

Accessing a career transition service to maximise your job prospects

Cassy Norris

Career transition services provide great support for those seeking advice on transitioning into another career and developing a relevant resume. One organisation providing such support and advice is INS Career Management.

Principal Futures Reference Group guest speaker **Sophia Symeou, CEO and co-founder, INS Career Management** provided this advice to the Principal Futures Group on 29 June 2016:

“A lot of private sector small enterprises are turning towards a mature age workforce. They want loyalty, stability and skills they don't have to invest in. As a result, employment opportunities exist from bus drivers to professionals, in all areas, including in the public sector.

INS is finding that on leaving their often life-time career, many mature professionals are not quite ready to fully retire. They often want to apply their skills in a new direction and are focused on flexibility rather than permanency. We also find that many people who have been in one career for a substantial period of time are unsure of how to go about looking for new and different opportunities – or identifying their transferable skills. And from our perspective even before looking at individual attributes, Principals have many transferable skills!

INS Career Management is a growing business providing expert services in career development, outplacement and career transition services for government, business and individuals. A key focus for INS today is to work with individuals to identify their transferable skills, and show them how to present what they know and can do.

This organisation also offers positions for those interested in working in this area.”

Sophia's entry into the industry

Sophia had a background in the community sector and has been passionate about education, even being hired in the past to undertake a research program on re-engaging students in school.

Further roles in EEO with the NSW Water Board and organisational change in other public sector agencies including RailCorp gave her the experience and expertise behind the industrial relations management consulting group she established.

One of her projects was concerned with the restructuring of the NSW rail system. With large numbers of redundancies and job cuts to manage, she set up a career transition centre. This was entirely focused on helping people make and then implement a decision on whether to take redundancy, stay doing nothing or be redeployed. She learned that people have lots of transferable skills, but often don't know how to articulate them.

Sophia set up the company *In No one's Shadow* (INS), seeing opportunities to help create a workforce for the future. She started with public sector employees who had been retrenched or made redundant.

She also supported programs for two groups she sees as marginalised in the workforce:

- Young people 16-25, helping them and their parents decide what to do with their life, and to set kids up for success.

- Working with mature age people (45 plus) providing them with the confidence and skill to reach for new opportunities.

Sophie's advice to Principals

- In developing your application for a position, consider how you can be attractive to other employers. You need a resume which is not a Principal's resume – it has to be one based on achievements, not responsibilities.
- A career coach can help you identify your marketable skills and assist in planning both your goals and your resume.
- When starting to plan your resume, identify what you do in your daily life as a Principal.
- You will find the most marketable skills are financial management, organisation of complex structures, managing people, managing conflict, managing sensitive issues, industrial relations, stakeholder management, leadership and motivation, strategic planning.
- Never put your age or address on your resume – just your email address. Also no photo because it leaves you open to interpretation.
- Remember to look into putting your details on LinkedIn. A highly effective strategy would be to start a principals' group on LinkedIn. As many as 70% of roles are never advertised. It is about networking and making others aware that you are looking for new opportunities.

For more information visit [Careers at INS](#)

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Cassy is Principal of Ryde Secondary College and leader of the SPC Principal Futures Reference Group. She was responsible for establishing the reference group and initiating the Principal Futures project with the NSWSPC, and has been a key member of the website writing team. Cassy believes that public school principals can make a huge contribution to society through their unique skills and experience. She is particularly keen to develop opportunities for retired principals on boards of companies and NGOs and in public education, the public sector and volunteering.