



**ACMA**

Associated Career  
Management Australia

A COLLECTION OF  
**CAREER MANAGEMENT ARTICLES**

VOLUME 1

BY TONY CROSBY, RPCDP, FCDA, CMF, CAHRI



**ASSOCIATED CAREER MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA**  
provides expert Career Coaching  
and Outplacement services Australia-wide  
to help you find the right job, faster.

# Contents

Career confusion.....	1	Record your achievements .....	30
Career clarity .....	2	Navigate your career ... don't let it founder! .....	31
Career education in schools and universities.....	3	The powerful pause.....	32
Career management .....	4	Job application tracking systems (ATS) .....	33
Common job search mistakes .....	5	Not happy in your job ... want more money? .....	34
Corporate career development.....	7	Moving around the job market .....	35
Executive career management tips .....	8	Building your network.....	36
Some advice for immigrants seeking employment.....	9	Applying for lower jobs can be a 'career killer' .....	37
Manage work / life skills.....	10	Job search structure .....	38
Mature age workers.....	12	Corporate / staff career development strategies.....	39
Outplacement .....	13	Outplacement for HR Managers .....	40
Psychometric and vocational assessment tests .....	14	Career progression.....	41
Removing career barriers .....	16	Job hunting advice .....	42
Selecting the 'right' qualifications and courses .....	17	Salary negotiation.....	44
The great 'job search' myth .....	18	Job satisfaction .....	45
A primary resource during your job search is people.....	19	Era of the independent worker .....	46
Break-through job search strategy .....	20	Maternity leave career management.....	47
People who listen, learn.....	21	Interview preparation basics.....	48
Drafting your job application .....	22	If you want to get lucky - take action.....	49
Job searching can be difficult .....	23	Broaden your career horizon.....	50
Making your mind your friend.....	24	Redundancy experience .....	51
Migrant job candidates are often disadvantaged .....	25	Career change strategy .....	52
Critical job search Action Plan .....	26	Using informational interviews.....	53
Career vision.....	27	New job search paradigm .....	54
Career conversations.....	28	Networking - your core job search tool.....	55
Negative thinking be gone!.....	29	Work closely with your referees .....	56

## Copyright Notice

**Recipients of this document are encouraged to distribute it to friends and colleagues  
FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY.**

This publication is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced without written permission from Associated Career Management Australia. Requests and inquiries regarding reproduction and rights should be addressed to [tcrosby@career-manage.com.au](mailto:tcrosby@career-manage.com.au).

# Career confusion



Photo by Sergey Nivens, AdobeStock\_74108880

**In today's highly skilled workforce and in an environment of minimal unemployment there lurks a hidden problem that is costing the Australian economy possibly billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and individual opportunity.**

'Career Confusion' afflicts all sectors of the workforce and all levels of participation. The most common statements career counsellors hear today are:

- *I don't know what to do next!*
- *I am unhappy in my current job!*
- *What can I do to change my career?*
- *Can someone help me to understand myself and my skills?*

All this equates to a significant section of the workforce who are underperforming or do not understand how to maximise their career opportunities.

Round pegs in square holes is a well known expression that summarises the career confusion epidemic that has no regard for educational, social or professional status and more importantly to the Australian economy, remains unmeasured and ignored by educators, governments and peak employer bodies.

Career development has become an individual responsibility over the last decade with career planning and ongoing professional development critical to the holistic career health of each person. So who amongst us can confidently state that they know exactly where their career is going and that they are both satisfied and fully understand their career options. Not many would be my experience as a career counsellor since 1996.

Career confusion can affect any age group with numerous school leavers having no real career direction which they then carry into their adulthood as unsatisfied workers who will never reach their full emotional and financial potentials.

Career counsellors are an important link between people, their careers and a productive workforce. It is extremely satisfying for a career counsellor to work with a client through many twists and turns to ultimately witnessing them become aware

to who they are, what they can offer and the exciting career opportunities that abound in this time of strong economic growth and skills shortages across most sectors.

To assist clients suffering from career confusion, career counsellors use a range of interviews and tests to identify each person's unique qualities and needs. A broad range of tests gives the best result that then enables the client to understand themselves in a way that they have probably never previously been aware of.

These techniques apply to all types of people, from any level, age group or workplace background.

**ACMA uses a simple formula on each client to establish the foundation for their career transition.**

<b>S + C + P = N</b>	
<b>Skills</b>	Mechanical
<b>Competencies</b>	Aircraft maintenance
<b>Personality</b>	Driver/Supporter
<b>Needs</b>	Jetstar recruiting aircraft (avionics) engineers

Need is very important because many people suffering from career confusion often have qualifications or experience in jobs that are in a contracting sector of the economy, or have selected a position that is totally unsuitable for their personality. In career counselling it is important to only point clients in a direction that has growth, opportunity and that matches their personal values.

The employment market has grown highly competitive and sophisticated. Inadequate preparation results in lost opportunities, frustration and rejection. People often settle for less with resultant loss in income, job satisfaction and career path.

**“It's not what you achieve, it's what you overcome. That's what defines your career.”**

- Carlton Fisk

# Career clarity



Photo by |kamonrat |AdobeStock\_120313306

**It is a never ending human trait to want to know the future, what will happen to you, your family and friends. Will I be happy or sad? How long will I live? And so on...**

Most aspects of our lives we have very little control over which often causes anxiety and apprehension. However our career is one aspect where we can take positive action today to ensure that good things happen tomorrow (or at least have a high chance of occurring).

Your career is one of the few areas of life where a person can initiate actions, take control and enjoy the good career outcomes of this fundamentally important part of a person's existence, now and into the future.

Nothing is guaranteed in life, but with professional assessment and help, plus research and planning most people can build a solid foundation for future career growth and consequent personal fulfilment.

So what is this state of mind called? 'Career Clarity' and it can be yours anytime you decide to take the necessary steps to consolidate and grow your career. This applies equally to senior management and factory floor personnel, across all industry sectors, occupations and regions...in other words it applies to you.

Clearly knowing where you want your career to go is the first step in what is often a complex but rewarding personal journey.

