



Planning your career

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Planning your career

We're frequently asked for career advice and we're pleased to be able to help wherever we can. We see a lot of career paths so we tend to have a very good handle on how careers can develop with the right choices at the right times.

Where to begin?

We have found that it can be helpful to start by focusing on a number of key areas:

Personal effectiveness

- In which aspects of my current role do I excel?
- Which aspects do not come naturally to me?
- Where I have been appraised which were the areas for development?
- List the 6 most significant contributions that you have made in the work environment.

Aspects of the next role

- List 6 qualities that you are seeking from your next position.
- List other points that, ideally, you do not want in the next role.

Possible positions

- List the job titles that you feel you could take on as your next role.
- Given the choice would you prefer to be a more senior manager within a smaller organisation or a less senior one in a larger organisation.
- Which positions would you not consider and why?

Sectors

- Think widely about the transferability of your skill set. List the sectors where you would like to work and, if different from your current sector, consider and list the ways in which you would adapt and how your previous experience could be relevant.

Ideal Organisation

- List specific companies that you would like to approach and think about the angle which would make you attractive to them.
- Is an international element important to you?
- Which companies would not be of interest and why? This will help you to focus.
- Have you considered self-employment?

Geographical Location

- Do you have local commitments - schools, spouse's employment etc which effectively tie you to a locality, or can you move?
- If so where would be your preferred location?
- Where would you not like to work?
- Would you require relocation assistance for a future employer?
- How much commuting are you prepared to do?
- Would you consider working in one area and weekly commuting to home?

Remuneration

- Consider your minimum requirements which would be acceptable - base salary and benefits.
- How should the package ideally be structured? For example how important might an equity stake be, bonus element and so on?

This structured approach will help focus you on the aspects which contribute to your future decision. You should aim to have a clear view of what you are looking for and a manageable number of practical options. You will then be in a position to target the appropriate companies.

The hard work begins here

Once you've got a clear idea of where you want to be and why, you can plan your campaign. Start with contacting people within your network, including people who currently work for your target companies or their competitors to get a feel for the market and even hiring managers. Network with headhunters and outplacement firms who you know are active in your target sector. Ask their advice about what they feel you need to do to achieve your career ambitions, and then use their advice. Stay in touch – it's unlikely they'll be handling a suitable position at that moment but give them a chance to talk to their contacts on your behalf. Be patient and stay flexible about what your ideal role might look like; it's possible that other people will see different routes for you that will take you in the same overall direction.

“Be patient and stay flexible about what your ideal role might look like”

A few final points

When considering longer term career planning it's probably useful to talk to people like us. We see a lot of career paths and can give you a good understanding about what impact a move will have on your career. We've seen a lot of mistakes as well as some great decisions and can help you choose the right path. We're happy to talk to you about any offer you're considering, regardless of whether we're handling the opportunity.