

INTERCULTURAL CAREER PLANNING



The Intercultural Communication Institute

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I would like to dedicate this edition to the legacy of LaRay Barna. LaRay worked in the intercultural communication field for over 30 years and counseled countless numbers of individuals in the field through her work at Portland State University, the Intercultural Communication Institute Master's Program, and the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication. We all owe her a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all the work she did to create this field.

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Mary Meares
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Introduction

What are intercultural jobs? Simply put, they are any jobs where people from diverse cultures come together—diverse in terms of cultural backgrounds that have shaped their perspectives, values, and communication styles. By this definition, almost all jobs in the United States, as well as many in other countries, are intercultural. The difference is that those of you reading this guide want to help others learn to make these interactions more positive and productive, and in many senses, more effective.

What intercultural jobs are out there? Jobs in intercultural communication exist everywhere and nowhere. Many people have created their current intercultural assignments. Most have used another field of expertise as an anchor, whether business, health care, education, or social service. They frequently work with organizations that have domestic multicultural or international aspects. It usually takes time, hard work, and innovation.

As Margaret Pusch, former Associate Director of the Intercultural Communication Institute, wrote, “This is an applied field—how can we help people see that every job is intercultural? Maybe the best job is being a great math teacher, or surgeon, or business person who incorporates intercultural skills, attitudes, perspective, and knowledge into their work.”

This guide is designed to give you an overview of the process of career development and an overview of some of the many types of jobs available in the field of intercultural communication. It is not comprehensive and should not be considered to be definitive; however, it may give you some ideas and direction in exploring work in the field. For first-timers, there is help elsewhere on how to prepare a resume, handle an interview, and obtain relevant information. Consult the reference section of this booklet for resources related to these matters and for ideas on where to look for intercultural job opportunities, whether domestic or overseas.

Some cautions are in order. The field is changing rapidly, so this booklet must be read with a recognition that what is true now may change tomorrow. Also realize that advice that is good for one person may not be appropriate for another. All comments are general and exceptions abound.

Good luck as you follow your career path!

Taking Stock of Yourself

Who are you? What do you bring to the world? Before you can decide what direction you want to move in professionally, it's helpful to assess your current skills, values, interests, education, and experience.

Skills: Transferable skills are skills you've developed from past jobs, hobbies, volunteer experiences, or any experiences that you can transfer to a future job. For example, can you manage people, write well, edit text, or work with the public?

One way to translate your experiences into skills is to think of something you've done that you're proud of. Describe it out loud to a friend and ask the friend to write down every skill or skill set you mention. For example,

"I helped diffuse a conflict between two groups in my organization. I was able to see the big picture of what was causing the conflict and intervene between the two main leaders of the groups involved. I was able to reframe the conflict in a cultural context which helped both sides to see the conflict was one primarily of cultural communication styles and not an reflection of respect or lack of respect. I gave the participants knowledge about the cultural differences and a common language for discussing these differences. Since that time, I have heard members of each group discussing their own and other groups' communication styles and supervisors have reported a significant improvement in the office atmosphere."

Encourage your friend to ask you more questions about the situation. When you are finished, take the list of skills and selectively add them to job descriptions on your resume or prepare yourself to talk about them in an interview. You may be surprised when you recognize some of the skills you have developed.

An important step in identifying skills is to translate your experience into something meaningful to employers. For example, if you have experience living overseas, it's not enough just to state the experience. What skills did you develop during your stay that would be useful to a potential employer? It's likely you learned how to work independently, developed skills in working with people from other cultures, and perhaps the ability to solve problems in creative ways. It is these skills that can be transferred to a future workplace that will make you stand out as a job applicant.

Here are some sample transferable skills valued by employers:

- Interviewing
- Writing
- Budget Management
- Public Speaking
- Team-building
- Problem-solving
- Negotiating/Arbitrating
- Project Management
- Organizing/Managing/Coordinating
- Teaching/Instructing
- Public Relations
- Stress Management

There are many variations to this list but they all stress good communication skills. In some cases, employers might request *intercultural* communication skills by asking for the “ability to work on multicultural teams” or “ability to relate to clients from various cultures.”