As a career counsellor/career management consultant since 1996 I have assist thousands of people with their pathway to discovery and clarity. There are predictable milestones, initiatives and indicators that are applicable to all people irrespective of background etc. All that is needed is personal motivation to maximise your career opportunities...it all starts and finishes with you.

**Let me set out a case study that illustrates a typical career discovery pathway.**

Bob was a 35 year old sales representative at an import/export company, and he was becoming frustrated at his lack of understanding of his next career move.

After intensive assessment it was discovered that he would really like the company manager's job, but had no idea how to get there. I got Bob to investigate the manager's career path over the last twenty years and to develop a chart showing the manager's progress to his current position.

Bob found out that the manager had worked in all aspects of the business, and in his late 30's had completed a Bachelor of Business degree (part time) and then succeed the previous manager almost 10 years ago.

So I said to Bob that if your career progress mimicked your manager then this should be a fairly good guide how to fulfil your ambition.

**Bingo! CAREER CLARITY had been attained!**

Having a plan and a vision is essential and open to anybody. Being clear about your goals and how to achieve them should be the guiding principle for all career focused people.

There is an underlying predictability about any career pathway and it is one of the few areas of life that can be traced and replicated.

Copious research material exists that support the above proposition that 'Career Clarity' is both essential for career development and readily available to all motivated workforce participants.

Career clarity by itself will not advance your career, however it is the first stepping stone in the right direction.



*Work to become, not to acquire.*

- Elbert Hubbard

# Career education in schools and universities



Photo by Monkey Business | AdobeStock\_61763942

## Primary

### Considerations

Introduce awareness and competencies at a rudimentary level. Zunker (1994) lists twelve competencies involving awareness, skills and knowledge in the following areas:

- Self concept
- Social interaction
- Change
- Benefits of education
- Relationship between work and learning
- Career information
- Personal responsibility
- Work in relation to the needs and functions of society
- Decision making
- Life roles
- Changing male/female roles
- Career planning process

### Strategies

Develop both school wide and classroom activities aimed at [exposing students to different occupations](#), types of work and their contribution to our daily lives.

Particular emphasis should be given to infusing career related information into all subjects eg. English.

### Program initiatives

- Develop an industry specific Career's Day whereby current participants (parents and/or local business people) are invited to the school to display their equipment and skills to students in an exciting and hands on manner e.g. : building Industry – contributors such as carpenters, tilers, concreters, plumbers, designers could all be included.
- Conduct a Skills Day where the link between current skills and workplace activities is shown eg. drawing skills with art and design occupations, or an interest in engines could be linked with motor mechanics.

- Teacher collects books from the library (at appropriate reading age); books that depict people in occupations. The collection is then distributed in the class, with later discussions and perhaps an essay focusing on the various jobs and skills.
- Organise a visit to local workplace (perhaps through a parent) with preparation and follow up lessons. Emphasis the co-operation and interdependence between employers and employees. This could be a monthly event, visiting contrasting workplaces to provide a broad appreciation.
- Develop lessons focused on How Work Effects Families. Discuss how some people work different hours and that at times people may be unemployed. Explore the differences in physical and sedentary work and how this may affect parents or guardians.
- Make a display of hats worn and tools used by various kinds of workers. Discuss hats worn by firefighters, construction workers and chefs; tools such as a doctors stethoscope and a musician's violin. Encourage the child to select a hat or tool that represents a job that he/she would like to do.
- Develop a lesson focused on 'What particular jobs require'. Children research (by interviewing parents and friends, using library books etc.) to find out what characteristics make people suitable for jobs.
- In Language Arts (or Study of Society) Debate: Why do people have different interests, values and skills. Teacher sets the stage by outlining what values should be discussed; why some people like to work in a team, and others prefer to work alone; why some people like to organise (supervise others); why some prefer outdoor to indoor work.

“ Find out what you like doing best and get someone to pay you for doing it.

- Katherine Whitehorn

# Career management



Photo by duncanandison | Adobe Stock\_ 81251383

## **Career management in today's workplace is essential for any career focused person ... ignore it at your own peril.**

The world of work and career success has changed dramatically over the last 15 years and bears little resemblance to previous times. This change continues at a rapid pace, so if you fail to keep up with change and innovation you are probably headed for a very disappointing career future. What you do today directly influences your career options in 5, 10 and 20 years time, so carefully managing your career development NOW is vital for your career health in the short and longer terms.

In years gone by career management was viewed as the responsibility of the employer not the employee (worker). However it is now the opposite with career management now being YOUR responsibility. Many people view this as being a great opportunity to take control of their own destiny and career development, and avoid the 'promotion by death or retirement' focus belonging to the last century.

Statistics show that most people will have on average six career changes during their lifetime, with some of these being enforced and others by choice. Irrespective of the reason not being prepared is like not having insurance on your house ... very dumb. So career management can be viewed as an insurance policy on your future career options and personal prosperity.

### **How do I start? What should I do?**

I am overwhelmed by all of this!

[Appoint a qualified professional career manager](#) (consultant / coach / counselor) to advise and guide you to ensure that you are being effective in your career planning and future career directions: Click [contact us](#) is a good starting point.

Ongoing professional development is one of the three key drivers of good career management. Every person needs to keep abreast of current industry trends, developments and changes. Annually you need to complete courses, training and attend seminars to maintain relevance of your knowledge and expertise. Thinking that your degree/qualification obtained

10 -20 years ago still has currency is simply naïve in today's highly competitive employment market. (If you think this is all too hard, costly and does not fit your lifestyle then your career prospects look grim).

### **The second key driver to good career management is networking.**

Join industry bodies and/or clubs, attend annual conventions, assist others in your circle of connections to develop their careers, socialize with strategic colleagues both within your organisation and competitor companies. Maintain contact with people in your network, do not let these connections wither; nourish them because they are vitally important to your next career move.

### **The final key driver to good career management put simply is 'knowledge is power', we all know that.**

So continually gather intelligence on market movers, those hiring, expanding (contracting) and keep accurate file notes easily recalled when needed. Opportunities often occur when least expected so being continually prepared with current expertise, qualifications and insider knowledge is critical to your career development.

People often think that (the above) does not apply to them, their occupation or industry sector. WRONG it applies equally to the shop floor worker, the operator, manager or CEO. If you want to avoid career stagnation or worse it is up to you to take the initiative. It is a hard cruel world out there in employer land (just ask someone who has been retrenched) and the only person looking after you is YOU!

