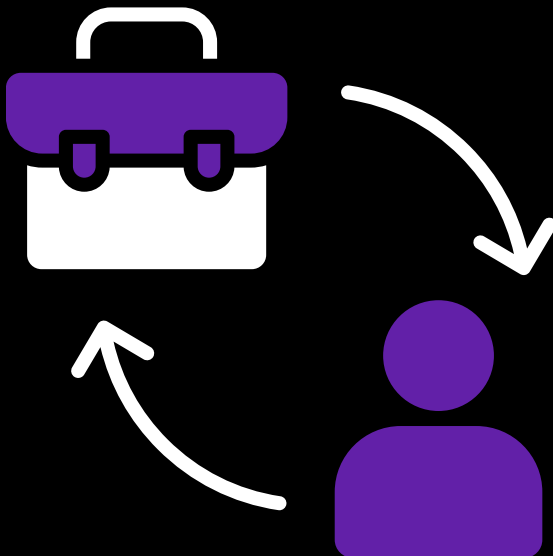


BEVERLY DINES

PIVOT

POWER

HOW TO ACTUALLY
PIVOT CAREERS AND
QUICKLY



PIVOT POWER

How to Actually Pivot Careers and Quickly

A Strategic Guide by Beverly Dines

INTRODUCTION

You've Already Pivoted More Than You Realize

Here's what I need you to know before we go any further: if you're reading this thinking you don't know how to pivot, you're wrong.

You've pivoted. Maybe you don't call it that. Maybe you call it "switching jobs" or "trying something new" or "that time I completely changed direction." But you've done it.

I've pivoted in over ten industries in ten years. Healthcare. Higher education. Financial technology. Nonprofit arts. Operations. Corporate leadership. Gig work. Creative roles. Content creation. Each pivot felt terrifying. Each pivot felt impossible until it wasn't.

And here's the truth that nobody tells you: the reason you're struggling to pivot, even though you and I both know you've got those transferable skills, is probably because you're not positioning yourself strategically. You're hoping someone will see what you can do. You're crossing your fingers that a hiring manager will understand that your skills transfer. You're applying to jobs spraying your resume like a wide net, hoping somebody will scoop you up.

In this market, strategy is everything.

This guide teaches you the strategy that got me into ten different industries. It's the same strategy that's going to get you into your next one.

CHAPTER ONE

The Adjacency Principle: Why You're Not Getting Interviews

The Problem Most People Face

Right now, I'm working with folks one-on-one who are doing something that's absolutely sabotaging their pivot. They're taking their resume, and they're spraying it across an entire industry with a wide net. They're hoping that somebody will see their transferable skills and scoop them up.

Let me be very clear: **that's not how hiring managers work.**

Hiring managers don't sit around thinking, "Oh, this person was in healthcare operations, but they have project management skills, so they'd probably be great in tech." That's not the thought process. What they're actually thinking is: "I need someone who understands tech. I need someone who knows tech culture. I need someone who can hit the ground running in tech."

They're not thinking about what you *could* do. They're thinking about what you've already done.

The reason you're struggling to pivot to a different industry or career, even though you and I both know that you've got those transferable skills, is probably because you're not using an adjacency principle in order to apply.

So here's how you do it from somebody who has pivoted in over ten industries in ten years.

Introducing the **Bev Pivot Principle**

I built this, so we're going to call it the **Bev Pivot Principle**. And it's going to change how you approach your entire pivot.

The Bev Pivot Principle works like this: You take your current job title and experience. Then you look at what industries are the most adjacent to where you are right now. Not where you want to be eventually. Where you are *right now*.

Let me give you a real example so this lands.

The Healthcare-to-HealthTech Pivot

Let's say somebody works as a Client Success Manager. They currently work as a Client Success Manager in healthcare. But they're looking to become a Client Success Manager in the tech space.

What I see a lot of folks doing is spraying their resume to every single Client Success Manager role in the tech space that they come across. They're thinking: "Okay, I'm doing this work in this industry. I absolutely can do it in this one. It's the same function."

But here's what they don't understand: even though you have done that function in a very specific industry, and even though you and I both know it's transferable, there is a bias when it comes to recognizing whether or not your applicability is going to make the most sense for their role in their industry, in their niche.

Hiring managers are asking themselves: "Does this person understand tech? Do they get how tech sales work? Do they understand the tech customer? Will they require a lot of onboarding just to learn the industry?"

So instead of jumping directly to general tech jobs and hoping something sticks, here's what I would advise: choose health tech jobs.

Health tech is adjacent to healthcare. It's adjacent to where you already are.

And not only is health tech adjacent to your current industry—there are a bunch of sub-niches under the health tech umbrella. Insurance technology. EMR technology. Healthcare logistics software. Telemedicine platforms. All of these are adjacent to healthcare operations.

Why Adjacency Works

Here's what happens when you apply to these adjacent roles instead of general roles:

You look applicable for the opportunity. You don't just have relevant experience—you have relevant *industry knowledge*. That matters enormously.

From a hiring manager's perspective, they're thinking: "This person has never worked in health tech specifically, but they understand healthcare. They understand healthcare terminology. They understand healthcare workflows. They understand healthcare compliance. The lift to onboard them compared to someone who's coming from retail or manufacturing is going to be significantly less."

You're going to be very exciting to hire because you're reducing their onboarding burden. You're reducing their risk. You understand the industry context already.

This is the competitive advantage that most people miss when they're pivoting.

The Real Advantage

Your on-the-ground experience in one industry becomes *critical expertise* in an adjacent industry.

Let me say that again because it's important: Your on-the-ground experience in one industry becomes critical expertise in an adjacent industry.

When you pivot using the Bev Pivot Principle, you're not starting from zero. You're starting from "this person already understands this industry." That's not nothing. That's actually huge.

CHAPTER TWO

Identifying Your Adjacent Industries

The First Step: Map Your Current Industry

Before you can find adjacent opportunities, you need to clearly understand where you are right now. Not where you want to be. Where you actually are.

Write down:

Your Current Industry: What industry are you in right now?

Your Current Function: What's your actual job title? What do you spend most of your time doing?

Your Current Specialty (if you have one): Are there particular niches or sub-specialties within your industry where you have experience?

Example: "I'm a Client Success Manager in healthcare operations, specifically in hospital administration."

This specificity matters because it helps you identify what's actually adjacent.

Finding Adjacent Industries

Here's what makes an industry adjacent:

It uses similar workflows to your current industry. The day-to-day processes are similar, even if the context is different.

It serves similar customer types. If you understand the customer psychology in healthcare, you understand the customer psychology in health tech.

It requires similar expertise or compliance knowledge. Healthcare compliance knowledge is valuable in health tech.

It values the same skill sets. If communication, problem-solving, and project management were valuable in your current role, they're valuable in adjacent roles.

The proximity isn't about job title. It's about the underlying systems, processes, and knowledge that transfer.

How to Identify Adjacent Industries

Step 1: Research Industry Clusters

Your industry doesn't exist in isolation. It exists within a broader ecosystem. Find that ecosystem.

Healthcare industry ecosystem includes:

- Hospital systems (your current location)
- Health insurance companies
- Medical device manufacturers
- Healthcare software and tech
- Healthcare consulting firms
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Healthcare nonprofits and research organizations
- Healthcare staffing agencies
- Medical education and training

All of these are adjacent to healthcare. All of them need people who understand healthcare.

Step 2: Find the Sub-Niches

Within each adjacent industry, there are sub-niches. These are often *less* competitive than the main industry and *more* aligned with your experience.

If you're pivoting from retail operations to tech operations, don't just look at "tech companies." Look at:

- E-commerce platforms (closer to retail than enterprise software)
- Logistics and supply chain tech (directly adjacent to retail operations)
- Marketplace platforms (essentially digital retail)
- Warehouse automation and management software
- Retail analytics platforms

Each of these is closer to retail operations than general tech is. Your experience translates more directly.

Step 3: Research Companies in Adjacent Industries

Once you've identified adjacent industries, research companies within those industries.

Look for:

- Companies that serve your current industry
- Companies that solve problems you've experienced in your current role
- Companies where people with your background actually work
- Companies that are hiring for roles similar to what you're currently doing

This research is important because it shows you: "People with my background already work here. This is a viable pivot."

Real-World Example: The Retail Manager Pivoting to Tech Operations

Current situation: "I'm a Store Manager in retail. I've been managing a team of 15, handling P&L for a \$2M budget, managing vendor relationships, and solving operational problems daily."

Adjacent industries instead of "tech":

- E-commerce operations (companies running online retail)
- Logistics and supply chain software (companies that solve retail's operational problems)
- Marketplace platforms (companies building digital retail systems)
- Warehouse automation (companies managing the backend of retail)
- Retail analytics platforms (companies selling to retailers)

Why these are better than general "tech":

- These companies hire from retail backgrounds
- These companies understand the problems you've solved
- These companies value your operational expertise
- You can speak their language because you understand their customers

When you apply to an e-commerce operations role, you're not a retail person trying to break into tech. You're an operations expert who understands the industry you're supporting.

Completely different positioning. Completely different odds.

CHAPTER THREE

Translating Your Skills Using Metrics

The Validation You Need to Hear

Your skills are not as industry-specific as you think they are.

Stop me if this sounds familiar: You're sitting with your resume thinking, "I've done X in retail/healthcare/nonprofit, but nobody in tech is going to care about that experience."

I see you. And I'm here to tell you that you're wrong about what you've actually accomplished.

You didn't just "manage a store." You managed complex systems. You solved problems. You made decisions with incomplete information. You motivated teams. You optimized processes. You delivered results.

Those aren't retail skills. Those are *universal* skills that every industry needs.

The problem isn't that your skills don't transfer. The problem is that you haven't translated them into the language of your target industry.

The Power of Metrics-Based Translation

Here's how you make your skills undeniable: metrics.

Metrics are the universal language of business. They transcend industry. They prove impact.

When you lead with metrics, you're not asking someone to *believe* you can transfer your skills. You're *showing* them that you've delivered measurable results.

Bad Approach (Vague and Industry-Specific):

"Managed retail operations and drove customer satisfaction."

