

# HOW'D YOU SCORE THAT GIG?

By Alexandra Levit

## 6 Tips for Landing Your Dream Job

- 1) **Learn about yourself.** Take time to do a self-assessment of your values, how you like to work, and what you'd be compelled to do even if you never got paid. Research careers and industries that map to your skills and interests. Hit the Internet, set up informational interviews, take relevant coursework, and arrange to go onsite at a company in your chosen field.
- 2) **Don't be deterred by a lack of experience.** In developing a resume and other promotional materials for the field you want to pursue, think about how your current skills and talents apply to the responsibilities you'll hold in the new job.
- 3) **Ease into a new career one foot at a time.** Perhaps this means earning a paycheck at your current job while doing a part-time internship in your new field or taking an adult education class or workshop on the weekend. The only way to find out if you're passionate about something is to try it.
- 4) **Remember that any progress is good progress.** Even confident people stay in unsatisfying jobs because they feel safe, and because they're afraid of making a bad decision. But in the quest to uncover a source of meaningful work, though, your worst enemy is inertia.
- 5) **Start early.** Twenty and thirty-somethings have more flexibility when it comes to test-driving different careers. The process of self-discovery is much easier when you're unencumbered by family responsibilities and substantial financial burdens, and when you haven't yet reached a level in a career where it's tougher to turn back.
- 6) **Have realistic expectations.** Even if you're lucky enough to hold your dream job, there's no such thing as the perfect work situation. Every job has its ups and downs, and aspects we love and aspects we don't love. And dream job doesn't mean "cushy" job. As your mom always told you, anything worth having in this world requires some effort.

*Alexandra Levit is the author of *How'd You Score That Gig: A Guide to the Coolest Careers - and How To Get Them* ([www.scorethatgig.com](http://www.scorethatgig.com), Random House 2008). She speaks at corporations, universities, and conferences around the country about workplace issues facing young employees, and her career advice has been featured in more than 800 media outlets including the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, the Associated Press, ABC News, and National Public Radio. Levit also blogs for the Huffington Post and Getthejob.com.*