Apart from providing you with 'career insurance', career management can be fun. Meeting people of like mind, helping others (who in turn will help you) and engaging in an active life are all part of a balanced and rewarding career journey.



*The best way to predict the future is to create it.*

- Abraham Lincoln

# Common job search mistakes



## **Relying on online job sites such as CareerOne, MyCareer, Seek, etc.**

In general, internet job and newspaper advertisements produce little value. However, it is also a mistake to ignore them altogether. Some of the best chances for jobs from advertisements are in specialty trade or professional publications and web sites of specific industries. I suggest you spend no more than five percent of your valuable time on advertised job postings.

## **Failing to target market organisations that would want your skill set**

Only put effort into connecting with companies and organisations most likely to need your skills, forget about the others you are simply wasting your time. Great resources now exist on the internet to quickly track down people and organisations in your target market, learning these techniques is the 'freeway' to your next job.

## **Looking only for job vacancies**

Searching only for companies with current vacancies is an obsolete job hunting method. The best jobs are rarely listed 'vacancies' or 'openings'. Rather, many good positions are created for the candidate, often at the interview. The key is to shift your focus from 'vacancies' to 'opportunities' (which exist nearly everywhere). Remember: every company is hiring all the time, if you have what they need when they need it!

## **Ineffective networking**

Networking should be the primary focus of every job search – occupying about 90% of your time. However, I find that most people go about it the wrong way – by talking too much and by asking for jobs. The best networkers are good listeners rather than big talkers. They have a clear agenda, and are not shy about asking for feedback and guidance. Remember: networking is more about giving than it is about taking, so always come from an attitude of generosity.

## **Leaving yourself open to too many kinds of jobs**

Another key to a successful job search is to focus on finding the RIGHT job – not 'just any job'. Critical factors to consider include satisfaction, growth potential, location, cultural fit, great co-workers, a pleasing environment and competitive compensation. When the job market is really tough, it's imperative to be more focused than ever.

## **Being unplanned in your job search**

Most people spend more time planning a holiday than planning a job search. I suggest the following tips to conduct a proper job search: a well-thought out methodology, daily solitude and planning, space dedicated to the search, tracking tools to measure your progress, and a system for accountability.

## **Doing it alone**

You pay a mechanic to service your car; a lawyer to create a will, then why would you not invest in professional help with your job search? Career coaches/consultants provide objective guidance, help you articulate your value, and provide a proven system for job search success. Many offer excellent advice on salary negotiations – often exceeding the job seeker's expectations.

## **Letting others control your job search**

I am continually amazed how people listen to the advice of others who are unqualified or not skilled in career transition management. Friends, family, colleagues and recruiters often give advice that is completely wrong or inappropriate to you (although given with the best of intent). A prudent person would not expect to get good legal advice from their carpenter cousin...so be aware and do not fall for this trap; it can be disastrous for an effective job search.

... continued on next page



## Common job search mistakes – cont'd

### Not preparing well enough for job interviews

When you boil it down, all job interviews are comprised of five basic elements: articulating your value, conveying your knowledge of the company, asking intelligent questions, negotiating compensation, and following-through. Each of these items has to be practiced in advance, so you can 'win' the job interview. 'Winging it' just won't do! Also, be sure to do extensive research on the company and the interviewer ahead of time.

### Not knowing your market value

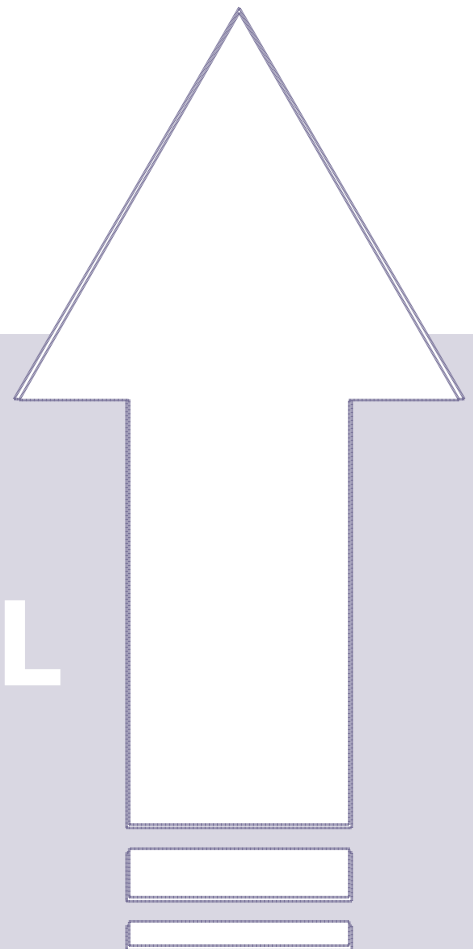
You must research and assess your value in the marketplace, so you'll be able to negotiate effectively. Never disclose your salary requirements – always get the employer to name the salary or range first. The time to talk money is when the employer has made it clear that you are their top candidate, and after they make an offer.

**It is very easy for even the savviest of job seekers to make these mistakes. Your ACMA consultant will show you how to navigate these potential pitfalls from the outset; your job search will be more productive and yield more positive results!**

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

- Thomas A. Edison

GET  
PROFESSIONAL  
ADVICE



# Corporate career development



Photo by nyul | Adobe Stock\_20641119

**In today's modern workplace, companies and organisations must lead and develop their workforce in order to maximise their return from this major resource. To ignore training and career development is simply 'bad business management', leading to staff turnover, disconnect and lack of a team vision.**

**Training and career development** are two separate components of workplace learning and it is career development that is often neglected, however one complements the other in a dynamic and interdependent workplace strategy.

Since 1991, ACMA has assisted numerous organisations (small, large, listed and unlisted) to implement targeted career development programs that are designed to engage, inform and assist employees to manage their careers. ACMA programs are tailored to both the organisation's objectives and the individual's aspirations, marrying them into a satisfied and focused employee equipped with the knowledge and tools to actively contribute to the corporate and common good.

