

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM



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DATES:

September 20 **Team Writing**
 October 4 **Dynamic Presentations**
 October 18 **Powerful Persuasion**
 November 1 **Leadership Communication Styles**
 and
 November 15 **The Agile Leader Workshop**

LOCATION: Herndon Training Center at CIT,
 8:30 am–12:30 pm

FULL CERTIFICATE PRICE: \$1,795
 Includes a complimentary seat in The Agile Leader workshop

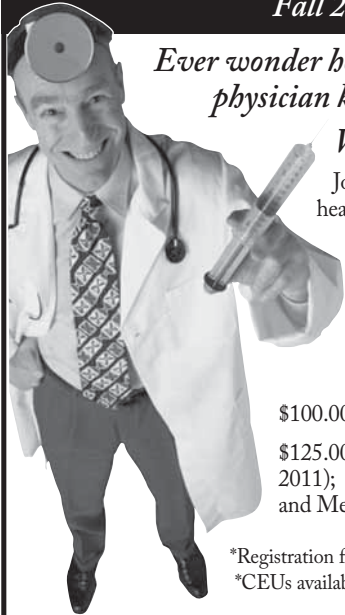
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 *CEUs available

To review the full list of topics and to register:

<http://som.georgetown.edu/prospectivestudents/specialprograms/minimed/>
 Questions? Contact minimed@georgetown.edu or call 202-687-5322



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A New Game Plan

Prepare for the worst by devising a strategy for a backup career

Adaptation

Joshua Lynsen felt the impact of the Great Recession firsthand. The news and multimedia editor of the Washington Blade was laid off in November 2009 when the local LGBT newspaper was abruptly shut down due to its parent company's financial woes. Even though the paper quickly reformed as the DC Agenda (it ultimately reverted back to the Washington Blade moniker) and Lynsen was re-employed, his sudden termination was a wake-up call that he needed to come up with a plan B.

"I was fearful that I was flailing," says the Silver Spring resident. "I was really apprehensive about what the future held."

Devising a plan for an alternative career as a safety net is easier said than done. The first step is often the most difficult, because it's the most intangible. "Soul-searching is hard," says career coach Mimi Darmstadter (301-728-6487; mylifeworkcoaching.com), who helps clients grappling with this stage of the process. "I force people to ask themselves the tough questions: 'What do I want to be when I grow up?' 'What's important to me?' 'What are the implications for other people?'"

A backup career has become a necessity as many industries face huge layoffs and even obsolescence. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 8.8 million people lost their jobs since the economic downturn began in December 2007.

Not wanting to become a statistic, Lynsen began figuring out what his alternative career might be. While he broadened his knowledge and hands-on experience managing the Washington Blade's online presence and community, he consulted with Darmstadter. She pushed him to take stock of his skills and



KEVIN DIETSCH

Kirsten Dawson reinvented herself as a restaurant construction project manager.

interests. "I realized that my strong writing background could translate really well into the social media arena," the 33-year-old says. "Coupled with a growing interest in public relations, I thought I could parlay these skills into something really fun."

Lynsen ended up leaving the Blade in August 2010 to pursue this course change without having a new job lined up yet. "It was a leap of faith," he says. He landed a job last fall as an account executive and social media manager with Chase Communications, where he handles PR and online strategies for the company.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

Kirsten Dawson, of Haymarket, Va., had already successfully executed a plan B in her early 30s, when she switched from doing sales for a large technology firm to being a doula. She never dreamed she'd have to come up with yet another career, but then her 36-year-old

husband had a massive stroke.

Dawson immediately stopped working so she could focus on managing the crisis. After a grueling year that included her husband's unsuccessful attempt to return to work, Dawson had an epiphany. "I realized that it was imperative that I got back to a full-time job that could be something that I could use to provide for my family for the rest of my working life," she says. "Because life was never going to be the same again."

As she talked to friends about what career she might pursue next, Dawson kept being reminded of how much she enjoyed working as a server and a bartender before she had a family. Those positions weren't fiscally viable options, but a friend in the industry passed on her résumé to Great American Restaurants. Dawson was hired into a junior position in the construction department, which oversees building new properties for the group. She was unsure of how much

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she'd like the work, but she quickly learned a valuable lesson. "You can reinvent yourself into anything if you're forced to," she says.

Six years later, she's a construction project manager for the company. "There's a self-satisfaction that comes from knowing you can learn something new," Dawson says. "It takes a lot of hard work, ambition, and the support of family and friends, but it's worth it."

EXPERT ADVICE

Dawson was lucky to have friends who guided her toward her new



Joshua Lynsen left print journalism to handle PR for Chase Communications.

career, because the process is not usually that easy.

A key component to branching out into a new field is to evaluate your strengths. Executive communications coach Larry Petcovic developed an online evaluation program called SciPhD (Sciphd.com), which helps post-doctoral candidates find work outside their primary industry. Like other, more general skill assessment tests such as Career Key (Careerkey.org) and SkillScan (Skillscan.com), this Web-based test determines clients' strengths in 24 categories

— such as "Delegation," "Social Intelligence" and "Risk Management" — then maps those results against various jobs.

"It helps people find their hidden talents," Petcovic says. "You need to figure out the skills you have that match the job you want, but you also have to figure out how your other skills enhance your ability to work with that business, which sets you apart from other applicants."

Those who've figured out what they want to do and the skills required to do it should dip their

toes in the water before plunging in, Darmstadter recommends. "Take a class or do some volunteer work," she says. "Expose yourself to opportunities to experiment with that new identity."

No matter what course one decides to take, the experts agree that the best time to begin conceiving plan B is while plan A is still in effect, so financial and emotional stresses don't cloud the process. Experts also recommend creating a savings cushion to give anyone between jobs some breathing space to weigh options. **NEVIN MARTELL**

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