Early work by Larry Samovar and Al Weitzel (1979) in the *International and Intercultural Communication Annual*, identified a number of important qualities for intercultural work that are still relevant today. Two hundred institutions in both the public and private sector that had international dimensions were surveyed. While this is an older study, the attributes required for successful performance are still relevant. These attributes were ranked in the following order:

- The ability to analyze information
- Problem-solving skills
- Empathetic and critical listening skills
- Verbal skills
- Writing skills
- Organizational skills
- High personal stress tolerance
- Small-group leadership skills
- Sophisticated understanding of the values and patterns of thought of a particular culture
- The ability to understand a foreign language

Values: What is important to you when it comes to jobs and careers? It’s important to think about your personal and work values when deciding what type of career will fit you. For example, is it more important for you to feel you are doing something that makes a difference in the world or makes a lot of money? You may want both, but if you had to choose, which is the most important to you? Do you want a job where you travel a lot or would you prefer to stay in one place? Many books on career exploration include sections on identifying your work and personal values (see the “Additional Resource” list at the end of this guide for possibilities).

Interests: What interests do you have that might enable you to bring something special to the job market? Usually those are the things that you know the most about and enjoy. If you have an interest in a particular country, region, or culture, for example, you may be able to use that knowledge in a job.

Education/Credentials: Few people can advance in the intercultural realm unless they have at least a master’s degree in some field. Whether or not the master’s or Ph.D. should be in intercultural communication depends on your goals and what employers need. Because most employers are looking first for non-intercultural skills, it might make you more marketable if you selected a degree in computer science, business, human resources, economics, social work, or some other area to add to your intercultural skills, perspective, and experience.

Dr. Sheila Ramsey, an independent consultant in the fields of intercultural communication and international management, warns that a business-function focus is needed if one is to do well in a corporate or business climate. This includes abilities to do performance appraisal, needs analysis, program design, problem solving, and more. Since all of these functions are influenced by culture, intercultural skills enhance the business focus, particularly in areas of diversity and inclusion, quality control, team building, and technology transfer. She stresses you will be expected to “talk the jargon.” However, a person should “go with his or her heart,” she advises. “Don’t get an MBA if you don’t want to.”

If you are wondering about your need for further intercultural education, you might ask yourself questions like these: Do I have a sound basis of knowledge in intercultural communication research and theory? Am I familiar with various learning styles, ways to deal with racism and ethnocentrism, various value and belief systems, and so forth? Can I confidently lead discussions and supply substantive background material to seminars and workshops? Can I state and support rationales to clients? If you are interested in training, are you familiar with methods, design, and techniques of implementation? Further intercultural education can help you develop expertise in these areas.

Many universities have advanced degree programs that focus on international or intercultural relations, international or intercultural management, international development, multicultural counseling, international education administration, intercultural education and training, and others. A few offer a degree emphasis specifically in intercultural communication. Most of these are in communication departments. Another route is to study with someone whom you respect as an intercultural mentor. This person could assist you in setting up a self-designed program in his or her university that could suit your needs. Finally there are several non-traditional M.A. programs that allow a specialization in intercultural relations. Some offer long-distance learning.

One resource you might find helpful is *Graduate Programs in Intercultural Communication and Related Areas*, available through the Intercultural Communication Institute (part of the Resource Directory given to Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication participants). This booklet lists residential Ph.D. and master’s degrees in intercultural communication, limited residency degree programs, and some programs in related fields.

In addition to formal education, be sure to think about other credentials like teacher certification, professional licensure, and professional organization memberships. Professional association memberships and involvement shows that you are interested and involved in the field. Certification and licensure are required in some fields. In either case, joining and working in professional organizations is very worthwhile. Their conferences can provide opportunities to present papers or give presentations, as well as to continue your own learning. In addition, be sure to list on your resume any awards you have received which can be in some way related to the profession you are pursuing.

Experience: What intercultural experience have you had, domestically or internationally? This can be work experience, experience you've gained through volunteer opportunities or hobbies, study in other cultures, or life experience. Many of these can be life-changing events. They can help you develop intercultural awareness as well as awareness of your own culture and self.

Experience with another culture gives you:

1. in-depth knowledge of at least one other culture—the language, customs, working habits, and other characteristics of life that provide background for culture-specific training;
2. the ability to shift frames of reference quickly, which contributes to creativity and problem-solving;
3. evidence that you enjoy challenges and can adapt to ambiguous and stressful circumstances;
4. familiarity with the problems that a person faces in transition to a new environment, situation, or business;
5. proof that you would be a good candidate for a position working with other cultures because of your previous record of adjustment and achievement.

What other attributes or skills can you list that have a direct correlation to your intercultural experience?