Career development is vital for people to understand their potential value to the organisation and/or industry sector. Building 3, 5 and 10 year career plans develops a vision that enables career pathways to be built and provide for better workforce resource planning. Individual employees and human resource managers can then plan for additional training or qualifications needed to fulfill these career plans, and therefore ensure an ongoing supply of skilled people ready to be utilised as needed.

It is not all about hard skills. The current team based workplace thrives on employees with good soft skills and this applies to all levels of personnel. In this 21st century people in general are better educated, more complex and demand a sophisticated level of interaction with peers, managers and customers.

ACMA career development programs address both hard and soft skills, with EI (Emotional Intelligence) being a critical component. A highly skilled employee (any level) with poor EI can be a disaster in a team environment, which is manifest in recent cases of bullying, stress and other ailments that afflict the current workplace.

The good news is that EI skills can be learned. Once identified as an area of concern in the initial assessment process (or perhaps noted by a concerned HR manager) strategies can be designed to address an employee's emotional intelligence and general interaction within the workplace, often with overflow benefits into the person's personal relationships.

**ACMA career development programs** are holistic in assisting the total person, not simply improving a set of skills. This not only assists the individual, but also the organisation can avoid workplace problems that can adversely affect productivity and at worst result in litigation etc.

Using intensive career management techniques people learn to understand themselves, their skills, personality and potential...more importantly they develop an understanding of their value to the company, organisation and sector.

People actually want to contribute and perform well in their jobs. The confusion occurs when they lack an understanding of the prospects with their employer, and have little or no concept of their career pathway in the foreseeable future.

ACMA career development programs will give employees the vision and competencies to grow professionally and personally. The ACMA career management consultant becomes a mentor to ensure that the corporate goals of the program are achieved within the context of facilitating both career and personal growth of all participating employees.

Empowered employees are productive employees!

A recent report from Deloitte clearly states *"focusing on career management will give your company endurance and agility."*

**“ I think everyone should experience defeat at least once during their career. You learn a lot from it.**

- Lou Holts

# Executive career management tips



Photo by WavebreakMediaMicro | Adobe Stock\_22681858

## Build your portfolio

Your portfolio is the second [most important resource](#) to your CV. It is a 'living thing' that you keep updated ready to use at any time to validate your career achievements, education and history.

## Actively network every week

Failure to network is the major contributor to 'executive career atrophy'. Attend, connect and nurture with your network regularly and you probably will never have to apply for another job.

## Take leadership positions in professional associations

Being seen is an executive's major marketing tool. The higher your public profile within your sector the more career opportunities are going to come your way.

## Write articles and do presentations

Your personal profile can be directly promoted through articles in professional journals, websites and blogs. Don't be shy; let the world understand your expertise on important industry topics and trends.

## Maintain your ongoing professional development and qualifications

The single most important [executive career management](#) need is to keep your qualifications up to date, plus undertaking continual professional development of at least 30 hours annually (documented in your portfolio).

## Understand and research your competition

Current intelligence on the people you will be competing against can give you a significant edge to maximise your next career move.

## Provide support and assistance to people in your network

Your contribution to others will enhance your situation when you need assistance or information critical to your next career move (remember The Godfather movie).

## Keep up to date with the employment market in your sector

Understanding whose hiring and firing is fundamental. Always know your worth and value to another employer and have your 'elevator pitch' ready to fire at any time.

## Perfect your interviewing, negotiating and similar skills regularly

These soft skills are an executive's tools of trade...practice, practice and practice!

“ I want to look back on my career and be proud of my work, and be proud that I tried everything.

- Jon Stewart

# Some advice for immigrants seeking employment



Photo by WavebreakMediaMicro | Adobe Stock\_13386493

**The White Australia Policy is not dead - it is part of everyday life for many job hunters. Although first and second generation immigrants account for more than 40 percent of the Australian population, the high unemployment rate for immigrants is a good indication that old habits and prejudices die hard.**

Some recruitment consultants openly and bluntly admit that immigrants, mainly from South East Asia and India with the same qualifications as their Australian counterparts do not even have a look in at the moment. The employers select people with whom they feel they can relate, and in many cases a candidate's resume is dismissed because of the foreign sounding name...refer this article <http://bit.ly/1KDAWUF>

Some employers realise that most immigrants have good skills and a very high work ethic, and abuse that fact. Most immigrants are keen to work hard and are committed to their jobs, which leaves them open to exploitation.

Before we look at the guerilla tactics that could be used to overcome these problems, let's define the criteria that make you a minority. At the first level two things are obvious. The colour of your skin and your accent. Your background comes next, with details such as your nationality, age, the schools and universities you attended, your family background etc. These are less important and can be concealed.

Increasing diversity in Australian society is often not reflected in the workforce of many Australian companies, this being partly caused by Human Resource managers implicitly seeking for individuals with the 'right fit' and not so much seeking to actively diversify organisational cultures; increased wariness of foreigners in an increasingly multicultural environment; lack of experience in inter-cultural/cross-cultural communication (causing uncomfortable communication).

Large multinational companies and increasingly government, banks and public companies are hiring diversity managers to try to remedy this situation by offering immigrant employment. At ACMA we become a [culture coach to foreigners](#) who do not know how their own cultural codes (for example modesty and hierarchical backgrounds) are perceived, and where their talents are best put to use in an unfamiliar society, and to HR managers to increase cross-cultural skills and awareness.

However, there is still a long way to go in the Australian workforce, so let ACMA manage your career transition by using:

## ... Guerilla tactics!

### [So what can be done about all this?](#)

Unfortunately it is very hard to change people's attitudes so the only possible tactic is, 'If you can't beat them, join them'. So here is what you should do.

- **Translate all your documents**, diplomas, certificates and references into English and have them verified.
- **Put a lot of effort into your Resume** which ACMA will do on your behalf to ensure that your presentation is at the highest standard and compliant with Australian requirements
- **Strictly follow the advice and direction given** by Associated Career Management Australia as they are experts in immigrant employment and helping you find your first job in Australia, and THIS EXPERTISE IS YOUR BEST CHANCE TO OBTAIN A POSITION QUICKLY!

“ Dreams are extremely important. You can't do it unless you imagine it.

