

Case Study: When Traditional Career Paths Aren't for You

How a Tulane Senior Landed Her Dream Job in NYC by Exploring Nontraditional Career Options

The Challenge

With graduation rapidly approaching, a Tulane University senior found herself at a crossroads that many students face but few openly discuss. Despite being academically successful in her public health studies program, the conventional career options she was hearing about didn't resonate with her interests and strengths, leaving her feeling uncertain about her next steps.

The situation became urgent when her concerned parents reached out to me on her behalf. They could see their daughter was struggling with a lack of direction and feared she would graduate without job prospects, potentially needing to move back home while she figured things out. The family felt they were at a dead end and needed a solution quickly.

The student was considering pursuing a master's degree, but without clarity on her career direction, she wasn't even sure what graduate program would make sense. She was at a critical inflection point, needing immediate guidance to transform her uncertainty into actionable career direction.

The Approach

Rather than forcing her into conventional public health career tracks, we agreed to explore nontraditional paths that could leverage her education in unexpected ways.

Discovery Phase: We began with comprehensive career exploration using both career and strengths assessments to understand her natural talents and genuine interests beyond the traditional scope of her major.

Career Mapping Process: Through our structured methodology, we identified three distinct career titles that aligned with her unique combination of interests, skills, strengths, and values—options that required deeper exploration beyond the most commonly discussed public health career paths.

Purpose Exploration: Our coaching sessions included deep reflection on the true purpose behind her choice to study public health. Through this process, we uncovered that her core driving force was being an advocate for health and wellness.

Strategic Networking: We developed a targeted networking map, identifying key individuals in her areas of interest, and conducted mock informational interviews to prepare her for real-world networking conversations.

The Breakthrough

The pivotal moment came when we connected her passion for health advocacy with an entirely different industry: public relations. We discovered that her personal purpose of being a health advocate could be powerfully expressed through PR roles at companies whose core mission centered on health advocacy.

This revelation opened up a whole new world of possibilities that perfectly married her educational background with her natural talents and passion—creative applications of her degree that required personalized exploration to uncover.

The Strategic Execution

Our career mapping exercise went beyond just identifying opportunities—we created a comprehensive action plan with specific goals for:

- **Timing:** When she wanted to receive a job offer
- **Location:** Where she wanted to work (New York City)
- **Industry:** Companies aligned with health advocacy missions
- **Role:** PR positions that would leverage her public health knowledge

With this clarity of vision combined with her newfound alignment of strengths, skills, and interests, she was equipped to pursue opportunities with confidence and focus.

The Results

The transformation was remarkable and swift. Armed with clarity about her direction and a strategic approach to her job search, my client achieved exactly what she had envisioned:

Career Success:

- Landed a public relations position with a health advocacy-focused company
- Secured the role in New York City, her preferred location
- Started her new position in the exact month she had targeted

Personal Growth:

- Gained confidence in pursuing nontraditional career paths
- Developed a clear understanding of how her education could be applied creatively
- Built valuable networking skills and professional connections

Family Relief:

- Eliminated her parents' concerns about post-graduation unemployment
- Demonstrated that alternative career exploration could lead to better outcomes than traditional paths
- Proved that thinking outside conventional recommendations could unlock hidden opportunities

Key Takeaways

This case demonstrates the value of personalized career exploration, especially when students need to dig deeper beyond the most commonly discussed options in their field. By taking time to understand her true purpose and exploring creative applications of her education across different industries, we were able to identify opportunities that aligned perfectly with her unique strengths and interests.

The success came from the combination of thorough self-assessment, creative career mapping, strategic goal-setting, and targeted networking. Most importantly, it shows that students benefit from individualized coaching that helps them discover nontraditional paths that are both personally fulfilling and professionally rewarding.

Sometimes the most satisfying career moves come from connecting your educational background with industries and roles that require deeper exploration to uncover, but share your core values and purpose.