Areas for further development: Other important things to consider in your career assessment are your weaknesses, or more correctly, your opportunities for growth. For example, which of the areas above do you feel you need to work on? What skills would be helpful for you to develop? Everyone has areas they can improve.

Changing careers: Many people come into the field of intercultural communication from other careers. Rather than leaving the old career behind, think about how you can build on your existing expertise and add an intercultural focus. The skills and knowledge you've developed can be a big asset, directly or indirectly.

Transitions: Career decision-making and job searching are often inherently stressful activities. Be prepared to deal with issues of self-identity and loss (of the options you choose not to pursue) as you go through this process. Many people find it positive and reassuring to seek support from others in the process via support groups, friends and family, and even professional career development specialists. William Bridges' (1980, 2004) work on transitions identifies the process of dealing with both positive and negative change and is very helpful in developing perspective on this process.

The Changing Realities of the World of Work

Internationally and domestically the world of work is constantly evolving. Economic ups and downs have forced organizations to reorganize, consolidate, and downsize, and intercultural jobs are not always seen as essential until a crisis occurs. However, there are often opportunities for consulting or contract work, as well as full-time employment.

The labor market has changed dramatically in the past few decades and will continue to evolve throughout the 21st century. One major shift is in the composition of workers in the labor market. Statistics from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics illustrate some of the changes in the United States. The labor force is aging. There are increases in the number of workers of Asian and Hispanic origin, and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of white (non-Hispanic) workers. These dynamics increase the need for everyone in the workforce to learn more about diversity and intercultural communication.

William Bridges (1994, 2004), an executive management consultant, anticipated many of the changes we have experienced in the labor market already, insisting that the modern world was on the verge of a huge leap in creativity and productivity, which we have seen and are still experiencing. He recognized that while there will always be enormous amounts of work to do, it is “not be contained in the familiar envelopes we call jobs.” He equated today’s struggle to find jobs like fighting over deck chairs on the Titanic. Not only are traditional jobs disappearing as a result of downsizing, restructuring, or layoffs, but the job concept itself is losing ground. The traditional, structured job, with job descriptions and responsibilities, is no longer adaptive and is being phased out. The trend is for employers to reduce full-time staff and look for specialized temporary help when the need arises. Futurist Tom Peters warned that the transformation of today’s employees into “business people” rather than “job-holders” is “utterly wrenching” and that it will take decades. The result of these changes is that many companies now prefer to hire consultants, part-time employees, life-of-project employees, or contract workers for specialized needs, especially in intercultural fields. As traditional jobs with defined work descriptions are gradually being replaced by teams gathered for short-term work projects, middle management as traditionally defined has also changed, being replaced by project management and manager-coaches.

Bridges had a lot to say about getting through this transition period when some people still think in terms of “traditional” work. This transition is difficult because health, pension, and other benefits are often still locked into jobs. We have depended on jobs for identity, social circles, and security. Bridges’ “new rules” to survive this change include the following:

- Education will continue to be important; however, the skills and knowledge needed will be constantly changing. People must be able to think, communicate, and solve problems.

- Look for “work that needs doing” and offer your services as an external vendor. Find ways to solve problems. Discover the essential things that you can do that technology cannot.
- Manage yourself as if you are a business: “Me, Inc.” This includes sales, quality, development, customer service, marketing, and so forth.
- Watch for new opportunities where you can use and develop your skills and knowledge. More and more we are finding that people draw from many sources and on various resources to develop their own unique careers.
- Create your own benefit program. Learn about health care, retirement, and investments.
- Teach your children flexibility, how to cooperate with each other, and to be self-starting, self-sustaining, creative, and have a clear sense of self—with dreams.

Things to Consider

- **What type of organization would you like to work in—public sector (government), nonprofit, educational, or private (corporate)?** There are different norms in different types of organizations, different types of pressures, and different values. However, don’t assume that all organizations in the same sector are the same either!
- **What do you want to spend your time doing?** You may want to be involved in primarily one task full-time or you may prefer doing a variety of tasks. You might prefer working with groups or working one-on-one. Most trainers start off performing other, more traditional functions and train for only a portion of their time. As they get more experience and expertise, the proportion of time spent training and working directly with clients may increase.
- **Do you want to work independently or as part of a larger organization?** Some trainers and consultants work as independent consultants, which can be very challenging. (See “Working as an Independent Contractor” on page 13 which briefly explores the pros and cons of independent consulting.) Others prefer to work within an organization or department in a larger corporation or institution that provides training services.
- **What industries are expected to grow?** In the U.S., the fastest growing areas for jobs are in health care and technology. Increases are also anticipated in the transportation industry and social services. All of these are potential areas for intercultural training and management. The number of jobs in the “job training and related services” occupations are expected to increase, with an increase for all training and development specialists (all specializations, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*). More traditional job training would benefit from the addition of an intercultural perspective as the workforce becomes increasingly diverse.