- George Lucas

## Manage work / life skills



Photo by Photographee.eu | Adobe Stock\_88075391

### **Examine the relationship of work / life skills in the workplace and its potential impact on business performance, career prospects and personal lives.**

I have been self-employed since 1977 and during this period I have commenced four new enterprises from scratch, and purchased and /or developed one other. During this time I have learnt (often the hard way) to effectively manage internal employees and a diverse range of clients.

The gaining of trust is elementary in any relationship and I truly believe that this is fundamental to the management of personnel and the development of a loyal and recurrent client base. Trust is defined as 'belief in a person's reliability' and this I view as the foundation of my business relationships over many years.

I am fortunate in that I can quickly develop empathy with others by listening, displaying interest and genuinely enjoying other people opinions and aspirations.

The article by James Strong (Leading Initiative P91-92) mirrors my own experience in managing organisations, and surviving in the 'hard cold business world'.

My personal qualities of gaining trust and respect helped me in a tangible and measurable way during the 1990-1993 economic recession that swamped Victoria (and in particular the Geelong region where I was based).

In a twelve month period 30% of our client base simply disappeared for a variety of economic factors and many local businesses ceased to exist, however I was determined that my business would survive, so I set about planning in twelve month time frames to rebuild the client base from outside the Geelong region, which was simply a 'basket case'. In reflection, it was the defining moment in my management career.

All department managers and staff were kept informed of the situation and my plans, actively assisting in developing new skills and expertise in products and services previously unknown to them. I focused on industries in the Australian economy that were growing and regions that were also reflecting strength and resilience to the recession, and then developed unique products and services that I marketed Australia wide, ultimately becoming recognised as an expert in these fields.

The result was that by the end of 1993 the business had replaced all lost income and even showed a modest growth, with no retrenchments other than natural attrition etc., Whilst I am personally chuffed with this scenario, it was a team effort achieved through both self and collective discipline by all staff members.

Discipline and management style also underpin my management success, effectively delivering results that reflect business plan projections and financial budget constraints.

The 'maintenance of the highest standards of self discipline' explores the personal self discipline of managers that can inspire others (not cut corners), and adhere to company procedures and protocols.

Furthermore, leaders displaying humility and moral courage make a deliberate and calculated decision allowing an organisation to progress as a cohesive unit with common goals, objectives and sense of purpose.

Moral courage stems from a cool, thinking approach that has enabled me to grow organisations (in both good and bad times), developing and mentoring staff, which ultimately reflects in high quality customer service standards and loyalty that translates into a profitable and vibrant enterprise.

... continued on next page

## Manage work / life skills – cont'd

All these aforementioned skills and qualities are immediately transferable into personal relationships outside the working environment, enriching and encouraging family members to grow, enquire and aspire.

Career development is a service I deliver to clients on a daily basis, actively assisting them into the workforce (from multiple entry points), or to improve and/or advance their personal careers/situations.

### The two underlying questions for any person entering the workforce are:

- What do you want?
- How will you know when you get it?

People really do have their own solutions and it is my role as a [career management consultant](#) to guide, mentor and assist them to discover themselves.

Richard Leider, a career counsellor for many years in the US breaks this process down into three 'hungers':

- To connect deeply with the creative spirit of life
- To know and express your gifts and talents
- To know that our lives matter.

As a professional career counsellor I can assure you that most people have no concept of the above, let alone the analytical capacity to explore them without guidance, which obviously is my role.

I have worked with all levels of management, professionals, tradespersons and unskilled people whose only common denominator is that that are all highly motivated in their own way (hence engaging my services).

Richard Leider has devised a fascinating formula that I consistently use with my clients that lays out the critical factors to consider when making career choices:

**T + P + E \* V**

**T = Talent**

**P = Passion**

**E = Environment**

**V = Vision**

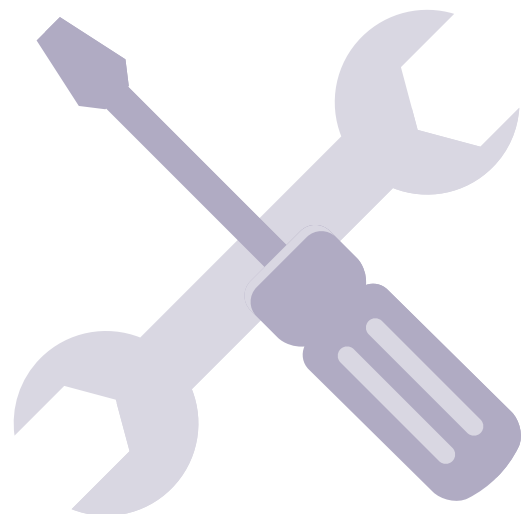
The sad fact in my experience, and also Leider's (Are You Deciding On Purpose P17), is that most people sell themselves short not understanding or [knowing their talents and worth](#). Therefore if a person cannot identify and articulate these basics in themselves, how can a prospective employer quickly understand the future potential of such a candidate. Hence you see dissatisfaction in the workforce with 'round pegs in square holes' simply because of the lack of fundamental understanding of who they are, what they have and what they are worth.

Work and life skills are therefore interrelated and often inseparable. Good communication skills in the workforce = good communication in private life etc., etc. By improving our people and personal management skills all levels of relationships can be enriched and career prospects dramatically improved.



*It's not the days in your life, but the life in your days that counts.*

- Brian White



# Mature age workers



Photo by goodluz | Adobe Stock\_111147660

## The second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century presents enormous challenges to people 45 years and older.

An amazing range of workplace changes have occurred over the last twenty years which can be very confronting to a person wanting to obtain a position in today's complex employment market.

Mature age workers are often 'thrown-out' onto the employment market through no choice of their own after having worked for one company or in one industry for many years...enforced workplace change is common due to corporate restructuring, downsizing, economic changes, business failure or re-entering the workforce after periods parenting or caring duties.

Whatever the catalyst mature age workers suddenly find themselves in a world of work that is drastically different to the one they entered many years previously and commonly suffer from what is called the 'Rip Van Winkle Syndrome' ... refer this article <http://bit.ly/1IQ5Ken>

This [lack of knowledge or understanding](#) of the 21st Century employment market application procedures and protocols is the main barrier for these displaced mature age workers that fail to move into valued employment opportunities. The fact is that the employment market is now sophisticated and complex and failure to adapt and learn can mean years of either under employment or unemployment, wasting the remaining productive years.

