.

And what about networking? The percentage of people who find a new positons through networking is significantly higher than those who blindly apply online with no one championing them internally. Set a networking plan in place – reach out to one or two people a week, join some industry groups where you can meet others in your field, participate on-line via blogs and social media like Twitter and LinkedIn. Share information, relevant articles and become a trusted resource for others. Get your name out there.

Just like losing 10 lbs. by increasing exercise and incorporating a healthy diet, finding a new position can be accomplished by assessing "why" you want to leave, "what" you need to get there and "networking" your way to that new position.