Careers in Training

Training has traditionally meant working with groups of people (small or large) to help them learn a new task, but can also refer to improving awareness or cognitive knowledge of an issue. Training may be short or long term, and mandated by an employer or voluntary. Intercultural training may be conducted by full-time employees of an organization (often as part of a Diversity Office or Human Resources) or by outside contractors. Relocation work is often grouped with training, but may involve working with an individual or family for a limited period (often just a few hours) to help them prepare to move to another location. While some trainers may develop their own materials, others may be required to use materials developed by the company that hires them.

Trainer Competencies

Trainers need a variety of different skills and abilities in order to be successful. Some important skills are:

- Industry and organizational awareness: Understanding of both the industry and the specific organization or corporation, its culture, and goals.
- Business function focus and understanding: General knowledge of how the business world works.
- Leadership skills: Skills in influencing others, getting support for training and for change in the organization.
- Technology awareness and competence: Computers are changing the way training is delivered. It is vital that trainers have knowledge of new training delivery methods.
- Culture focus: Intercultural trainers need to be able to see and help others see both the influence of member's cultures on the organization and the organizational culture.
- Systems view: The ability to see beyond specifics to the larger picture of goals, impediments, and results.
- Human relations focus: "People skills" to teach, counsel, and lead.
- Competence focus:
 - Knowledge of intercultural communication and social science theory (the "why")
 - Ability to speak, write, and listen well
 - Ability to solve problems
 - Ability to be sensitive to the climate of organizations and the needs of clients
 - Ability to be able to organize, budget, plan, manage, evaluate, and research

Training in the Corporate World

The Association for Talent Development often focuses on the future of training in their publications (*T + D*). Some of the trends they identify include:

- The workforce has become both more educated and more diverse. Training practices will have to change to become more sophisticated and appropriate for their audiences.
- Technology, including social media, and cloud computing, affect the way that training is delivered and training departments will have to continue to find different ways to deliver training. Technology-based delivery of training will continue to increase and trainers will both work with technology experts and become more technologically skilled themselves.
- Corporate restructuring means that more and more individuals are be employed in small- and medium-sized organizations. These organizations traditionally offer less training. This is an opportunity for contract trainers and consultants to offer their services. This also means there are more trainers working as one-person, full-service training providers within companies.
- Corporate training departments are smaller as more training is outsourced. Training departments often function more as internal consultants and managers of external providers. They also do more train-the-trainer work with front line managers who will train their supervisees.
- The focus has shifted to improving performance of employees and producing measurable results. Training is more aligned and integrated with the work itself.
- Companies put more emphasis on being “learning organizations.” Trainers facilitate learning tied to organizational goals. As a result, they must understand the organization and the industry.

The ATD State of the Industry Report describes increases in the amounts of money spent on training and the proportions of people trained. In addition, it notes increases in the number of outside providers of training, the emphasis on skill-based training, and the use of learning technologies. Although much training is still delivered in a traditional classroom, increasingly training is also delivered by a variety of technological means. The trend is also divided by industry and “leading-edge” firms as compared to all others. Interestingly, many of these training trends also apply to non-profit and public sector. There, as well, more emphasis is being placed on technology and efficiency.

If you are moving into the intercultural consulting field, one area to explore is employee relocation training. More corporations are seeing the need for assistance for both employees and their families in the process of adjusting to a new location. The Employee Relocation Council (Web: www.erc.org) is a membership organization of providers of services from real estate brokers to educational counselors. Consult them for more information.

Coaching

Coaching is working one-on-one, often with a manager or an employee who has been recognized as having strong potential, to help them improve their performance or solve problems. This may include helping employees prepare for overseas assignments, helping them during that experience, helping family members, and helping with re-adjustment upon return to the home country. It may also involve helping managers with their ability to supervise and communicate with their employees, or other types of complex managerial tasks.