It needs to be acknowledge that 'Ageism' discrimination does exist at certain levels, however there are many organisations that now actively pursue mature aged workers, and with mounting skills shortages mature aged workers are needed to contribute into their late 60's and beyond.

The main reason mature age workers fail to obtain suitable employment is their inability or refusal to change, learn and adapt to the modern world of work. The result is that they become disenfranchised from the employment market, suffer personal and financial stress which in most cases is avoidable.

ACMA has [worked with mature aged people](#) for many years and continue to observe the same mindset and mistakes being repeated until intervention occurs...often initiated by a concerned partner or friend.

Mature age workers cannot change the world as it exists NOW! They can only control their own vision of the world, adapt and grow...the other option is to stagnate and waste your opportunities.

The good news is that there are now numerous education and retraining opportunities available to mature age people, with many being delivered conveniently online at your own pace. Rightly or wrongly your employability will often depend solely on having the appropriate qualifications (tickets).

Those who embrace change, tackle new technologies, systems and methods will find gratifying work.

This is not easy! However with the careful ACMA support and coaching any reasonable person can thrive into their later years actively contributing to society and their own welfare.

## The challenge is yours!



*Success is how high you bounce when you hit the bottom.*

- General George Patton

# Outplacement



Photo by Saklakov | Adobe Stock 112329709

## **OUTPLACEMENT IS VITAL for any company or organisation implementing enforced workplace change, downsizing, retrenchment or redundancy.**

Typically management view the provision of Outplacement services as a benevolent act to assist former employees find another position and move on with their lives, and whilst this is a major objective of an Outplacement program there are more cogent reasons to ensure that proper Outplacement support is provided to former employees.

Since the introduction of the Fairwork Act the industrial relations landscape in Australia has changed dramatically, with many large and small scale organisations executive teams struggling to understand its full implications. Get it wrong and a company can face uncapped liabilities totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars...think about Adverse Action, OH&S and Common Law claims.

The redundancy/retrenchment process is often delegated to the human resources manager (and why not) who in many cases has not been through this process previously, and who most likely has little or no understanding/qualifications to properly manage the assignment from beginning to end.

Consequently an organisation can be unwittingly exposed to huge potential liabilities if something goes wrong (with the potential for this risk extending possibly for many weeks after the initial retrenchment has occurred). Imagine if Boards and shareholders really knew of these potential liabilities. Remember it is the employer who is enforcing these changes on their employees, so a duty of care certainly exists. Furthermore, by subjecting employees to this trauma it is incumbent on the terminating employer to provide timely counselling and support to all affected personnel. Failure to do so is indefensible, particularly in a legal (and moral) context.

A [well structured Outplacement program](#) will manage and minimise most of these risks, initially focusing on counselling and support over the first 24 to 48 hour period after being informed of the retrenchment. Carefully designed processes

that assist people and their families to cope with these sudden changes are all components of risk management on behalf of the employer.

If something goes horribly wrong (e.g. an employee self harms or became violent to management) then the structure exists to quickly act to prevent and /or minimise these possibilities. Not to have these structures in place is an abrogation of duty of care to former employees, shareholders and the wider community.

Outplacement works for the benefit of both the employer and the retrenched worker, assisting all parties to 'settle down' and move ahead following this significant and traumatic event. Not to provide Outplacement services could therefore be viewed as reckless and irresponsible.

## **A high quality Outplacement program will provide:**

- [Experienced and qualified counsellors](#) skilled in enforced workplace change
- A planned processes to address the immediate impact on employees and their families
- A structure to monitor individual health and reaction (particularly during the first 48 hour period)
- A proven program to intensively assist former employees to find a new position
- The flexibility to respond to individual needs and job search requirements over a 12-24 month time frame

Outplacement is more than finding a new job. It is about helping all parties to effectively move through a time of major trauma in a managed and supportive environment, thereby minimising immediate risks and maximising future opportunities.

“Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



# Psychometric and vocational assessment tests

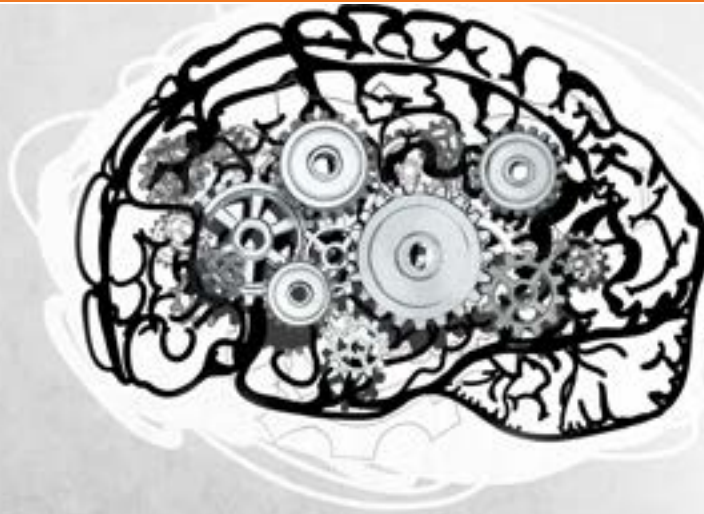


Photo by denisismogilov Adobe Stock\_ 123832246

**In the words of Plato “No two people are born exactly alike ...”. Therefore the task of a career adviser is complimented by the use of various assessment tools, including Vocational Assessment Instruments.**

There are six types of assessment tests:

1. Intelligence
2. Interests
3. Values
4. Skills
5. Personality
6. Computer based.

**The Education and Industrial Testing Service of San Diego,** California has developed three career assessment instruments encapsulating all of the above:

COPS – Career Occupational Preference System, which is an Interest Inventory and takes 20-30 minutes to complete.

CAPS – Career Ability Placement Survey, which is a battery eight 5 minute Ability/Skills assessments.

COPEs – Career Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey, which is a Values Inventory that takes 40-50 minutes to complete.