This sounds like a retail person trying to work in retail. It doesn't translate to any other industry.

Better Approach (Metrics-Based Translation):

"Optimized operational workflows reducing process time by 35%, improved customer satisfaction scores from 78% to 94%, and managed \$2M annual budget while delivering 18% cost reduction through vendor optimization and process redesign."

Now you sound like an operations professional. The specific domain (retail) is less important than the measurable outcomes (35% efficiency gain, 40% satisfaction improvement, 18% cost reduction).

Building Your Metrics Portfolio

For each major accomplishment in your current role, identify:

The Problem You Solved

What operational challenge were you facing? What needed to be fixed?

Example: "Customer wait times were averaging 8-10 minutes at checkout, causing customer frustration and lost sales."

The Action You Took

What specific changes did you implement?

Example: "Redesigned checkout process, added real-time queue monitoring, and optimized staff scheduling based on traffic patterns."

The Measurable Result

What changed as a result of your action? How much? By what percentage?

Example: "Reduced average wait time to 3-4 minutes, improving customer satisfaction scores by 22 points and increasing repeat purchase rate by 12%."

The Business Impact

What did this mean for the organization?

Example: "This translated to approximately \$150,000 in additional annual revenue from improved customer retention and higher transaction volumes."

Converting Your Accomplishments

Now here's the translation piece. Take that accomplishment and reframe it for your target industry.

Current Accomplishment (Retail):

"Implemented new point-of-sale system, trained team of 15 on new workflows, and reduced transaction errors by 40%."

Translated for Tech/Operations (Same Accomplishment, Different Framing):

"Led cross-functional implementation of enterprise software system including staff training, process redesign, and quality assurance protocols, achieving 40% reduction in errors and 95% system adoption rate."

See what happened? The core accomplishment is the same. But the language shifted from "retail" to "enterprise operations." The metrics prove capability regardless of industry context.

Another Example:

Current Accomplishment (Healthcare):

"Coordinated patient scheduling across 12 providers, reducing appointment wait times by 6 weeks and improving patient satisfaction."

Translated for HealthTech:

"Optimized complex scheduling systems across multi-provider networks, implementing process improvements that reduced wait times by 30% and improved satisfaction metrics from 72% to 89%."

The core skill is the same: optimizing complex systems with multiple stakeholders. The language shifted to emphasize the operational and analytical aspects that any industry values.

Creating Your Skills Inventory

Build a document with your top 10 accomplishments. For each one, include:

- 1. The accomplishment as you'd describe it in your current industry**
- 2. The core skill demonstrated** (problem-solving, optimization, team leadership, etc.)
- 3. The metrics that prove your impact**
- 4. How you'd reframe this for your target industry**

This isn't dishonesty. You're not changing what you did. You're translating it into language that other industries understand and value.

The Secret That Changes Everything

Industries are more similar than they are different.

Every industry has:

- Complex systems that need optimization
- Teams that need leadership
- Customers/users that need understanding
- Problems that need solving

- Budgets that need management
- Processes that need improvement

The terminology might be different. The context might be different. But the fundamental challenges are the same.

When you translate your accomplishments using metrics instead of industry jargon, you prove that you can solve *these* problems—regardless of which industry you're in.

That's transferability. That's positioning. That's how you make yourself applicant to adjacent industries.

CHAPTER FOUR

Finding Where You're Already Doing the Work

The Shortcut Most People Miss

Here's something that blew my mind when I realized it: you might already be doing the work of your pivot inside your current role.

You might not realize it. You might not have framed it that way. But you might already have experience in your target field *while being employed in your current field*.

This is the shortcut that nobody talks about.

Real Talk: You Might Already Have the Experience You Think You Need

Let me give you an example.

You're a healthcare operations manager. You want to pivot to tech operations. You think you need to start from scratch. You think you need to somehow "get tech experience."

But what if—in your current healthcare operations role—you've been managing the implementation of new software systems? What if you've been coordinating with IT teams? What if you've been optimizing digital workflows?

Congratulations. You have tech operations experience. You just don't call it that.

Your job title says "Healthcare Operations Manager." But your actual work—the problem-solving, the systems thinking, the technology coordination—is operations work that exists in any industry.

The question is: how much of your current role already aligns with your target role? And can you lean into that while you're still employed?

The Self-Audit: Where Are You Already Aligned?

Answer these questions honestly:

What percentage of your current role could be described as work you'd do in your target field?

Be specific. Not "most of it" or "some of it." What percentage? 30%? 50%? 70%?

What specific projects or responsibilities in your current role use skills you'd use in your target field?

List them. Write them down. Be specific about what you're actually doing.

What terminology from your target field is already part of your current work?

If you want to move into tech, do you use tech terminology now? Do you manage technology systems? Do you work with developers or IT teams?

What gaps exist between your current role and your target role?

Be honest about what you're *not* doing. What skills or experience do you actually lack?

The Implosive Pivot Strategy

Here's where it gets powerful.

If there are gaps between your current role and your target role, you can strategically take on projects in your current job that close those gaps.

I call this the **Implosive Pivot Strategy**. It's the act of taking on projects or opportunities at your current job that better position you for the job you want to pivot to.

You're not waiting to get hired in your target field. You're not hoping someone will take a chance on you. You're actively building the experience you need *while still employed*.

Real Examples of the Implosive Pivot Strategy

Example 1: Retail to E-Commerce Operations

Current situation: Store manager in retail

Target: Operations coordinator at e-commerce company

Gap: You haven't managed digital operations or logistics systems

Implosive pivot strategy: Volunteer to manage the online ordering system implementation for your retail location. Coordinate with the tech team. Learn the backend systems. Manage inventory in the digital space.

Now when you apply to e-commerce companies, you don't just say "I managed a store." You say "I managed the implementation and ongoing operations of our digital ordering system, coordinating with technology teams and managing inventory across both physical and digital channels."

You've closed the gap.

Example 2: Marketing to Product Marketing

Current situation: General marketing manager at a company

Target: Product marketing manager at a tech company

Gap: You haven't managed product launches or worked closely with product teams

Implosive pivot strategy: Ask to lead the product launch for a new offering. Partner with the product team. Learn the product development process. Own the messaging around how the product solves customer problems.

Now when you apply to product marketing roles, you say "I led product launches, managed cross-functional coordination with product teams, and developed go-to-market strategy for new offerings."

You've positioned yourself as a product marketer.

Example 3: Healthcare to HealthTech

Current situation: Operations manager in a hospital

Target: Operations coordinator at a health tech company

Gap: You haven't managed healthcare software implementations or worked with tech vendors

Implosive pivot strategy: Get your company to fund a healthcare operations software implementation. Lead the process. Manage vendor relationships. Coordinate training and adoption.

Now when you apply to health tech companies, you say "I led enterprise software implementations in healthcare environments, managed vendor partnerships, and coordinated adoption across multiple departments."

You've built health tech experience while working in healthcare.

How to Identify Implosive Pivot Opportunities

Look for projects in your current role that:

Involve skills your target role requires. If you're pivoting to a tech role, look for projects that involve technology. If you're pivoting to leadership, look for projects that involve team management.

Stretch you toward your target industry. The project should move you closer to where you want to be, not further away.

Benefit your current employer. This is important—the project should help your current company, not just help you. You're solving a real problem while building your experience.

Are visible and documentable. You need to be able to put this on your resume and talk about it in interviews. It can't be a side project nobody knows about.

Align with professional development opportunities. Can your company fund training related to this project? Can they pay for certifications that would support both this project and your long-term growth?

The Funding Hack: Using Your Company's Professional Development Budget

Here's something most people don't realize: your current company probably has a professional development budget they want you to use.

This is the secret weapon.

You can propose to your manager: "I want to take the [relevant certification/course]. Here's how it would directly benefit our organization: [specific benefit]. It would also help me lead [relevant project]."

Now your company is funding your pivot. You're getting the credentials you need. You're building the experience you need. And you're doing it while getting paid.

Real Example:

You want to pivot from marketing to product management. You propose: "I want to take the Pragmatic Product Management certification. This would help us improve our product development process and better align our marketing efforts with product strategy. I'd like to apply this knowledge to leading the [upcoming product initiative]."

Your company funds the certification. You take the course. You lead the project. You build product management experience. You get a new credential on your resume.

When you apply to product manager roles, you don't just have your certification—you have hands-on experience applying it.

That's strategic pivoting.

The Communication Strategy

When you pitch these opportunities to your manager, frame them as:

A business benefit to your current organization. Not "I want to learn this for my own career." But "This will help us solve [problem] and improve [metric]."

A leadership development opportunity for you. Managers are usually excited about developing their staff. Positioning it as your growth makes them more likely to support it.

A specific, time-bounded project. Not "I want to learn product management eventually." But "I want to lead this specific product initiative and get certified in product management to do it well."

A mutual win. You get experience and skills. They get a skilled employee and improved organizational capability.

This approach works because it's honest. You're not hiding your intentions. You're not being deceptive. You're saying "I want to develop in this direction, and here's how that benefits us both."

Most managers respect that.

The Implosive Pivot Timeline

The implosive pivot isn't instant. It takes time. But it's significantly faster than waiting for someone to hire you without experience.

Realistic timeline:

Months 1-2: Identify opportunities and propose projects

Talk to your manager. Identify gaps in your experience. Propose a project that closes that gap.

Months 3-4: Take relevant training or certifications

Pursue credentials that support both your project and your pivot.

Months 5-12: Lead your project while building experience

Execute the project. Document your accomplishments. Build real experience in your target area.

Month 12+: Pivot with credibility

Now when you apply to your target role, you don't say "I want to learn this field." You say "I led this project. I have this certification. I have real experience."

Your odds of getting hired increase dramatically.

The Power of This Approach

The implosive pivot strategy works because:

You're building real experience, not hoping for hypothetical capability. You're not asking someone to believe you *could* do tech operations. You've *done* tech operations—maybe in a different context, but you've done it.

You're reducing the hiring manager's risk. When you apply to your target role, you're not an unknown quantity. You're someone who's already completed a relevant project. You're lower risk.