In addition to the skills listed above for trainers, Coaches need to be able to develop interpersonal rapport and help individuals to identify and reach their own goals. In order to do this they need excellent listening skills, the ability to help clients reflect, and the ability to provide feedback.

Coaches often work by phone or other synchronous technological means, on a regular basis over a period of time. They are usually independent providers, most often hired by the organization in to provide services to their employees, but may be hired by individuals as well. Coaches may be certified through the International Coaching Federation.

Consulting

Consulting is more complex than training or coaching. It involves working with employees of an organization to diagnose a problem (often involving a needs assessment), and then recommending interventions to remedy identified concerns. Those interventions may include training or coaching, but may also involve a change in policies, procedures, or organizational structure. As a result, it requires a much broader skill set (in addition to the trainer competencies listed above) and more sophisticated level of knowledge and experience. If large-scale training is recommended, the consultant may design the training, but hire others to conduct it. While large organizations may have internal consultants, most consultants work for consulting companies or as independent contractors (see below).

Working as an Independent Contractor

The best advice anyone can give you about working as an independent consultant, trainer, or coach is “Don’t quit the day job.” Although it is true that significant income and opportunities are possible, these are usually available only to individuals at the highest levels of expertise and many years of experience. On the other hand, occasional consulting as an adjunct to your full-time job might give you both the experience and the perspective to decide if you wish to pursue it full-time. If you are in a situation where you don’t need a full-time income, working independently might be something to consider, but keep in mind that it may not lead to a lucrative income. It is also possible to develop relationships with other independent contractors, where you share referrals and work together on larger contracts, but this involves developing a network of peers you trust and work well with. Many independent providers also work as subcontractors with consulting companies.

It is generally accepted that owning one’s own business requires many hours a day, seven days a week, and start-up capital (at least one year’s salary is recommended) to get established. In addition to having the background, knowledge, and performance skills already mentioned, contractors must be willing to be perpetual job hunters. They are always in the process of selling themselves and their services, to those who may or may not see the usefulness of intercultural expertise. They must also be familiar with (or hire people to help them with) budget analysis, cost accounting, tax accounting, advertising layout and design, and all the other business functions. This may sound formidable, but the changes that are already underway in the workplace warn that preparation for self-employment may be very wise. The trend toward downsizing and outsourcing, as discussed above, may mean that many more individuals pursue this type of work.

Many intercultural or diversity consultants specialize in particular industries or types of problems. The concerns of an organization remedying a history of racism may be very different from one that is developing a leadership program to improve their global leaders. In addition, the knowledge of specific industries or types of organizations may be relevant when making recommendations. Networking and word-of-mouth referrals are vital in this context.

Careers in Education

Careers in the field of education include teaching as well as working with students, faculty, and staff outside the classroom. Both realms offer many opportunities to educate students about intercultural differences and communication.

Teaching Jobs

Teaching Communication: Teaching intercultural communication at the college/university level usually requires a doctorate degree. Most professors of intercultural communication work within departments of communication or speech communication and, in addition to teaching, do research and writing. Professional associations for professors include International Academy for Intercultural Research (IAIR) and the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR).

Teaching English Language and Other Languages: Although many teacher training programs include little or no mention of intercultural communication, one opportunity to work with students from many cultures is in the language classroom. Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) is the teaching of English to non-native speakers in an English-speaking country. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is teaching English in a non-English-speaking country.

Qualifications for teaching positions depend on the setting and level. Teaching K-12 generally requires a teaching certificate as well as training in TESL/TEFL. Full-time positions at community colleges and universities have become quite competitive. The minimum requirements is often a master's degree, however, some applicants in popular markets may have doctorates. Overseas, qualifications vary by country. In many countries, a master's degree is required for teaching at the college or university level, but a bachelor's degree is adequate for language schools or private teaching. References for teaching jobs are listed in the bibliography under "Education" and "International." The professional association for English language teachers is Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL).

Teaching in Other Fields: Intercultural communication knowledge and experience is helpful for teachers at any level and in any subject area for working with students and general classroom management. Intercultural communication can also be incorporated into content areas, especially in the fields of anthropology, sociology, business, international relations, politics, area studies, linguistics, and education, just to name a few. Each of these areas has its own professional organization, some of which have special interest groups for intercultural communication and teaching about culture.

Non-teaching Jobs

International Educational Exchange: The options for working in international educational exchange are to work with foreign students (as a foreign student advisor, admissions specialist, or related position) or in study abroad programs at colleges and universities.