A notable feature of the COPS system is that it indicates specific links between users and occupational groups, for each measured dimension – Interests; Abilities; Values

**Australian Centre for Educational Research (ACER)** has developed a range of tests focused on:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Personality Indicators
- Organisational Development
- Career Planning

**Harcourt Assessment Australia and New Zealand** also produced a number of assessment and career planning tests and support products covering the following topics:

- General Mental Ability
- Emotional Intelligence
- Numeracy, Literacy and Occupational Skills
- Occupational Personality and Motivation
- Workplace counselling
- Vocational Guidance
- Job Analysis and Job Stressors

The value of testing is an ongoing debate, however it is accepted that clients need to be assessed and if used wisely vocational assessment instruments provide valuable information to the adviser.

ACMA uses a multi part written assessment and online psychometric test, as well as personally evaluating each client. This combination has proven to ultimately provide a highly accurate profile that then enables specific advice and direction to be developed.

Formal assessment provides a reasonably accurate vehicle to identify a person's interests, values and abilities and consequently make informed career choices.

The overall objective of these tests is to assist clients to make more objective and rational career decisions. Accordingly, the central task of narrowing career options is assisted by assessments tests, promoting self knowledge and self development, plus the keys to considering various occupations.

... continued on next page

Tests are based on the following factors:

- **Raw score:** score a candidate has earned for the number of correct answers
- **Sample population:** when comparing an individual with a group, the group are themselves a sample of a larger group called the population
- **Norming:** test results for a large group of previous test results (standard set of results) with which to compare current results.
- **Norm group:** group on which previous tests were conducted
- **Correlation statistically significant:** correlation of one statistic to another is the measure of how the two are related (if the relationship is perfect then the coefficient is 1.00 etc.)
- **Reliability:** extent to which a set of test results are reproduced when the same test is readministered to the same group of people
- **Content validity:** If the test content is the same as the job for which the test is being administered
- **Criterion validity:** is purely empirical (you may have no logical reasoning that an ability is needed, you have simply observed the connection)
- **Construct validity:** based on a logical, theoretical argument (in an ideal world)
- **Distribution:** the frequency or how often each score occurs
- **Normal distribution:** bell-shaped curve when measuring a wide range of things
- **Percentile:** position in a large group somewhere between the bottom (or 1st), to the 99th scoring as high or higher than 99%
- **Standard score:** set of previous results with which to compare results from new group with

## Intelligence tests

Are an important tool to ensure that people are employed in pursuits that match their IQ level. Rex and Margaret Knight wrote in 1959:

*"Intelligence tests are employed for many practical purposes. They are of great value to the vocational psychologist, as an aid to determining the type of occupation for which an individual is best fitted. Occupational success, of course, depends on many factors beside intelligence; it depends also on special aptitudes, attainments, physical qualities, interests and character traits. But there are many occupations in which high intelligence is a prerequisite, though not a guarantee of success. A boy of no more than average intelligence who attempts to train for one of the higher professions is wasting his time. Conversely, where a person of high intelligence is employed in routine work, his talents are lost to the community, and he himself may suffer great unhappiness and frustration. In doubtful cases, an intelligence test may save years of misdirected effort."*

It needs to be noted that intelligence and merit are not necessarily related. Adolf Hitler was a highly intelligent, but was a flawed 'evil genius', ultimately killing tens of millions. Intelligence is a potent tool for doing either evil or good, just as manual or social skills can be used for constructive or destructive purposes.

Psychologist Cherie Curtis published an article in the Financial Review on 18th April 2005 making the following comments that confirm the value of standardised assessments in the recruitment selection process:

*"By including assessments in their recruitment tool kit, employers cast a net wider to include talented people working in different fields or with qualifications or skills outside the usual requirements. Employers are well advised to benchmark their own organisation culture and the predominant values of employees, and then assess candidates against the measures to accurately identify those with a good fit. Appropriate assessment can also be applied to determine a candidate's cognitive ability ... work preference or job fit profiling to assess how well they may work with others."*



*You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do."*

- Confucius

# Removing career barriers



## **Any person irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or socio economic background can learn new skills and improve their chances of getting that new job or promotion.**

Studies in neuro plasticity show that a healthy brain (any age), quickly responds to new learning and actually develops new connectors to facilitate this stimulation. The old adage that 'you cannot teach an old dog new tricks' is simply wrong...in fact you can (as well as young dogs etc..).

The average person has about 60 to 80 thousand thoughts per day of which 95% are repeated everyday (routine thinking).

Eighty percent of these thoughts are negative and this is where the [ACMA program assists](#) in turning around these 'automatic negative thoughts' and provides training using **Rapid Pathway Molding** (RPM) techniques so that you visualize and understand that:

- I can change my career
- I can get that new job
- I can get that promotion
- I can perform well at an interview
- I can learn new skills
- I can do a new course to improve my marketability
- I can network effectively
- I can access the hidden job market
- I can market myself to employers
- I can adapt to a new workplace
- I can be emotionally intelligent
- I can manage workplace politics
- I can negotiate good outcomes
- I can win.....

ACMA Career Management and Outplacement programs are focused on empowering clients to achieve the best possible outcomes by helping them to see, say and feel their skills, abilities, competencies and potential. Using RPM techniques [your ACMA consultant](#) will work with you on issues that 'hold you back' or are negative thoughts contributing to limiting your career objectives.

Most people's IQ is fully developed by 19 years of age and cannot be enhanced by study etc. Emotional Intelligence can be learned and developed at any age. EI is vitally important in today's service based economy where 'soft skills' are critical in the modern workplace.

Your ACMA consultant will assist you to understand your EI and the principles behind it. Information is everything in today's world, so awareness of you personal EI and pathways to developing and improving it will potentially unlock many barriers to your career progression now and over the years to come.

People often complain that they missed out on that new job or promotion and have no idea why! Could it be their lack of emotional intelligence or negativity?

Let your ACMA consultant work closely on these issues to free yourself from your negative thoughts and possible emotional barriers currently impacting on your career potential.

**“** I've learned that making a 'living' is not the same thing as 'making a life'.

- Maya Angelou

# Selecting the 'right' qualifications and courses

Throughout my journey as a **career practitioner/counsellor** since 1996 it has never ceased to amaze me why people select undergraduate and post graduate qualifications that many never fully utilise.

To invest numerous years and dollars into an activity that ultimately provides little or no return on investment does not make sense.

