

Career Management Skills for the 21st Century

In the 21st century, huge and rapid changes are redefining the nature of work, jobs and careers. The old certainties are gone never to return. A job for life, a structured graduate training programme, a steady climb up the career ladder are yesterday's realities.

The self-reliant graduate is aware of the changing world of work, takes responsibility for his own career and personal development and is able to manage the relationship with work and with learning throughout all stages of life.

As you prepare to step away from the academic world and begin a fresh start in the challenging world of work, invest in the assistance of professional and qualified career consultants who (via psychometric testing and a thorough evaluation of your values, interests and skills) will help you to zoom into the more 'suitable' jobs and work styles that you could excel in and who can coach you in skills to manage your career.

Remember, today the challenge is not merely to find a job but to manage your career for lifetime employability. Based on our thorough research over the years, we have found the following traits/skills to be CRITICAL in order for graduates to survive and thrive in a changing work environment:

Strong Self Awareness

- Able clearly to identify skills, values, interest and other personal attributes.
- Able to pinpoint core strengths and 'differentiating factors'.
- Equipped with evidence of abilities (e.g. summary statement, record or 'portfolio').
- Actively willing to seek feedback from others, and able to give constructive feedback.
- Able to identify areas for personal, academic and professional development.
- Able to match opportunities to core skills, knowledge, values, interests etc.
- Able to make an informed decision based on the available opportunities.

“Career tests are like blood tests; they give you an accurate, 360-degree profile of you as a career person. Career unhappiness often comes from not knowing yourself well enough to choose the right work environment.”

Confident & Able to 'Sell' Self

- Able to define and promote own agenda.
- Can identify employer's or boss' needs and can promote own strengths in a convincing way, both written and orally, selling 'benefits' and not simply 'features'.
- Has an underlying confidence in abilities, and a personal sense of self-worth.

Opportunist

- Able to identify, create, investigate and seize opportunities.
- Have research skills to identify possible sources of information, help and support.

Proactive about Career Planning

- Able to plan a course of action which addresses:
 - Where am I now?
 - Where do I want to be?
 - How do I get there?
- Can identify employer's or boss' needs and can promote own strengths in a convincing way, both written and orally, selling 'benefits' and not simply 'features'.
- Has an underlying confidence in abilities, and a personal sense of self-worth.
- Able to implement an action plan by:
 - Organizing time effectively
 - Identifying steps needed to reach the goal
 - Preparing contingency plans
- Committed to personal development and life-long learning:
 - Understands preferred method and style of learning.
 - Reflects on learning from experiences, good and bad.
 - Able to learn from the mistakes of self and others.
- Able to monitor and evaluate progress against specific objectives.

Networking Skills

- Develop career-sustaining relationships, both inside and outside your organization).
- Able to define, develop and maintain a support network for advice and information.

Negotiation Skills

- Able to negotiate the psychological contract from a position of powerlessness.
- Able to reach 'win/win' agreements.

Coping with Uncertainty/Changes

- Able to adapt goals in the light of changing circumstances.
- Able to take myriads of tiny risks.

Transfer Skills

- This is a higher level skill in itself as skills are not automatically transferable. In order to stay ahead of changes within the organization or within the industry, you must be able to apply skills to new contexts. Examples of transferable skills are:
 - Analytical Skills
 - Communication Skills
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Organizational Skills
 - Creative Skills
 - Problem Solving Skills

Interpersonal Skills

- Able to generate friendships and relationships as much as business results and cash. Remember, a job will not last a lifetime but a friendship will!
- Able to work effectively in a team environment
- Always having the heart and time to others win

“I create relationships; the relationships create job offers.”

Balancing Work and Home Life

- Understands personal priorities and constraints (internal and external). This includes the need for a sustainable balance of work and home life.

“This is an ESSENTIAL and often overlooked aspect of the individual’s overall success as a valuable asset to the society.”