You're demonstrating commitment. You didn't just *talk* about pivoting. You actually took steps to make it happen. That signals seriousness to potential employers.

You're getting paid while you prepare. You're not taking an unpaid internship. You're not leaving your job and hoping something works out. You're strategically using your current employment to build your next opportunity.

This is how you pivot without the financial risk.

CHAPTER FIVE

Stop Being a Generalist: The Specialization Advantage

The Truth About Generalists in a Pivot

There's something people aren't telling you about pivoting: the harder you try to be everything to everyone, the harder it is to get hired anywhere.

This is especially true when you're pivoting.

Too many people approach a pivot thinking, "I'm a generalist. I can do operations. I can do project management. I can do client success. I can do anything operations-adjacent."

Stop. This approach is actively working against you.

When you're pivoting, being a generalist makes you *less* hireable, not more.

Here's why:

Hiring managers are trying to solve a specific problem. They need someone for a specific role. When you come in as a generalist saying "I can do lots of things," what they hear is "I'm not particularly good at any one thing."

When you're coming from a different industry, generalism reads as lack of focus. Specialization reads as commitment and expertise.

The Generalist Trap

You fall into this trap because it feels safe.

If you say "I can do operations," you're casting a wider net. More jobs might fit. You have more options.

Except you don't. You have fewer options because you're competing against specialists in every category.

You're competing against operations specialists who know tech operations. You're competing against client success specialists who know SaaS. You're competing against project managers who know agile environments.

You're not competing. You're losing.

How Specialists Stand Out

A specialist can say: "I'm an operations professional who specializes in HealthTech implementations. I've managed three enterprise software rollouts in healthcare settings. I understand healthcare compliance, healthcare workflows, and healthcare customer needs."

A generalist says: "I'm an operations professional with experience in various industries. I can do different types of operations work."

Who sounds more credible? The specialist.

Who would you hire? The specialist.

The specialist might not be able to do *general* operations. But they can do *specific* operations better than anyone else. And for the job you're hiring for, specific is exactly what you need.

Identifying Your Specialization

Your specialization should sit at the intersection of three things:

What you're actually good at. Not what you think you should be good at. What do you have real skill in? Where do you get consistent results?

What's needed in your target industry. What problems does your target industry have? What skills are always in demand?

What's different from what everyone else offers. What's your edge? What combination of skills is less common?

Real Example: The Healthcare Admin Pivoting to HealthTech

What you're good at:

- Healthcare operations (8+ years)
- Staff management and training

- System implementations
- Customer/patient communication

What's needed in HealthTech:

- Understanding of healthcare workflows
- Experience managing healthcare implementations
- Knowledge of healthcare compliance
- Ability to communicate with healthcare customers

Your differentiator:

- You understand both the healthcare side AND the technology side
- You can translate between clinicians and tech teams
- You've actually been on the healthcare side of implementations (not just tech side)

Your specialization: **Healthcare operations professional specializing in healthcare software implementations with deep understanding of clinical workflows and healthcare customer needs.**

That's specific. That's valuable. That's hireable.

Building Your Specialization

You don't need to wait to pivot to specialize. You can start now.

Step 1: Choose Your Specialization

Not "operations." But "HealthTech operations" or "E-commerce operations" or "SaaS operations."

Pick one. Make it specific.

Step 2: Lean Into It in Your Current Role

When you have choices in your current job, choose projects that reinforce your specialization.

If your specialization is HealthTech operations, volunteer for health IT projects. Seek out work that involves healthcare and technology.

Step 3: Pursue Specialization-Relevant Education

Get a certification, take a course, read industry reports—all specific to your specialization.

If your specialization is healthcare software implementations, get a project management certification with healthcare focus. Join healthcare IT associations. Follow healthcare technology news.

Step 4: Network in Your Specialization

Connect with people who work in your specialization. Go to industry events for your specialization. Join communities focused on your specialization.

You're signaling to the market: "I'm serious about this specific area."

Step 5: Update Your Positioning

When you talk about yourself—on LinkedIn, in interviews, on your resume—emphasize your specialization.

Not: "Operations professional with experience in various industries"

But: "Operations professional specializing in healthcare software implementations"

The second one is memorable. The second one is hireable. The second one is you.

The Specialization Advantage for Pivots

When you specialize, several things happen:

You're competing against fewer people. There are thousands of operations professionals. There are hundreds of SaaS operations professionals. There might be dozens of HealthTech operations professionals. Fewer competitors means better odds.

You're more valuable to your target market. If someone needs a HealthTech operations person, you're exactly what they need. You're not competing; you're the solution.

You stand out in interviews. When you can speak knowledgeably about your specialization, you demonstrate expertise and commitment. Generalists can't do this.

You attract referrals. People remember specialists. "I need a HealthTech operations person" is easier to match than "I need an operations person."

You command better compensation. Specialists are paid more than generalists. You have more leverage.

The Counter-Argument (And Why It's Wrong)

"But if I specialize too much, won't I limit my options?"

Short answer: no. Longer answer: you might have fewer total options, but you'll have better options.

A specialist has 10 great opportunities.
A generalist has 50 mediocre opportunities.

Better to have 10 great than 50 mediocre.

And here's the real secret: once you establish yourself as a specialist, you can pivot to adjacent specializations more easily.

If you're a HealthTech operations specialist and you want to move to InsurTech operations, that's an easier jump than moving from "operations generalist" to "InsurTech operations specialist."

You've already proven you can be a specialist. Now you're just changing the vertical.

Your Specialization Blueprint

Complete this for yourself:

My target industry: [Specific industry]

My target function: [Specific role]

My specialization: [Intersection of what you're good at + what's needed in target industry + your differentiator]

How I'll position this specialization: [How you'll talk about yourself]

How I'm building this specialization now: [What you're doing today to specialize]

This is your pivot blueprint. This is how you go from generalist hoping for opportunities to specialist attracting them.

CHAPTER SIX

Communicating Your Pivot: The Resume and LinkedIn Positioning

The Communication Challenge

You've identified your adjacent industry. You've documented your metrics. You've found experience you're already building. You've chosen your specialization.

Now you need to communicate all of this in a way that hiring managers in your target industry understand.

This is where most pivots fail.

People position themselves using the language of their current industry. Then they wonder why nobody in their target industry understands their application.

The Language Translation

You need to translate your resume and positioning from current-industry-language to target-industry-language.

This isn't hiding who you are. This isn't being dishonest. This is speaking the language your target audience uses.

Current Industry Language:

"Managed retail operations including staff scheduling, inventory management, customer service delivery, and P&L responsibility."

Target Industry Language (E-commerce):

"Managed operations for multi-channel fulfillment environment, including team coordination, inventory optimization, customer experience improvement, and budget accountability."

Same accomplishments. Different language. The second one speaks to e-commerce people because it uses their terminology.

Building Your Pivot Resume

Your pivot resume isn't a new resume. It's a translation of your existing resume.

Step 1: Use Your Current Accomplishments

Don't make up new accomplishments. Use what you've actually done. But reframe it.

Step 2: Use Target-Industry Terminology

Pull language directly from job descriptions in your target industry. Use their words when describing what you've done.

Step 3: Lead With Your Most Relevant Accomplishments

Reorder your bullet points to emphasize accomplishments that translate to your target industry.

If you're pivoting from retail to e-commerce operations, lead with your inventory management accomplishments, not your customer service accomplishments. They're both relevant, but one translates more directly.

Step 4: Emphasize Metrics

Metrics are universal. They work in any industry. Lead with numbers, percentages, and measurable results.

"Reduced operation costs by 22% through process optimization" translates across industries.

Step 5: Include Your Specialization

Somewhere in your resume—probably in a professional summary—state your specialization clearly.

"Operations professional specializing in healthcare technology implementations with proven track record of successful enterprise software rollouts."

Real Example: Retail Manager to E-Commerce Operations

Original Resume (Retail Industry Language):

Store Manager
ABC Retail Company | 2018-2024

- Managed daily retail operations for 15-person team and \$2M annual budget

- Implemented new point-of-sale system, training staff and reducing transaction errors by 40%
- Improved customer satisfaction scores from 78% to 94% through staff training and process optimization
- Managed vendor relationships and negotiated contracts resulting in 18% cost reduction

Translated Resume (E-Commerce Industry Language):

Operations Manager
ABC Retail Company | 2018-2024

- Managed multi-channel operations including point-of-sale, inventory systems, and fulfillment logistics for team of 15 with \$2M annual budget accountability
- Led implementation of enterprise point-of-sale and inventory management systems, coordinating cross-functional teams and achieving 95% system adoption rate with zero downtime
- Optimized operational workflows and customer experience processes, improving performance metrics from 78% to 94% and increasing order fulfillment efficiency by 22%
- Managed vendor and supplier relationships across 12+ partners, negotiating terms and consolidating services for 18% annual cost reduction while maintaining service levels

See what happened? The accomplishments are identical. The language shifted from "retail operations" to "operational systems and fulfillment logistics." The second version speaks to someone hiring for e-commerce operations roles.

LinkedIn Positioning for Pivots

LinkedIn is where people first discover you. Your headline and summary need to signal your specialization and target industry.

Current LinkedIn Headline (Generic):

"Retail Manager | Operations Professional | Leader"

Target Industry LinkedIn Headline (Specialized):

"Operations Professional Specializing in E-Commerce Fulfillment | Experienced with Enterprise System Implementations"

The difference is night and day.

Step-by-Step LinkedIn Update

- 1. Update your headline** to include your specialization and target industry
- 2. Rewrite your summary** to speak to your target industry. Use language from job descriptions in that industry.
- 3. Reorder your experience section** to emphasize accomplishments most relevant to your target industry.
- 4. Add a skills section** that includes terminology from your target industry.
- 5. Get endorsements** for skills relevant to your target industry.
- 6. Join groups** in your target industry.
- 7. Follow companies** in your target industry.
- 8. Share content** from your target industry.

You're signaling: "I'm serious about this industry. I understand this industry. I belong in this industry."

The Professional Summary: Your Specialization Statement

Many people skip the professional summary. Don't.

Your professional summary is where you state your specialization clearly. It's where you make the case for your pivot.