Foreign student advisors work with students studying outside of their own country and usually returning to their home country. They also work with foreign scholars who are teaching and doing research. Since 9-11, greater emphasis has been placed on the documentation of students and monitoring of their progress. Generally, foreign student advisors are involved in some or all of the following:

- Student admissions
- Advising students on cultural issues
- Immigration and visa regulations
- Counseling students
- University regulations
- Assisting students with housing
- Orientation of new students
- Intercultural programming
- Assisting students to connect with the community

At larger institutions, there may be individuals in the admissions office who handle recruiting and pre-admission services. Requirements for foreign student advisors vary greatly by institution.

Study abroad advisors or directors work with students who want to go overseas to study for a semester or a year. They may run and administer programs or simply help match students with programs run by other universities. In addition, short-term programs for overseas study during vacation times are becoming more popular in recent years as an additional source of revenue for universities. These may be held in conjunction with a course and be led by a professor. Sometimes these are marketed to non-students (alumni or members of the community). As with foreign student advisors, requirements vary greatly; however, marketing and managerial skills, as well as knowledge of the cultures where students are going, are often necessary.

NAFSA: The Association of International Educators is the professional association for individuals and institutions working with international educational exchange. NAFSA has divisions for individuals working with foreign student advising, study abroad programs, administrators of English language programs, admissions personnel, and for community volunteers. There are also two professional educator groups – one for overseas advisors and the other for program agencies, such as Institute for International Education (IIE).

There are, as well, many organizations that provide overseas programs for high school students. They not only need trainers but people who actually accompany the student during their travel. The organization that sets standards for organizations involved in high school exchange programs is the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET).

Student Services: Opportunities in student services include working with students in a variety of settings outside of the classroom including residence hall, student activities, career centers, campus ministries, and academic advising.

One area that deserves special note is the area of counseling. In working with students at colleges and universities, cross-cultural counseling skills are becoming more and more important, as well as a general grounding in intercultural communication skills and theory. Often intercultural conflict, culture shock, and developing personal values are issues students are dealing with in their college years. Both international students and those studying in their home countries are frequently dealing with those culturally different from themselves in a more intense way than they have experienced before. As they are exposed to new cognitive concepts, their internal re-construction of categories to deal with difference may lead to confusion and frustration. Most counselor education programs now require at least one course in cross-cultural counseling.

Qualifications for jobs in student services vary, depending on the institution. Some require master's degrees. There are a variety of organizations that exist for student service professionals, including the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the American Counseling Association (ACA).

Administration: Directors of programs or departments, deans, and other administrators certainly have many opportunities to utilize intercultural communication skills, and may also be in a valuable position to further intercultural communication education and awareness programs. More than faculty and staff, they may be able to influence change in intercultural education, both in and outside the classroom. Jobs in administration depend on the institution and positions and requirements vary greatly. Consult with administrators in the areas you are interested in pursuing. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* is a source of information about jobs and trends in educational administration.

Careers in the Nonprofit and Public Sectors

In addition to opportunities in corporate and educational settings, there has been a dramatic growth in intercultural opportunities in nonprofit organizations and the public sector in the last few decades. From hospitals, police departments, and city government, to emergency response organizations and those serving diverse communities on long-term issues, there is a clear need for professionals with expertise in working with diverse populations and training others to do so, as well. While many of these types of organizations will hire people on a contract basis to provide training, some are large enough (and see the need) to have dedicated diversity and inclusion/intercultural professionals.

Diversity and inclusion programs in federal, state/province, and local governments are becoming increasingly important, both addressing racial issues and refugee/immigrant populations. Some communities have positions focusing on diversity or inclusion, while others include this as part of the mission for many different jobs and have training and evaluation on diversity issues for people in all positions. Get to know people in the locations where you are interested in working to find out how diversity and cultural issues are included in their employee base.

In addition to other public sector positions, intercultural communication work is increasingly recognized as important in both the criminal justice and health care systems. While some hospital systems are public and others are corporate-owned, all face issues of cultural diversity within healthcare teams and between patients and providers. Some hospital systems have specific offices with professionals who train providers on diversity issues and advocate for patients when there are intercultural challenges. In the criminal justice system, there are similar diversity concerns and increasing recognition of the need for intercultural work from policing, to the judicial and prison systems, especially around issues of implicit bias and historical mistreatment.

