

FAST COMPANY

THE SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDE TO REINVENTION



As the owner and COO of [Sugarleaf Vineyards](#), the years spent creating and managing every aspect of the brand and watching it become nationally recognized was exhilarating. Mission accomplished: I created a highly regarded, consistent and profitable business. The business building was done, the branding was solid, the product was respected, sales were strong; the marketing plan was in place and effective—now what?

I knew the things I loved most about building Sugarleaf—developing the brand, marketing the company, devising growth strategies, driving sales, creating partnerships and speaking publicly about marketing and my entrepreneurial journey. This was

enough to motivate me to make the transition into my newest venture, as a [branding and marketing consultant](#) that would allow me to replicate similar success stories for other companies. I wanted to help brands create their marketing strategy with a youthful and entrepreneurial perspective.

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The list of motivating factors for professional transitions are endless—whether it's the impulsive pursuit of a dream, outgrowing your business or job title, a burning the desire for a change in scenery or workplace culture, or the result of natural professional progression. People generally advance beyond the boundaries and grow beyond the skills that once defined them. Corporate culture would refer to as "working your way up the corporate ladder" but in the entrepreneurial world it's called reinventing yourself and launching your newest venture. Serial entrepreneurs have to re-appropriate their skills and relevant experience to suit the needs of the new company and oftentimes wear multiple hats in the process.

Making the decision to choose and pursue a different path is easy. Getting beyond that point and actually making the transition is, without a doubt, the hardest part. There are a few things you should keep in mind if you want to succeed in making a professional transition:

1. Build a comprehensive support system. Surround yourself with a support system of peer mentors who understand you, your business and where you are in life. Develop and maintain relationships with successful high-level proven business people that you respect, admire, and aspire to be like professionally to help you navigate and execute your plan. Bring a trusted personal advisor onboard to be a sounding board. Hire a business coach or life coach if necessary.

2. Evaluate your strengths and skills. List the business skills that were required in your last position and the successes that you achieved. Determine if your experiences at your most recent company qualifies as hands on education to help you launch your next venture. Many of your skills should carry over to your new venture, so be sure to identify any additional professional areas of expertise that may be needed and seek counsel.

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3. List your priorities. Be clear about what's important to you and what you value most. Make sure that you can achieve your goals and objectives while maintaining work-life balance throughout your transition. Your business should work for you, and not against whatever equilibrium you create to ultimately make the transition manageable.

4. Clarify your vision. Create a mission statement for your business. Know your market's demographics and how you will reach them. Immerse yourself in the industry you've set your sights on, soak up as much knowledge as you can and form a professional network within that industry. Create your step-by-step action plan.

5. Know when to take the plunge. Timing is everything. Make sure that you plan (and accomplish) your exit strategy when transitioning. Keep in touch with your network and make sure that your transition is as seamless as possible. Make sure you understand the risk involved with changing jobs or creating a new business. Know the downside and be comfortable taking the plunge without having all of the answers, but also be comfortable asking for help, the upside will outweigh your fears!

Lauren Maillian Bias is the Founder and CEO of [Luxury Market Branding](#), a strategic marketing and branding consultancy where she brings her firsthand knowledge, expertise and passion for marketing to her clients. She is a member of [The Young Entrepreneur Council \(YEC\)](#), an invite-only nonprofit organization comprised of the world's most promising young entrepreneurs. The YEC promotes entrepreneurship as a solution to unemployment and underemployment and provides entrepreneurs with access to tools, mentorship, and resources that support each stage of their business's development and growth.

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