Structure:

"[Title/Role] specializing in [your specialization]. [Years] of experience delivering [key results]. Proven expertise in [target industry relevant skills]. Ready to bring [your unique value] to [target industry]."

Real Example:

"Operations professional specializing in healthcare technology implementations. 8+ years delivering successful enterprise software rollouts across hospital systems. Proven expertise in managing complex implementations, coordinating cross-functional teams, and ensuring rapid adoption in healthcare environments. Ready to bring deep healthcare operations knowledge combined with technology implementation experience to HealthTech organizations."

This communicates:

- Your specialization (healthcare tech implementations)
- Your experience level (8+ years)
- Your track record (successful rollouts)
- Your unique value (both healthcare AND tech)
- Your target (HealthTech)

Addressing the Pivot Directly

Some people want to be subtle about their pivot. They want to position themselves as if they've always been in their target industry.

Don't do that.

Be honest about your pivot. But frame it strategically.

In a cover letter or interview, you might say:

"I've spent [X years] as a [current role] in [current industry]. During that time, I became increasingly passionate about [target industry] and developed a specialization in [specific area]. I've strategically taken on projects that position me for this transition, and I'm now ready to bring my [specific skills] to [target industry]."

This communicates:

- You're coming from another industry (transparent)
- You didn't randomly decide this (intentional)
- You've been preparing (committed)
- You bring unique perspective (valuable)

Transparency builds trust. And for a pivot, trust is everything.

The Language Alignment Audit

Before you submit an application:

1. Read the job description and extract the top 10 keywords
2. Check: do these keywords appear somewhere in your resume?
3. Does your positioning speak to the target industry?
4. If a hiring manager reads your resume, would they understand that you understand their industry?

If the answer is no, rewrite until it's yes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Master Interview Language for Your Pivot

The Real Problem With Pivot Interviews

Your resume got you the interview. Congratulations.

But now comes the part that actually determines whether you get the job: the interview itself.

Here's what most people don't realize: the interview is where your pivot either becomes obvious (in a good way) or becomes a liability.

And the difference comes down to language.

Hiring managers in your target industry don't care about your job title in your previous role. They don't care that you were officially called "Store Manager" when what they need is someone who can "manage operations."

They care about one thing: Can you do THIS job?

The way you prove you can do this job is by speaking their language. By using their terminology. By demonstrating that you understand their industry and their challenges.

This chapter teaches you exactly how to do that in interviews.

The Principle: Translate First, Then Tell Your Story

Before we get into specific situations, understand this fundamental principle:

You don't answer the question they literally asked. You answer the question they're actually asking.

When a hiring manager asks "What's your technical experience?" they're not asking for a catalog of tools you've used. They're asking: "Can you operate the specific systems we need you to operate?"

When they ask "Have you led teams before?" they're not asking for your official job title. They're asking: "Can you influence, direct, and manage people?"

Your job in the interview is to:

- 1. Acknowledge what they're really asking for**
- 2. Provide specific evidence from your experience**
- 3. Use their industry language and terminology**

4. Connect your accomplishment directly to their current need

Let me show you exactly how to do this.

Situation 1: "Tell Me About Your Technical Experience"

What They're Really Asking

A hiring manager asking about technical experience is not asking for a list of tools. They're asking:

- Can you use complex systems?
- Can you learn new systems quickly?
- Do you understand the technical concepts relevant to this role?
- Will I have to train you from scratch, or can you be productive immediately?

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "I've used various software tools including Excel, basic HTML, and CRM platforms. I'm a quick learner and can pick up new systems as needed."

Why this fails: You sound like you have surface-level knowledge. You're hedging ("various software," "basic HTML"). You're not demonstrating mastery of anything. You're asking them to believe you'll learn their system.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

Step 1: Lead with the specific tools relevant to their role, not a generic list

Don't say: "I've used software systems"

Say: "I've worked extensively with [specific systems they care about] and [related systems]"

Step 2: Provide specific context for how you used those tools

Don't say: "I'm proficient in Excel"

Say: "I used Excel extensively to manage [specific outcome], creating dashboards that tracked [metric] and [metric], resulting in [quantified result]"

Step 3: If they ask about tools you haven't used, bridge to related tools you HAVE used

Don't say: "I haven't used that specific tool"

Say: "I haven't used [tool name] specifically, but I've used [comparable tool] extensively and managed [similar responsibility]. The underlying principles are similar, and here's why I'm confident learning [tool name] quickly: [specific example of how you learned a similar system]"

Step 4: Connect your technical capability to business outcomes

Don't separate "here's what I know how to do" from "here's what I delivered"

Connect them: "Using [technical tool], I accomplished [business result]"

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce Operations

Interview question: "Tell me about your technical experience. We need someone who can manage our e-commerce platforms and inventory systems."

Bad answer: "I'm decent with computers. I've used basic software at my retail job and I'm willing to learn new systems."

Good answer: "I've worked with point-of-sale systems and inventory management software extensively. At my retail position, I managed our ABC Retail System—which tracks real-time inventory across 15 locations and integrates with our supply chain—and I implemented our new digital ordering platform. That implementation required coordinating with our IT team to integrate the system with our existing inventory management, training the team, and optimizing the process. We achieved a 95% system adoption rate with zero operational downtime.

I haven't used your specific e-commerce platform, but the principle is the same: managing inventory visibility, order flow, and system integration. I learn new systems quickly—when we transitioned to our new retail management system, I was up to full productivity in 2 weeks and training my team within 3 weeks."

What just happened:

- You named specific tools and systems (point-of-sale, inventory management, digital ordering)
- You demonstrated proficiency through concrete accomplishments
- You showed you can learn new systems quickly (with proof)
- You bridged to their need (managing their specific platform)
- You used their language (adoption rate, system integration)

Scenario 2: Nonprofit Manager Pivoting to SaaS

Interview question: "What's your experience with technical systems? We use Salesforce heavily and our team needs to understand how customer data flows through our system."

Bad answer: "I haven't worked directly with Salesforce, but I'm familiar with databases and I pick up software quickly."

Good answer: "I haven't worked specifically with Salesforce, but I've managed customer relationship systems in a nonprofit environment, which actually gives me perspective on how customer data should flow.

In my nonprofit role, I used [CRM system name] to track donor relationships, interactions, and giving patterns across our entire database of 50,000+ donors. I designed workflows that automatically tracked donor engagement and flagged high-value prospects for our development team. I also coordinated with our analytics team to pull reports that informed our fundraising strategy.

The core principle in Salesforce—customer data flowing through the system to inform business strategy—is exactly what I did with [system]. I'm confident that learning Salesforce's specific functionality would take me 3-4 weeks of concentrated effort, and here's why: I've transitioned between multiple CRM systems and each time I focused on understanding the underlying logic first, then learning the platform-specific tools. By the time I left my nonprofit role, I was the go-to person for our CRM troubleshooting."

What just happened:

- You named the specific system you *have* used
- You explained the principles that transfer (customer data flow, workflows, reporting)
- You showed you understand what they need (customer data informing strategy)
- You demonstrated you can learn their system with a realistic timeline
- You proved competence through past system transitions

Scenario 3: Healthcare Operations Manager Pivoting to FinTech

Interview question: "We need someone who understands API integration and data security. Tell me about your technical experience."

Bad answer: "I don't have a development background, but I've worked with software systems and understand basic technology concepts."

Good answer: "I've managed technical implementations in healthcare—an industry that's extremely regulated around data security, which is actually similar to what FinTech requires. In my healthcare operations role, I led the implementation of our EHR system, which required me

to understand data security requirements, system integration between departments, and compliance protocols.

Specifically, I worked with IT teams to ensure our patient data was properly encrypted and integrated across multiple systems while maintaining HIPAA compliance. I participated in security audits, managed vendor relationships for our system integrations, and ensured that any new system additions had proper API integration with our existing infrastructure.

While I haven't worked in FinTech specifically, the principles are directly applicable: you have sensitive data that needs to be secure, systems that need to integrate properly, and regulatory requirements that must be met. I understand the business logic behind technical requirements and can translate between technical teams and business stakeholders. That's actually my value—not coding, but understanding how technology serves your business goals and managing implementations that deliver that value."

What just happened:

- You pivoted to what you DO have (regulated industry experience)
- You showed you understand their actual need (data security, integration, compliance)
- You positioned your strength (translating between technical teams and business)
- You proved you can learn their specific context (FinTech, APIs) because you've done similar translations

Situation 2: "Have You Led Teams Before?"

What They're Really Asking

When a hiring manager asks "Have you led teams?" in a role that requires leadership, they're not asking for your official title. They're asking:

- Can you influence people to work toward a goal?
- Can you make decisions and stand by them?
- Can you manage conflict and resolve problems?
- Have you held people accountable?
- Have you motivated people to deliver results?

It doesn't matter if your title was "Manager," "Coordinator," "Project Lead," or "Specialist." What matters is whether you've actually done leadership work.

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "Well, I've never officially managed people, but I've worked on teams and I think I have good leadership qualities. I'm good at communication and I like helping people develop."

Why this fails: You sound like you're asking them to believe in your potential rather than demonstrating your capability. You've given them exactly what they're afraid of: uncertainty about whether you can actually lead.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

Critical mindset shift: Stop thinking about your official title. Start thinking about the actual work you've done.

Have you ever:

- Been responsible for getting a group of people to accomplish something?
- Made decisions that affected multiple people?
- Had to convince people to do something they weren't originally enthusiastic about?
- Had to correct someone's work or performance?
- Had to coach or develop someone's skills?
- Had to break down a complex goal and assign parts of it to different people?

- Had to keep track of progress and hold people accountable?

If you've done ANY of these things, you've done leadership work. Even if your title doesn't say "Manager."

The key is framing it correctly:

Don't say: "While I haven't officially managed people..."

Say: "I led a team of [X people] to accomplish [specific goal]"

Don't hide the fact that they weren't officially your direct reports. But lead with the leadership you actually did.

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Retail Supervisor Pivoting to Operations Manager

Interview question: "Tell me about your experience leading teams. This role requires managing a team of 8-10 people."

