Business Weekly: How do you start with helping people determine if the time is right for a career change?

Carol-Anne Minski: The real key to figuring things out is simple but profound: to know what you want. It sounds simple, but there is a lot underlying that. You have to know yourself and the

market, and that can depend on whether you are looking for self employment or the next job. That takes a lot of research. It's also about determining if there are pathways at your current company,

or if there are other companies.

BW: What are some exercises you use to get people to know themselves and the market?

CM: One of the ways is to do a SWOT or strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis.

I have the participants do a skills assessment. As a participant, this is getting to know you and what you want, and then I have you write accomplishments. When you write your accomplishments, it's

amazing what a confidence boost that is. It shows you the things you enjoy doing. It is confidence building. Then I teach how to explore the market, how to do information interviews with people

in jobs that interest you, how to network and find out more information by joining a professional organization in the areas you are interested in and that would allow you to gain knowledge about a new area.

BW: How do you help people determine what the next best step is for them professionally?

CM: The way I begin the workshop is the question: Where do you want to go? You have to think about what you want, and figure out how to get there. Knowing that begins with knowing

yourself. As we progress through, I find out that people really don't know how to network. People really don't understand it. It's not just asking for jobs. It's really establishing a reciprocal relationship. You are giving information as you are speaking with individuals, as well as getting information and advice. I help them figure out how to introduce themselves with the correct wording and how to bring in their accomplishments without sounding like bragging.

BW: What is the biggest obstacle that keeps people from making a change in their professional lives?

CM: The biggest obstacle is lack of clarity and, after that, is lack of confidence. As a success coach, I work with a lot of stressed-out business professionals and business owners, and they are looking to build clarity in life priorities and confidence at work. What I say is, I help them find their "mojo," or motivation to jump over obstacles, to help them find their focus and courage to achieve their goals.

BW: On your professional path, what inspired you to create a business centered on building

strong leaders?

CM: It started with the concept of goal setting, which has always intrigued me from my past and my

work as a coach. I achieved my Ph.D. with that idea in mind. I wanted to learn about motivational

goal setting, self-confidence, and how people become good leaders in organizations. I believe that

goal setting played a major part in that, so I started to study goal-setting, and asked people how they

achieved their goals. That is how my book, "Focus! Get What You Want Out of Life" got started. It

was all about change and achieving goals, and what came up was the confidence you want and the

clarity of the goal. I believe you get what you want in life when you set goals.