If there is a specific sector you are interested in, work to build expertise in that area. For example, if you are interested in working in healthcare, there are numerous publications and professional organizations within different specialty areas that address research and practice related to cultural issues. In addition, there are online discussion groups and conferences related to intercultural healthcare. These provide opportunities for both learning and networking with those already working in these areas. While you do not have to have medical training to work in healthcare, knowledge of the specific concerns, challenges, and vocabulary of the medical field, as well as the ability to communicate with healthcare professionals are all vital.

In addition to public sector opportunities, there are numerous nonprofit organizations whose missions focus on issues of culture and diversity. Whether focused on a specific cultural group or a context or issue, knowledge of and expertise in intercultural communication is valuable in the nonprofit sector. Opportunities are extremely diverse, so focus on the problems you want to help solve or the needs in the community where you want to live. Organizations like Idealist.org can be helpful in finding job listings. However, if there is a specific area, region, or organization you are interested in, you are best to regularly review local websites and build relationships with people in those contexts.

General Recommendations from Experts in the Field

A few years ago, some faculty members from the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication and other senior professionals in the field were asked “What advice would you give to those who want a career in intercultural training?” Here is what they said:

- Get training and experience in management, education, training, anthropology, psychology and work in the field as a general trainer or manager or educator and begin to add intercultural communication/diversity components as your skills, reputation, and experience increase.
- Go to graduate school.
- Get an MBA if you want to work in business.
- Work with an experienced person in the field!
- Find a mentor.
- Take initiative to get experience—for example, teach classes at local adult schools and community colleges, volunteer for crisis hotlines, and give presentations to business, management groups, and community groups. Network with colleagues in field through organizations such as ASTD, and SIETAR.
- Subcontract or joint venture on projects with larger consulting organizations.
- Write articles for journals, newsletters and other relevant publications. If you have done any interesting research or projects—write up your findings. If you haven’t yet, design and implement some so you can write about them. Relate all your work to business or organizational issues, for example, customer service, or work group conflict.
- Do serious work abroad.
- Do serious intercultural work in the U.S.
- You’ll need practice—volunteer to help other trainers and follow-through with volunteering. Be specific about how you can help (saying “I can help in any way” is hard to respond to).
- Be skilled in another area and combine it with international expertise, whether it be computers, training, or other areas.
- Do it as part of another job.

- Build a solid theory base—as more people enter the field, the separation will be those who are not relying exclusively on experience.
- Spend an extended amount of time outside of the U.S. in order to be credible in the intercultural field. I would also emphasize the concurrent development of skills beyond teaching English while outside the U.S.
- It is not enough to be a highly skilled trainer or facilitator in either diversity and inclusion or intercultural communication. Consulting firms (whatever their size) and corporations want people with dexterity in multiple arenas, the ability to write proposals, market, create and design training programs and materials, and who possess a great deal of flexibility and stamina for all those long travel days.
- Excellent personal education/qualifications are a must.
- Establish contacts and trust relationships in related fields of training. Work together with very experienced trainers in related fields.
- Work for some years in a human resources/development position in a large corporation if possible.

Decision-Making in the Career Process

So, once you know who you are, the options, and what the experts recommend, how do you decide what to pursue? There are many different styles and techniques for decision-making, but think about what has worked for you in making big decisions in the past. Many people find writing or talking about their choices helps to clarify things. It is also helpful to network. Talk to everyone you can who's doing anything in the field. Make yourself known, and sometimes opportunities will present themselves. You might also learn that you're not interested in some of the options. A great way to do this is "informational interviewing"—interviewing not for a specific job opening, but rather to gather information about a field and its general conditions and opportunities.

There are numerous resources to help you in the process of decision-making:

- **The Internet:** The Internet is a wonderful resource when you are looking at career options, job listings, or exploring communities where potential jobs are located. See the listings in the "Additional Resources" section at the end of this guide or use search engines to find web sites.
- **College career centers:** Alumni and community members are sometimes welcome to use the resources of college and university career centers. They frequently have a wealth of resources as well as counselors for assistance.
- **Books:** There is an ever growing collection of books related to the career search process. Ask at your local bookstore or library.
- **National and International Associations:** Associations have publications as well as conferences where you can talk to people about what it is they really do in their job. Some associations have job listings and systems for conducting job interview at conferences.
- **Professional career counselors:** Counselors are trained to help you in this process. You may find it helpful to consult with one.