Bad answer: "I've been a supervisor, but I've never managed a full team as a manager. I supervised retail associates and helped train new staff, but I've never had formal management responsibility."

Good answer: "I've led teams of 12-15 people in my retail supervisor role. Here's what I mean by that: I was responsible for daily team coordination, scheduling, performance management, and training. I held people accountable for their performance and sales goals. When we had performance issues—like staff not meeting customer service standards—I had to address it directly through coaching and, when necessary, corrective action."

One specific example: we had high turnover in our store, which was hurting our customer service scores. I analyzed the issue, identified that most people were quitting within their first 90 days because training was weak, and I redesigned our entire onboarding and training program. I led the training rollout, held team members accountable to the new

standards, and coached them through the transition. Within 6 months, our 90-day retention improved from 40% to 78%, and our customer satisfaction scores increased by 12 points.

That's team leadership: identifying a problem, designing a solution, implementing it across my team, holding people accountable, and delivering measurable results."

What just happened:

- You claimed leadership even though your title was "Supervisor"
- You specified the size and scope of your team
- You gave concrete examples of leadership activities (accountability, training, coaching)
- You showed business impact of your leadership
- You positioned the job you're interviewing for as similar to leadership you've already done

Scenario 2: Healthcare Coordinator Pivoting to Operations Manager

Interview question: "This role requires managing a team of 6-8 people. Have you managed teams before?"

Bad answer: "I haven't officially managed people, but I've coordinated with different departments and I'm organized and a good communicator."

Good answer: "I haven't had 'Manager' in my title, but I've absolutely led teams to accomplish complex goals. In my coordinator role, I managed the implementation of our new patient scheduling system across three hospital departments. That project involved coordinating 25+ staff members across different departments, managing their concerns about the transition, training them on the new system, and holding them accountable to adoption timelines.

Here's what that leadership looked like: I had to convince people who were resistant to change to embrace a new system. I had to break down the implementation into phases and assign responsibility to different department leads. I had to track progress, identify blockers, and

problem-solve when things went wrong. When people fell behind on adoption, I followed up directly to understand why and coached them through the issue.

The result: we achieved 95% adoption rate with zero downtime, and the new system reduced scheduling errors by 40%. That's team leadership—getting a large group of people aligned on a goal, managing their concerns, holding them accountable to timelines, and delivering measurable results."

What just happened:

- You reframed "coordinator" work as leadership
- You specified exactly how many people you influenced (25+)
- You described the core leadership activities you actually did
- You showed you can manage resistance and drive change
- You connected it to business results
- You positioned yourself as ready for the manager role they're hiring for

Scenario 3: Project Specialist Pivoting to Project Manager

Interview question: "Tell us about your experience managing projects and teams."

Bad answer: "I've been a project specialist for 3 years, supporting project managers. I've never officially managed a project myself, but I've learned a lot from watching PMs do it."

Good answer: "While my title has been 'Project Specialist,' I've actually managed several projects end-to-end. Let me give you a specific example: we had a customer request to customize our product for a new use case. The PM on our team was overallocated, so I took ownership of that project.

I defined the scope with the customer, broke it into work streams, assigned tasks to developers and designers, and managed the timeline. When the developers hit a technical blocker, I diagnosed the issue,

worked with them to find a solution, and adjusted our timeline accordingly. I communicated status to the customer weekly and managed their expectations when we had delays. We delivered the customization on time and the customer was satisfied enough to sign a multi-year contract.

That's full project management: defining scope, breaking work into pieces, assigning resources, identifying and resolving blockers, managing stakeholder communication, and delivering results on time. I've now managed 4 projects in that way, and I'm ready to formalize that into a full project manager role."

What just happened:

- You reframed your specialist work as actual project management
- You told a specific, detailed story of a complete project
- You showed you can handle the key PM responsibilities (scope, resources, blockers, communication)
- You proved you deliver results
- You positioned yourself as ready to transition to PM as your official role

The Framework for Any Leadership Question

Here's the framework you can use for ANY question about leadership you haven't "officially" done:

- 1. Acknowledge what they're really asking:** "You're asking whether I can lead people to accomplish goals and deliver results."
- 2. Claim the leadership you DID do:** "I've done exactly that in my [previous role], though it wasn't my official title."
- 3. Give a specific, detailed example:** "Here's the project/initiative I led: [specific example with people involved, scope, challenge, and result]"

- 4. Describe the actual leadership work:** "My role in leading that project involved [specific leadership activities: making decisions, managing conflict, coaching, holding accountability, etc.]"
- 5. Connect to business impact:** "The result was [quantified result that mattered to the business]"
- 6. Position for the role:** "That's exactly the kind of [project/team/initiative] I'd be managing in this role, so I'm confident I can be successful."

The key is: **Stop waiting for someone to give you permission to call yourself a leader. Lead in your current role, then claim it in interviews.**

Situation 3: "Why Are You Pivoting? Why Should We Take a Risk on You?"

What They're Really Asking

When a hiring manager asks why you're pivoting, they're not asking for a personal story. They're asking:

- Are you running away from something, or running toward something?
- Will you be happy in this role, or will you leave in 6 months when you realize it's not what you wanted?
- Are you taking this seriously, or is this a desperation move?
- Do you understand what this job actually is?

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "I've been in healthcare for 8 years but I'm really interested in tech now. Tech seems more exciting and the pay is better. I think I'd be good at it."

Why this fails: You sound like you're chasing something shiny. You're not demonstrating that you understand what you're signing up for. You're suggesting you might leave again if something else seems better.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

The key is showing strategic intentionality, not random career-hopping.

Your answer should communicate:

1. You've been thoughtful about this pivot (not impulsive)
2. You understand what the new role actually involves
3. You have genuine motivation (not just running away)
4. You bring something unique from your background
5. You're committed to this direction long-term

The structure:

"I've spent [X years] in [current industry]. During that time, [specific experience that pushed you toward this pivot]. I became interested in [target industry/function], and I've been strategically building experience in that area. [Specific examples of how you've built relevant experience].

What appeals to me about this move is [specific, authentic reasons related to the role itself]. My background in [current industry] actually gives me a unique advantage: [how your background helps in target role].

I'm not looking for something new. I'm looking to apply my skills in [specific area where you're strong] to the [specific problem or industry] where I can have the most impact."

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Healthcare Manager Pivoting to HealthTech

Interview question: "You've spent 8 years in hospital operations. Why pivot to healthcare software now? Why should we trust you'll stay?"

Bad answer: "I've always been interested in technology and I think HealthTech is growing. The pay is better and I wanted a change. I think I'd really like working in tech."

Good answer: "I spent 8 years in hospital operations, and I became deeply frustrated with the tools we were forced to use. Our EHR system was clunky, our scheduling system caused constant conflicts, and our data couldn't talk across departments. I watched clinicians spend hours fighting with systems instead of focusing on patients.

That frustration turned into interest: what if I worked on the *other side*? What if I helped build the systems that hospitals actually need instead of just dealing with the ones we have?

So over the last 2 years, I strategically started building toward this pivot. I led our hospital's implementation of a new patient management software. I coordinated with the vendor team, managed the adoption across our organization, and learned firsthand how healthcare software companies think about solving our problems. I also got certified in healthcare IT project management.

What appeals to me about this move is the opportunity to solve the problems I experienced directly. I'm not running away from healthcare—I'm leaning into my expertise in healthcare operations and applying it to building better solutions. HealthTech companies need people who *understand healthcare*, and that's exactly what I bring. I'm not going to get bored because I'm still solving healthcare problems—I'm just doing it from the software side."

What just happened:

- You showed thoughtful motivation (frustration → strategic pivot)
- You demonstrated intentionality (you've been building relevant experience)
- You proved you understand the target industry (HealthTech)

- You positioned your healthcare background as an asset, not a liability
- You explained why you'll stay (solving problems you're passionate about)

Scenario 2: Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce Operations

Interview question: "You've been in retail management for 6 years. Why jump to e-commerce now? This is a pretty different world."

Bad answer: "Retail is declining and e-commerce is the future. I want to be in a growing industry. I think e-commerce would be more interesting."

Good answer: "You're right—retail and e-commerce are different. But here's why this isn't actually a random jump: I've been watching retail evolve for 6 years, and I saw the writing on the wall. More customers shopping online. More complexity in managing both channels. Our company started investing in e-commerce, and I deliberately raised my hand for projects that brought me closer to that side of the business.

I managed the rollout of our online ordering system for our store. I coordinated with our e-commerce team, learned how their operations worked, and managed the integration between physical inventory and online fulfillment. I also took a course in e-commerce operations and got certified in supply chain management.

What appeals to me is the operational challenge. Retail store operations has ceiling—I'm managing one location. But e-commerce fulfillment is managing the operations for thousands of simultaneous orders. That's a bigger problem to solve. And here's where my retail background is valuable: I understand inventory management, I understand logistics, I understand customer experience. I understand the *retail perspective* of what e-commerce customers expect because I've been selling to them for 6 years.

I'm not leaving retail because I'm bored. I'm leveraging my retail expertise to solve bigger operational challenges on the e-commerce side."

What just happened:

- You acknowledged the transition is real (not dismissing their concern)
- You showed you've been intentional about building bridge experience
- You explained your motivation clearly (bigger problems to solve)
- You positioned your retail background as an advantage
- You showed you understand what e-commerce operations actually involves

Scenario 3: Nonprofit Program Manager Pivoting to SaaS Product Management

Interview question: "You've been managing nonprofit programs. What makes you think you're ready for SaaS product management? These are pretty different roles."

Bad answer: "I've been interested in tech for a while and I think SaaS product management would be a cool career change. I'm a fast learner and I think I'd be good at it."

Good answer: "You're right—nonprofit program management and SaaS product management are different. But here's what I've realized: at its core, both roles are about understanding a customer problem and building a solution that solves it. And I've been doing that in nonprofits for 5 years.

In my nonprofit program manager role, I managed programs that served vulnerable populations. I had to understand their problems deeply, design programs that addressed those problems, test my assumptions, get feedback, iterate, and measure impact. I did that with limited resources and had to be strategic about what to build.

