

Career Management

In the distant past, we relied on our employers to “manage” our careers. We had secure employment, stayed with the same company for sometimes decades and worked our way up from the mail room. Then the 90’s arrived along with massive downsizing and job insecurity – many people’s retirement plans were discarded as they had to react to foreign circumstances.

The paternalistic company is now a thing of the past – it is incumbent upon us to properly manage our careers to provide for our long term plans. This requires some work! It does however give you something which we didn’t have in the paternalistic 90’s and beyond – greater control over our future.

Once again it comes down to planning – determining what direction you wish to head and what you will need to do to get there. As with any plan, it needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance and amended as necessary.

Careers are complex beasts as there are many options available to us. In fact, seeking professional advice as you do with your personal financial planning (after all, your career is a key asset) is highly recommended. From a general perspective, this is what you need to consider:

- What is your vision or long term goal for your career?
- Know yourself - What is it that you enjoy doing?
- Know yourself - What is it that you are good at?
- What are your gaps and what do you need to do to bridge the gaps?
- What are your personal values and beliefs and how can you align that to your current and future employers?
- What are your current and future domestic requirements and circumstances?
- What are the educational requirements for your preferred careers?
- Who in your current network will be able to assist you in formulating your career plan and help make it happen?
- What other external resources can you access to help you in realising your career aspirations (for example, highly experienced executive recruitment consultants who have relevant industry or functional experience)?
- What are the current market conditions, and what are the “expert” views about future market conditions – will your current skill base be relevant in five years or do you have to transform myself?
- How can you best present myself to the market – what is your unique value proposition?
- Be prepared to take opportunities as they present – be decisive based on knowledge.

To achieve real career change and challenge, and ensure it is satisfying and enjoyable requires the demonstration of the behaviours that makes you a successful executive in the first place – self-motivation, resilience, persistence, creativity, results orientation, influence, initiative, positive mindset. Quite simply, proper career planning is hard work – it is all about the individual creating opportunities rather than waiting for them.