Conclusion

The job search process is a wonderful opportunity for growth and exploration. Although it may take time to find what you want to do and ways to make it happen, keep in mind that if you approach any job from an intercultural perspective you will find opportunities to use and develop your intercultural repertoire. View this as a process—not a hoop to jump through and be finished with, but a ongoing process of evaluation, considering alternatives, and taking action.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

GENERAL CAREER GUIDES

- Beck, Martha. Finding Your Own North Star: Claiming the Life You Were Meant to Live. New York: Harmony, 2002.
- Bolles, Richard N. What Color is Your Parachute? 2015. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2014.
- Boldt, Laurence. How to Find the Work You Love. New York: Penguin/Arkana, 2004.
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- Lore, Nicholas. The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success. New York: Touchstone Books, 2012.
- Palmer, Parker. Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.
- Tieger, Paul, Barbara Barron, and Kelly Tieger. Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through Secrets of Personality Type. (5th Edition). New York: Little, Brown, 2014.
- Yates, Martin. Knock 'Em Dead 2015: The Ultimate Job Search Guide. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media, 2014.

CAREER TRANSITIONS

- Bridges, William. Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes (Revised, 25th Anniversary Ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2004.
- Collamer, Nancy. Second-Act Careers: 50+ Ways to Profit from Your Passions During Semi-Retirement. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2013.
- Leider, Richard J., and Alan M. Webber. Life Reimagined: Discovering Your New Life Possibilities. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2013.
- Miedaner, Talane. Coach Yourself to a New Career: 7 Steps to Reinventing Your Professional Life. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

INTERNATIONAL CAREERS

- Cressey, Laura, Barrett Helmer, and Jennifer Steffensen (Eds.). Careers in International Affairs. (9th Edition). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2014.
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- Russell, Donovan. Choosing a Career in International Development: A Practical Guide to Working in the Professions of International Development. College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com, 2013.
- Young, Nancy E., with Gary Althen. The Handbook of International Student Advising. Portland, OR: Intercultural Interaction, 2013.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Internet has dramatically changing the job-search process, especially internationally. There are many resources available, including job listings, general career advice, and information about your desired destination. The sites listed below are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is available; however, most contain links to other sites.

Self Exploration:

- Career Interests Game, University of Missouri Career Center: <http://career.missouri.edu/index.php/career-interest-game>
- The Keirsey Temperament Sorter and Keirsey Temperament Theory: www.keirsey.com/

Information About Educational Options:

- Petersons: www.petersons.com/
- See the section in the SIIC binder on degree programs related to intercultural communication and relations.

Information About Jobs:

- **America's Career InfoNet:** www.acinet.org/acinet/
Developed by the Department of Labor, with links to states.
- **Careers Online Virtual Careers Show:** www.careersonline.com.au
Around 1000 job descriptions from Australia and the U.S., sorted into interest area groups.
- **Idealist:** <http://www.idealists.org/>
Nonprofit/NGO job and volunteer listings.
- **JobSmart/JobStar:** www.jobsmart.org
Hundreds of descriptions of occupations and extensive linkages to other sources.
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook:** www.bls.gov/ooh
Produced by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- **The Riley Guide:** <http://www.rileyguide.com>
An extensive database of resources, including information on international employment, listings by country and region, sources of international information, and a large number of links to other useful sites.

Information About International Jobs and Living Overseas

- American Citizens Abroad: www.americansabroad.org
- Escape Artist: www.escapeartist.com/going/home/htm
- Expat Exchange: www.expatexchange.com
- Expat Forum: www.expatforum.com
- World of Expats: <http://www.worldofexpats.com>

U.S. Government Sites (also check state and local governments):

- The Peace Corps: www.peacecorps.gov/
- The State Department (Foreign Service jobs): <http://www.state.gov/careers/>
- AmeriCorp*VISTA: www.cns.gov/americorps/

Publishers:

- Impact Publications: <http://www.impactpublications.com/internationalandtravel.aspx>
A large and comprehensive career book “superstore” and publisher with many books focused on international careers.
- Transitions Abroad: www.transitionsabroad.com
This web site for *Transitions Abroad* magazine includes a bookstore and links to other resources for study, work, and travel worldwide.

Professional Organizations:

- Association for Talent Development (ATD, formerly ASTD): www.td.org
- NAFSA: The Association of International Educators: www.nafsa.org
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL): www.tesol.org
- Society for Human Resource Management: www.shrm.org
- International Coach Federation: www.coachfederation.org

**Remember to search
for sites about specific organizations, schools, and communities.**