I became interested in nonprofits that use software to scale their impact, and I realized: the software companies building those tools need people who understand nonprofit problems. So I deliberately shifted my focus. I took on a project to evaluate and implement donor management software for our organization. I worked closely with the vendor team, became deeply familiar with their product, and understood how software could solve the problems I was managing manually.

That experience showed me I wanted to be on the product side: helping nonprofit organizations build better tools by deeply understanding their problems and translating that into product strategy.

What appeals to me about SaaS product management is the scale. In nonprofits, I solved problems for 100-200 beneficiaries. In SaaS, my decisions could impact thousands of organizations and the millions of people they serve. My nonprofit background is an asset because I deeply understand the nonprofit customer—their constraints, their values, their needs. Most SaaS teams don't have that lived experience. I do."

What just happened:

- You showed the underlying skill is the same (understanding problems and building solutions)
- You demonstrated intentional bridge-building
- You positioned your nonprofit background as unique insight, not a liability
- You showed you understand the SaaS industry (scale, customer focus)
- You explained why you're pivoting (bigger impact) not why you're running away

Situation 4: "Tell Me About a Time You Had to Learn Something Completely New"

What They're Really Asking

This question appears in almost every interview for a pivot. They're asking:

- When faced with unfamiliar terrain, do you panic or problem-solve?
- Do you ask for help or try to figure it out alone?
- How quickly do you get productive?
- Do you take initiative or wait to be told?

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "Um, well, I've always been a quick learner. In my job I've learned new systems pretty easily. I'm comfortable with change."

Why this fails: You're giving generic qualities instead of specific evidence. You're not showing them *HOW* you learn or *HOW* quickly.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

Use the **STAR method**, but with emphasis on the actual learning process:

- **Situation:** What was the skill/system/industry you had to learn?
- **Task:** Why did you have to learn it? What was at stake?
- **Action:** Specifically, how did you go about learning it? What steps did you take? Who did you ask? How did you prioritize?
- **Result:** How quickly were you productive? What did you accomplish once you learned it?

Key: Don't just say "I learned it." Describe the *process* of learning.

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Healthcare Manager Pivoting to Tech

Interview question: "Tell me about a time you had to learn something completely new and unfamiliar."

Good answer: "When we implemented our new EHR system at the hospital, I had zero experience with enterprise health IT systems. The system was incredibly complex—it had modules for scheduling, patient records, billing, and pharmacy, and they all had to integrate seamlessly.

Here's what I did: First, I asked to attend the vendor's advanced training course—not just the basic one everyone got. That gave me the conceptual framework. Then, I partnered with our IT team to understand the technical side—not to become a developer, but to understand how the system actually worked under the hood.

While the rest of my team was learning through trial and error, I created a reference guide for common workflows. I also scheduled weekly 'office hours' where people could ask me questions about the system. By doing this, I was learning through teaching—every question forced me to understand the system more deeply.

Three weeks into implementation, when other departments were still struggling with basic functions, my team was already optimizing workflows. I was promoted to lead the implementation across the entire hospital.

The key is: I didn't just passively learn. I actively sought to understand not just *how* to use the system, but *why* it worked that way. That deeper understanding made me productive fast and able to train others."

What just happened:

- You gave a specific situation (EHR implementation)
- You described your learning process step-by-step (training, partnering with IT, creating guides)
- You showed you took initiative (asking for advanced training, creating resources)
- You proved you got productive quickly (3 weeks)
- You showed you can teach others what you learned
- You connected it to business impact (promoted to lead implementation)

Scenario 2: Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce

Interview question: "Tell me about a time you had to master something you'd never done before."

Good answer: "When our company launched our e-commerce platform, I volunteered to be the store manager liaison between our physical operations and the online side. I had literally zero e-commerce experience.

Here's what I did: I asked to shadow our e-commerce operations team for a week. Not in a classroom setting—I spent actual time in their work, seeing how they managed inventory across channels, how they handled fulfillment, how they solved problems differently than we did in stores.

Then I identified the gaps in my knowledge. I realized I didn't understand supply chain software or fulfillment logistics, so I took a 4-week online course in supply chain management. While I was taking the course, I was applying concepts to our actual business—I mapped how our inventory flows from our warehouse to stores to online fulfillment.

I also spent time with our warehouse team learning how they managed inventory and how online orders flowed through their system. I created process documentation that both retail and e-commerce teams could reference.

Six months later, I was the go-to person for solving problems between retail and e-commerce operations because I understood both sides deeply. That's when they asked if I wanted to transition to the e-commerce operations team officially."

What just happened:

- You named something you truly didn't know (e-commerce)
- You described specific learning strategies (shadowing, formal course, hands-on application)
- You showed you took initiative to fill gaps

- You connected learning to business value (solving cross-functional problems)
- You proved you got productive quickly (6 months to being a go-to expert)
- You showed the learning led to career advancement

Scenario 3: Nonprofit Manager Pivoting to SaaS

Interview question: "Tell me about a time you had to learn something completely new."

Good answer: "When I decided to pivot toward SaaS product management, I realized I didn't understand how software companies actually work—the methodology, the language, the decision-making frameworks were completely foreign to me.

I did three things simultaneously: First, I took a product management certification course and actually studied the fundamentals of product strategy, roadmapping, and release cycles. Second, I volunteered for our organization's software selection and implementation project, which put me in the room with actual software vendors and made me understand how software products are built and sold. Third, I started reading books and blogs from product leaders in SaaS companies.

But here's the key—I didn't just consume information. I applied what I was learning to my actual job. I started thinking about my nonprofit programs through a product lens: What's the core problem we're solving? Who's our customer? What are our success metrics? How do we know if our program is working?

That shift in thinking made me dangerous fast. Within 6 months, I was able to have intelligent conversations with software vendors about their product roadmap. Within a year, I was consulting with other nonprofits about software selection.

When I interviewed for product manager roles, I came in not as a nonprofit person hoping to break into tech, but as someone who deeply understands the nonprofit customer and has studied product

management methodology. The combination made me uniquely valuable."

What just happened:

- You described the gap you identified (don't understand SaaS)
- You described specific learning strategies (certification, hands-on project, reading)
- You showed you applied learning immediately
- You proved you got productive quickly (6 months to intelligent conversations)
- You showed the learning made you uniquely valuable
- You positioned yourself as bringing nonprofit expertise + product knowledge

Situation 5: "How Will You Handle the Learning Curve?"

What They're Really Asking

This is a direct question about your confidence in your ability to pivot. They're asking:

- Are you realistic about what you don't know?
- Are you overconfident, or appropriately confident?
- Will you ask for help or try to figure everything out alone?
- How do you handle frustration when things are hard?

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "I learn quickly so the learning curve won't be steep for me. I'm confident I can figure it out."

Why this fails: You sound arrogant or naive. You're not acknowledging what you actually don't know. You're suggesting it won't be hard, which isn't credible.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

Acknowledge what's genuinely different, then explain how you'll navigate it.

Structure:

"The learning curve will involve [specific things that are genuinely different in target industry]. Here's what I'll do: [specific strategies for managing that learning curve]. Based on [past example], I can [realistic timeline for productivity]. I'm committed to [specific way you'll accelerate the learning]."

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Healthcare Manager Pivoting to FinTech

Interview question: "FinTech is different from healthcare in almost every way. How will you handle learning our industry and our technology?"

Good answer: "FinTech is genuinely different from healthcare in meaningful ways—the regulatory environment, the pace of change, the customer expectations are all different. I'm realistic about that.

What's NOT different is the core skill I'm bringing: managing complex implementations where security and data integrity are critical, and where you can't afford mistakes. In healthcare, we're managing patient data—one mistake can harm someone. In FinTech, one mistake costs someone money. The stakes are different but the mindset is the same.

Here's how I'll handle the learning curve: First, I've already started studying the FinTech regulatory landscape and how it differs from healthcare. I've read case studies on major FinTech implementations and identified what makes them succeed or fail. Second, I'll ask you specifically: what are the top 3-4 things I need to understand in the first 90 days? I'll create a learning plan around those priorities.

Third, I won't pretend I'm an expert in areas where I'm not. I'll ask questions upfront. I'll find mentors on your team who understand FinTech deeply and I'll learn from them. In my healthcare role, I successfully transitioned from clinical operations to IT operations—completely different domain. It took me 6 months to be fully productive, and by month 6 I was solving problems that saved the organization significant money.

I expect a similar timeline here: 3 months to understand the landscape, 6 months to be fully productive and creating value, 12 months to be a senior contributor."

What just happened:

- You acknowledged what's genuinely different (regulatory, pace, customers)
- You identified what transfers (complex implementation management)
- You named specific strategies (learning plan, asking for mentors)
- You showed self-awareness (won't pretend to be expert)
- You provided realistic timeline based on past experience
- You positioned learning as an investment, not a liability

Scenario 2: Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce Operations

Interview question: "Your background is pure retail. Our operations are completely digital. How confident are you that you can actually do this job?"

Good answer: "Fair question. Here's what I'm realistic about: I don't have e-commerce operations experience, and that will be a learning curve. The systems are different, the logistics are different, the metrics might be different.

But here's what I bring: I've managed complex operations, I understand inventory management, I understand customer experience, and I understand how to optimize processes. Those skills transfer. What I

need to learn is the *specific context*—how e-commerce operations differ from retail operations.

Here's my plan to close that gap: First, I've spent the last 6 months learning your industry. I understand your technology stack, I've studied your competitors' approaches, and I understand the unique challenges of e-commerce fulfillment. Second, I'll identify the top metrics you care about—I'm guessing it's fulfillment speed, order accuracy, and cost per unit—and I'll become an expert on how those metrics work in your environment.

Third, I'll partner closely with your existing operations team for the first 90 days. I won't come in pretending I know better. I'll come in asking questions and learning your systems. In retail, when I was promoted to a new store, I always spent the first month just observing before making changes. I'd do the same here.

Based on my transition experience, I'd expect to be independently productive within 3-4 months, and fully ramped by 6 months. By month 6, I'll be able to identify optimization opportunities that your team hasn't had bandwidth to explore."

