

CAREER STORIES

A Company Job Rotation Program Helped Me Find a New Career in Aerospace

by *The Muse Editor*



Sherronda Hurd, a contract administrator at Northrop Grumman.

These days, career paths are rarely linear. That was the case for Sherronda Hurd, who pivoted from working as a pharmaceutical representative to an analyst position at [Northrop Grumman](#), a leader in the defense industry.

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At the company, Hurd took advantage of Northrop Grumman's numerous development opportunities, including mentorships, tuition reimbursement, and job rotation programs. She had the guidance and support to help determine where she could thrive long term—which is what led to her current role, as a contract administrator managing aerospace contracts.

"I learned that it wasn't uncommon to be unsure of your career path, and by seizing those opportunities, I was able to gain an abundance of knowledge and understanding, which aided me in setting and achieving my career goals," she says. "My career journey is still evolving, but experience has given me the confidence to better understand where I am headed."

Here, Hurd talks about her transition from healthcare to the aerospace industry, what she likes most about her job at Northrop Grumman, and the specific company programs that helped drive her professional growth.

Tell us about your career journey, and what led you to your job at Northrop Grumman.

I moved more than 2,000 miles from California to attend Clark Atlanta University, where I earned a bachelor's degree in computer and information systems (CIS). Studying CIS is what initially piqued my interest in the aerospace and defense industry. As I learned about the innovative technologies and how essential the industry was, I set a goal to become a part of it.

After a year and a half of working in the healthcare industry, I decided to transition into the aerospace and defense industry. I accepted an entry-level rotational position at Northrop Grumman, which set the foundation for my career and is how I found my way into the



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Grumman, which set the foundation for my career and is how I found my way into the company's business management organization.

What attracted you to work in the aerospace industry and specifically at Northrop Grumman?

As one of the top aerospace and defense companies, Northrop Grumman was high on my list. The range of career paths, culture of inclusion, and the company's investment in its employees also attracted me to Northrop Grumman. I was extremely fortunate to have been brought into a company that invests in the development of its employees, offering numerous opportunities for growth and advancement.

What are you responsible for in your role?

As a contract administrator, my tasks vary depending on the size and complexity of the project, as well as what phase the contract is in. I play a critical role in the end-to-end contracting process, including contract strategy, development, negotiations, execution, modification, performance, closure, and termination. I serve as the primary liaison between internal and external stakeholders for the projects that I support, ensuring that all are compliant with the terms and conditions of the contract and in sync with regard to contractual changes.

What does a normal day in your job look like?

There are no normal days as a contract administrator and that is what I like most about my position. In my day-to-day, I collaborate with internal and external stakeholders across the company to tackle various tasks including but not limited to contractual changes, contract compliance, audits, proposal preparation, and reviewing a number of correspondences. Each day brings about unique assignments, so there are always new challenges—whether there is a deadline to meet, a deliverable due, or a document to review.

How has Northrop Grumman supported you in your growth and development?

Northrop Grumman has continuously supported my growth and development through the vast amount of opportunities and programs available to its employees. For example, through their tuition reimbursement program, EdAssist, I was able to take numerous courses at the University of California, Los Angeles, and obtained a certification in government cost estimating and pricing—at no cost to me.

The company also has a Business Management Rotation program, which allows participants to take on new roles and responsibilities across the business management spectrum. By participating, I was able to expand my knowledge of the business organization and gain an abundance of experience and skills. The rotation program is actually how I landed my current role. With the guidance of an amazing mentor, I completed a nine-month rotation in contracts and in the end, I was offered a permanent position within the organization.

What do you like best about the company culture at Northrop Grumman?

What I like most are the strides the company has taken to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion. There are several ERGs whose missions center around achieving and sustaining a workforce that is inclusive. Each group offers unique benefits to both employees and the company by providing supportive networks for African Americans, Native Americans, women, people with disabilities, employees raising children, and more. The approaches and practices being implemented by the company to foster an environment where all feel valued and welcome is awesome. I like that you don't have to fit into a specific category to contribute to or be a part of an ERG, which enables learning and networking across the company for employees of various backgrounds.

What advice do you have for candidates who want to apply for a job at Northrop Grumman?

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I encourage any candidate that is interested to apply. Northrop Grumman is a great place to work with endless career opportunities. My advice is to be intentional with what you want, diligent throughout the process, embrace change, and never underestimate the value that you can bring to the table.

What is the best career advice you've ever received?

The best career advice I received was a handwritten note on a blank page in a book called *TRW 1901-2001: A Tradition of Innovation* that a remarkable manager of mine gave me. In summary, she wrote, "Reaching beyond the stars and achieving greatness, not only in our industry but in life, is a marathon of pushing boundaries that will test you beyond measure. Nonetheless, never lose confidence, embrace the experiences, and count your blessings." This advice continues to resonate with me and keeps me grounded as I journey through life and my career.



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