What just happened:

- You admitted what you don't know (e-commerce operations experience)
- You listed what you DO know (operations, inventory, customer experience)
- You named specific strategies for learning
- You showed you've already started learning (studied industry, competitors)
- You demonstrated collaboration mindset (partnering with existing team)
- You gave realistic timeline
- You positioned yourself as bringing fresh perspective while respecting existing expertise

Scenario 3: Nonprofit Manager Pivoting to SaaS

Interview question: "You've never worked in a SaaS company. We move really fast, we iterate rapidly, and our metrics are completely different. Can you really adapt to that?"

Good answer: "You're right—nonprofit operations and SaaS are different paces. But I'd argue that nonprofits operate in a fast, uncertain environment too; we just handle it differently. We work with limited resources, constantly shifting priorities, and we have to adapt quickly because we're serving vulnerable populations.

That taught me how to move fast with incomplete information and stay calm when priorities change. The 'fast' in nonprofits is different from 'fast' in SaaS—in SaaS you're iterating on product features; in nonprofits you're iterating on program approach. But the underlying skill—comfort with ambiguity and ability to adapt—transfers.

What I'll need to learn is your specific metrics and methodology. I understand OKRs in theory, but I need to understand how *you* use them. I understand agile in theory, but I need to understand your sprint cycles and how you make decisions.

Here's how I'll get up to speed: First, I've already been reading about SaaS product management and studying how companies like [Company X] and [Company Y] operate. Second, I'll ask you to assign me a mentor in month 1—someone who lives and breathes your culture—and I'll learn from them. Third, I'll contribute to small projects first to learn your processes before taking on bigger initiatives.

I'm a fast learner and I adapt well, but not because I'm naturally gifted—it's because I've intentionally developed those skills by working in high-change environments. I expect I'll be productive within 2-3 months and fully integrated within 6 months."

What just happened:

- You reframed nonprofit experience as transferable (uncertainty, adaptation)
- You acknowledged what's genuinely different (metrics, methodology)

- You showed you've already started learning
- You had realistic expectations
- You planned specific strategies (mentor, small projects first)
- You positioned yourself as bringing something valuable from nonprofit world, not as a blank slate

Situation 6: "What Do You Know About Our Industry?"

What They're Really Asking

This is the critical test for pivots. They're asking:

- Have you actually studied our industry, or are you just hoping to get hired?
- Do you understand our competitive landscape?
- Do you understand our customer?
- Do you understand our challenges?
- Are you serious about this pivot?

How Most People Answer (And Why It Fails)

Bad answer: "Well, I know you're a FinTech company and the fintech industry is growing. I've read about some of your recent funding rounds. I think it's an exciting space."

Why this fails: You've done the bare minimum research. You sound interested but not informed. You don't understand their actual business or challenges.

How to Answer Using the Pivot Principle

You need to answer with specific information that shows:

1. You understand their industry/market
2. You understand their competitive position
3. You understand their customer

4. You understand their challenges
5. You understand how this role fits into solving those challenges

Structure:

"The [industry] is [specific trends and dynamics]. Your company specifically [what they're known for/their positioning]. The competitive landscape is [key competitors and dynamics].

What I understand about your customer is [specific insight about their needs/challenges]. And I think that's where your opportunity is in [specific area].

This role is important because [how this role solves the challenge you identified]."

Real Examples for Different Pivot Scenarios

Scenario 1: Healthcare Manager Pivoting to HealthTech

Interview question: "Tell us what you know about the HealthTech space."

Good answer: "HealthTech is experiencing significant growth because healthcare providers are under pressure on two fronts: rising costs and increasing regulations like interoperability requirements from CMS. Providers have legacy systems that don't talk to each other, and they're desperately looking for solutions.

Your company specifically focuses on [what they do], which positions you to solve [specific problem]. You're competing against [major competitors], but your advantage is [specific differentiation].

From my time in healthcare, I understand the customer—hospital administrators are risk-averse, they move slowly, and they need proof that a system works before they adopt it. They also have technical teams with strong opinions about what will work. That means your sales and

implementation process needs to respect their risk profile and their technical expertise.

I also understand the implementation challenge. Bringing a new system into a hospital is massive—it requires coordinating multiple departments, managing change resistance, and proving ROI. Most healthcare software companies underestimate how long true adoption takes. I've lived that experience from the hospital side.

What I see is an opportunity for companies like yours to differentiate on implementation success—not just building a great product, but ensuring healthcare customers actually adopt and use it. That's where I think I can add value in this role: I understand what healthcare customers need to successfully adopt new systems."

What just happened:

- You showed specific industry knowledge (regulatory trends, customer pressures)
- You understood their competitive position
- You understood their customer deeply (risk-averse, slow-moving)
- You identified a business opportunity (implementation success)
- You connected this role to solving that opportunity
- You positioned your healthcare background as specific insight, not generic experience

Scenario 2: Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce Operations

Interview question: "What do you understand about the e-commerce space?"

Good answer: "E-commerce is in a period of consolidation right now. Everyone thought pure-play e-commerce was the future, but what's actually winning is omnichannel—companies like Walmart and Target that can leverage physical stores as fulfillment centers and create seamless customer experiences across channels.

Your company specifically is positioned as [their positioning], and you're competing against [key competitors] by [their differentiation]. The competitive advantage right now belongs to companies that can fulfill orders faster and cheaper than Amazon—that means distributed fulfillment networks and inventory optimization.

From my retail background, I understand the operations challenge that's actually critical in e-commerce: inventory accuracy. When you're managing inventory across online and physical channels, one wrong number causes either stockouts—and angry customers—or overstock and wasted money. Most e-commerce operations teams are fighting inventory inaccuracy constantly.

I also understand fulfillment efficiency. In retail, we optimized for in-store operations. In e-commerce, everything is about speed and cost. But the core principle is the same: how do we get the order to the customer as fast as possible with zero errors?

What I see as your opportunity is inventory optimization. If you could reduce inventory inaccuracy by 50% and reduce fulfillment time by 20%, you'd have a significant competitive advantage. In retail, I improved inventory accuracy through process redesign. I think that expertise applies directly here."

What just happened:

- You showed specific industry knowledge (omnichannel trends, competition)
- You understood their positioning and competitive landscape
- You understood the actual customer pain point (inventory accuracy, fulfillment speed)
- You identified a business opportunity (inventory optimization)
- You connected your experience to that opportunity
- You positioned yourself as solving a specific, concrete problem

Scenario 3: Nonprofit Manager Pivoting to SaaS

Interview question: "What do you understand about the SaaS space, and specifically our market?"

Good answer: "SaaS is consolidating around verticalization—companies that build for specific industries are outperforming generalists. In the nonprofit space specifically, there's a massive opportunity because nonprofits have been underserved by software companies. They have different needs than enterprises—lower budgets, smaller teams, mission-driven decisions.

Your company specifically is solving [specific nonprofit problem], and you're gaining traction against [competitor] because nonprofits prefer solutions built specifically for them over enterprise software adapted for nonprofits. Your customer acquisition strategy focuses on [how you acquire customers], which is smart because nonprofits talk to each other.

What I understand about the nonprofit customer—from having been one—is that they make decisions differently than enterprises. Cost is a primary factor, but so is mission alignment. They want software companies that *understand* their work, not just sell them a product. They're skeptical of companies that don't seem to get nonprofit challenges.

I also understand the adoption challenge. Nonprofits have limited IT resources, so implementation and support have to be straightforward. And they want to see ROI quickly—if they implement your software and save 10 hours a week, they need to see that value within 90 days.

Where I think you have an opportunity is in customer success and retention. A lot of nonprofit software companies acquire customers and then lose them because implementation is hard or ROI isn't clear. If you could improve your customer success process to ensure nonprofits are getting clear ROI within 90 days, you'd have higher retention and better expansion revenue. My nonprofit experience means I understand that journey deeply."

What just happened:

- You showed specific market knowledge (verticalization, nonprofit underserving)
- You understood their competitive position and customer acquisition
- You understood their customer psychology (mission-driven, budget-conscious)
- You identified a business opportunity (customer success and retention)
- You connected your nonprofit background to solving that problem
- You positioned yourself as solving a specific, concrete challenge

The Interview Framework for Pivots

Here's the framework you can use for ANY interview question when you're pivoting:

1. Listen for the actual question behind the question

What are they really asking about? Capability? Commitment? Realistic understanding? Learning ability?

2. Lead with the capability you DO have

Don't start with what you don't have. Start with what you bring.

"I've managed complex [relevant skill] in [current industry]..."

3. Bridge to their world

Connect your experience to their specific context.

"...which gives me insight into [their challenge] because..."

4. Show specific industry knowledge

Prove you've studied their industry and understand it specifically.

"What I understand about [their industry] is..."

5. Identify a business problem you could solve

Position yourself as solving a specific challenge they face.

"I think your opportunity is..."

6. Give a realistic timeline for productivity

Show you're realistic, not overconfident.

"I'd expect to be productive in [X timeline] based on..."

This framework works for almost any pivot interview situation.

The Mindset: You're Not Less Qualified, You're Differently Qualified

The final thing I want you to understand:

When you walk into an interview for a pivot, you might feel like you're behind because you don't have the exact title or exact industry experience. You're not behind. You're differently qualified.

You bring:

- Proven capability in complex problem-solving (just in different context)
- Understanding of a customer or market most of their team doesn't have
- Fresh perspective because you didn't grow up in their industry
- Commitment—you chose this pivot intentionally
- Humility—you know what you don't know

These are not liabilities. These are advantages.

The hiring manager isn't looking for someone exactly like their last hire. They're looking for someone who can solve their current problem. If

you can demonstrate you understand their problem and you have the foundational skills to solve it, your different background becomes your competitive advantage.

Speak their language. Show you understand their business. Prove you can deliver results. And own your pivot.

That's how you interview your way into a new industry.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Adjacency Principle in Action: Case Studies

Case Study 1: The Healthcare Administrator Pivoting to HealthTech Operations

Current Situation:

Sarah is a Hospital Operations Manager. She's been managing hospital operations for 8 years. She loves healthcare but is frustrated with clinical pressures and wants to move to the tech side of healthcare.

She wants to be an Operations Manager at a healthcare software company.

The Problem:

Sarah applies to HealthTech Operations Manager roles. She gets no callbacks. She has the right title, the right experience level, but nobody is calling.

Here's why: her resume looks like hospital operations. Her accomplishments are about hospital operations. She talks about clinical

workflows and patient safety. That's valuable in hospitals. But HealthTech companies worry that Sarah doesn't understand tech.

The Solution Using The Bev Pivot Principle:

Instead of applying to general HealthTech companies, Sarah targets Health IT solution providers and healthcare software companies—especially ones that sell to hospitals (adjacent to where she is).

Companies like:

- Epic (EHR software)
- Cerner (Healthcare IT)
- Optum (Healthcare software and solutions)
- CVS Health's tech division

These companies understand that Sarah has deep healthcare knowledge. They know healthcare software companies need people who understand healthcare.

What Sarah Changes on Her Resume:

Instead of: "Managed hospital operations including clinical workflow coordination, staff scheduling, and patient safety protocols"

She rewrites: "Managed enterprise healthcare operations including system coordination, team leadership, and compliance management across complex multi-department environment"

Same role. Different language. Now it speaks to HealthTech.

The Adjacency Advantage:

Sarah isn't trying to break into "tech." She's moving from hospitals to healthcare technology companies. These companies desperately need people who understand hospitals because that's who they sell to.

Sarah goes from "person from healthcare wanting to break into tech" to "healthcare expert moving to healthcare tech."

Completely different positioning. Completely different odds.

Result:

Sarah gets interviews at three HealthTech companies. She gets hired. Her healthcare knowledge becomes her competitive advantage at a tech company.

Case Study 2: The Retail Manager Pivoting to E-Commerce Operations

Current Situation:

Marcus is a Store Manager for a large retail chain. He's managed stores for 6 years. He's good at operations, managing teams, and P&L responsibility. He wants to move into e-commerce operations.

He applies to e-commerce operations roles. Nothing.

The Problem:

Marcus is applying to pure-play e-commerce companies (Amazon, Shopify, etc.). His retail experience doesn't translate to their hiring managers because they don't need someone who understands retail. They need someone who understands e-commerce and logistics.

Marcus feels like he's starting from zero.

The Solution Using Adjacency:

Instead of applying to pure e-commerce, Marcus applies to companies that bridge retail and e-commerce:

- Companies running omnichannel retail (both physical stores and e-commerce): Target, Walmart, Best Buy

- Companies offering retail software for online ordering: Toast, Lightspeed
- Companies managing retail fulfillment and logistics: ShipBob, Flexport (for smaller retailers)
- Companies that sell to retail: Shopify, Squarespace

These companies understand that retail operations knowledge is valuable for understanding how e-commerce impacts retail.

What Marcus Changes on His Resume:

Instead of: "Managed retail store operations including inventory, staffing, customer service, and P&L for \$2M budget"

He rewrites: "Managed multi-channel fulfillment operations including inventory optimization, team coordination, customer experience, and budget management for \$2M operation"

He adds experience with point-of-sale systems and digital integration that actually happened in his retail role.

The Adjacency Advantage:

Marcus isn't trying to become an e-commerce person from scratch. He's moving from brick-and-mortar retail to omnichannel retail/e-commerce operations. The companies in this space understand that his retail background is exactly what they need because they support retailers.

Result:

Marcus interviews with Target in their omnichannel operations team. His retail knowledge becomes his selling point. He's hired within 3 months.

Case Study 3: The Nonprofit Marketing Manager Pivoting to SaaS Product Marketing

Current Situation:

Jennifer spent 5 years as a Marketing Manager at a nonprofit. She managed campaigns, community engagement, and donor communications. She loves the work but is burned out from nonprofit salaries.

She wants to move to SaaS product marketing.

She applies to SaaS companies. Nobody calls.

The Problem:

Jennifer's resume screams "nonprofit." Her accomplishments are about community engagement and donor relations. SaaS companies don't understand how nonprofit marketing translates to product marketing.

Jennifer feels like her marketing experience doesn't count.

The Solution Using Adjacency:

Instead of applying to consumer SaaS companies, Jennifer applies to companies that sell to nonprofits:

- Nonprofit management software: Blackbaud, Donorbox, GiveWP
- Nonprofit fundraising platforms: Classy, Network For Good
- Nonprofit communication tools: Constant Contact (nonprofit edition), Mailchimp
- Nonprofit operations software: Little Green Light, Bloomerang

These companies understand nonprofits deeply because they serve nonprofits.

What Jennifer Changes on Her Resume:

Instead of: "Managed marketing campaigns for nonprofit including community outreach, donor communications, and fundraising support"

She rewrites: "Managed product marketing including customer communications, campaign strategy, and lifecycle marketing for nonprofit audience"

She emphasizes metrics from her nonprofit work: growth in audience, engagement rates, conversion on asks.

The Adjacency Advantage:

Jennifer isn't learning product marketing from scratch. She's moving from a nonprofit organization (the customer) to a nonprofit software company (the vendor).

She has deep knowledge of the customer because she was the customer. That's incredibly valuable for a product marketer at a nonprofit software company.

Result:

Jennifer interviews with Blackbaud in their nonprofit product marketing team. Her nonprofit background is her superpower. She's hired in 2 months.

The Pattern Across All Three Case Studies

Notice what happened in each case:

- 1. They didn't jump to their "dream industry."** Sarah didn't jump to all-purpose tech. Marcus didn't jump to Amazon. Jennifer didn't jump to consumer SaaS.
- 2. They moved to an adjacent industry** where their current experience was valuable. Healthcare to HealthTech. Retail to omnichannel. Nonprofit to nonprofit software.
- 3. Their current expertise became a competitive advantage.** In each case, the skills and knowledge from their current industry were exactly what their target company needed.

- 4. The pivot was smaller and faster.** They weren't trying to completely reinvent themselves. They were expanding in a logical direction.

This is the Bev Pivot Principle in action.

CHAPTER NINE

Handling Objections and Addressing Gatekeeping

The Objection: "You Don't Have Experience in Our Industry"

This will happen. You'll apply. An interviewer will say, "You've never worked in tech/SaaS/healthcare. How do we know you'll succeed here?"

This is not a dealbreaker. It's an opportunity.

How to Address It:

"I've worked extensively with [relevant adjacent experience]. In fact, that experience might be an asset here because I understand [customer perspective/workflow/challenge] from the inside.

Here's what I did: [specific project that demonstrates capability in target area]. This project required me to [specific skills needed for target role], and I delivered [measurable results].

I'm confident I can learn your specific context because [proof of learning ability]."

You're acknowledging the gap while simultaneously proving you've already done similar work.

The Objection: "We Really Need Someone Who Already Knows [Specific Software/Process]"

This sounds like a hard requirement. It usually isn't.

How to Address It:

"I understand the value of that background. I've used [comparable software] extensively. The principles are similar, and I learn new software quickly.

In fact, my background in [adjacent software/process] gives me a perspective on how [specific software] could be optimized for your workflow.

Here's my track record learning new systems: [example of how you quickly learned a complex system]. I'm confident I'll be productive with [specific software] within [reasonable timeframe]."

You're not saying the requirement doesn't matter. You're saying you can meet it quickly because you've demonstrated learning capability before.

The Objection: "We've Never Hired Someone from Outside Our Industry"

This is actually a gatekeeping comment more than a real objection.

How to Address It:

"I appreciate that. And I think that might be exactly why I could be valuable to your team.

I bring a fresh perspective on [industry challenge]. I've solved similar problems in [adjacent industry], and I can bring those solutions here. Plus, I understand [customer/market] from the inside because I worked there.

I'm not trying to be something I'm not. I'm offering a different perspective combined with [specific relevant expertise]. Let me show you how that could help you solve [specific company challenge]."

You're reframing it from "I'm not from your industry" to "My perspective is valuable because I'm not from your industry."

CONCLUSION

Your Pivot is Possible

You came into this guide thinking: "I want to pivot, but nobody will hire me from a different industry."

I'm here to tell you that's not true.

The barrier isn't that you're unqualified. The barrier isn't that your skills don't transfer. The barrier is that you haven't positioned yourself strategically.

The Bev Pivot Principle changes that.

Use adjacency. Move to industries next to where you are, not across the world from where you are. Your current experience becomes an asset instead of a liability.

Translate your accomplishments using metrics. Metrics work in any industry. Your results speak louder than your job title.

Find where you're already doing the work in your current role and double down on it. Use the Implosive Pivot Strategy to build experience in your target field while getting paid for it.

Specialize. Stop trying to be everything to everyone. Be exceptional at something specific.

Communicate strategically. Use the language of your target industry. Translate your positioning. Make it clear that you understand and can contribute to your target field.

Master interview language for your pivot. In interviews, speak their language. Use their terminology. Demonstrate that you understand their business, their customers, and their challenges. Lead with your capability, bridge to their world, and show specific industry knowledge.

This is how I've pivoted ten times in ten years. This is how you pivot too.

You've got the skills. You've got the capability. You've got the heart.

Now you've got the strategy.

Go pivot.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The most important thing I want you to know:

You're not broken. You're not unqualified. You're not incapable of pivoting.

You just need to know the game.

Once you understand the Bev Pivot Principle, once you understand how to position yourself using adjacency and metrics, once you understand that you might already be building the experience you think you need, once you master the language of your target industry and speak it confidently in interviews—everything changes.

You go from hoping someone will see your potential to *showing* them your capability.

You go from applying blindly to applying strategically.

You go from fearing your industry transition to owning it.

You go from stumbling through interviews to commanding them with language that proves you belong.

That's the power of strategy. That's the power of knowing how hiring managers actually think.

You're capable. You're qualified. You just needed to know how to position yourself and communicate your value in the language of your target industry.

Now you do.

This ebook is designed as a strategic guide for professionals navigating industry transitions. Each chapter builds on the concepts of adjacency positioning, metric-based translation, strategic specialization, and interview language mastery—the core principles that have enabled hundreds of professionals to successfully pivot to new industries and accelerated career growth.

For more resources, case studies, and personalized guidance on your pivot, visit www.beverlydines.com

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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