What you are personally suited to do and have a passion for are not the only considerations, it is also about employment opportunities after graduation. No job, a low paying position or limited career progression opportunities are the dead end reality for many 'wide eyed' graduates (*"if I had only known this years ago"* is a common lament).

Unfortunately universities, RTO's and similar institutions are constantly guilty of "shoe horning" people into courses that may be inappropriate or knowing that career opportunities will be very limited on completion. Educational institutions exist on fees charged and as such are selling products...not independent career advice as many purport.

Whilst qualifications are a necessary part of any professional's credentials, they may not always be the elevator ride to the top that people aspire to. Some people actually succeed without qualifications, however this is not something I would actively advocate.

Nevertheless, the careful consideration of undergraduate or post graduate study is imperative to an individual's life outcomes, and I can assure you that it is that individual that wears the consequences of a good or bad choice...so you had better get it right!

People often continue with post graduate qualifications (Graduate Dip, Masters and PhD) to find that they are over qualified for active participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce... the number of PhD's driving taxis attest to this.

A successful career is based on appropriate qualifications for the position and industry sector, plus supply and demand. The employment market is just that 'a market'...there has to be a willing seller and a willing buyer.

As situations change additional qualifications will be needed to keep relevant with industry trends and economic circumstances...so again a bad decision at any point can lead to a lack of employment or career progression opportunities in the future.

Today's worker can look forward to multiple career changes throughout their lifespan so decisions on new qualifications are an ongoing component of any professional's career planning.



A blend of practical workplace experience and appropriate qualifications is a good mix. Employers look for people who can add value and achieve for them...they want a return on investment just like you.

## So how to avoid these traps!

**Careful analysis** of employment market, economic, demographic and socio political trends is a foundation for good decision making. Don't listen to your uncle Bob or a mate. Obtain professional assistance as this information is readily available and collated by a good career development practitioner who will be abreast of these factors.

Making good career decisions is vital to your long term financial stability, social and mental health...don't waste your time, money or life on poor educational choices.

“Choose the job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

- Confucius

# The great 'job search' myth



Photo by llhedgehogll Adobe Stock\_ 61579343

**People experiencing enforced or voluntary workplace career change often have unrealistic expectations about the availability of a suitable position being readily accessible to them. This can quickly translate into negative feelings and a loss of confidence (all of which is completely avoidable).**

A job search is a search that most people have to conduct to FIND THE RIGHT JOB WITH THE RIGHT ORGANISATION. Stop and think about all the variables that need to be aligned for you to achieve this highly desirable outcome, and further consider if only one component is missing???. A job search is a complex task that requires a lot of planning, strategizing and hard work (and often a bit of luck) to achieve the best possible result.

Consider the arrogance of the following mind set: *"when I leave my job I expect that the ideal job is always there ready for me to start"...* (this is how most people approach it)... *"I finish today and in a couple of weeks I will walk straight into my ideal role"*.

It's a myth that needs to be recognised as a dangerous misconception and an unrealistic expectation. If you are prepared to take any old hack job then that is what you will get. On the other hand career focused people are selective about the position and who they work for...nothing wrong with that.

A job search is about finding the right job for you by positioning yourself to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Accept the fact that approximately 70% of jobs are never advertised (the hidden job market) and are sourced through a number of ways. The ACMA program is focused on target marketing and connecting clients directly with people and organisations in their target market, and thereby bypassing recruiters and internet job seeker sites as much as possible.

By positioning we mean that when a suitable job comes up in your target market then they already know of your existence, skills and qualifications for the role. Nothing mysterious about that, however, most job seekers never do it.

A successful job search takes time and systematic effort, with the ACMA program focused on doing the research and analysis needed to effectively manage your job search to ensure only 'good career choices'.

Many job searches fail simply because people (unknowingly) go about it in the wrong way, applying for jobs listed on internet job sites and with recruiters, and then complain about the lack of response and/or positive results. The worst scenario is getting the wrong job, or settling for second best when all the time missing great job opportunities that could drive their career and personal lives to really good outcomes.

The myth has been exposed...a great job search is complex, easily mismanaged and potentially personally disastrous if you get it wrong. Canny job seekers avoid these traps and connect directly with the people and organisations that need and appreciate their talents and potential.

**Think about this common corporate approach (below), why they do it and how you can capitalise on this knowledge to maximise your career opportunities...**

Paula worked as a cardiac nurse at a major metropolitan hospital and was approached by a supplier to become a technical nurse trainer for their heart pace maker product. After extensive negotiations she got this prestigious position, and the introducing company employee received a \$4,500 bonus for introducing her to the company...this job was not advertised and her new employer never advertises positions... they simply recruit through their own introductions and connections... (THINK ABOUT IT)

**“** *Pitting your dream against someone else's is a fantastic way to get discouraged and depressed.*

- Jon Acuff

# A primary resource during your job search is people

## One of your most precious resources during a job search is people.

You may have some strong feelings about “using people” and you may be reluctant to ask for help. After you complete [your job search](#) however, you will realise that the majority of the information which led you to your final destination came from people.

Remember! Using people as resources is distinct from taking inappropriate advantage of others. Using people effectively is the key to your finding a new situation in the most expeditious fashion.

Keep in mind the following realities:

### **No one owes you anything! Don't act as if you are entitled to help. When you are seeking free advice, take care not to inadvertently act as if you think 'people owe it to you'.**

Every person you approach has their own preoccupations and worries! Be sensitive to others. If their response is not what you expect, it may have nothing to do with you.

Remember the networking contact I called on last month? I have just found out he has lost his job and his wife has cancer. No wonder he did not do much to help me, as his world must have been falling apart.

- Most people want to help! Despite not owing you anything and with their own preoccupations, most people will go out of their way to be of assistance. Your responsibility is to approach them in the appropriate manner and to assist them in helping you.
- [Approach people](#) in a way that acknowledges that their time is limited. Arrange an appointment at a time and location which is best for them.
- Establish the length of your meeting in advance and hold to it.
- Effective networking does work! What most people term networking is only a pale approximation of the real thing. Put aside any preconceptions and past experiences, and learn how to make networking pay off for you.

- One of your goals is to spread the word of your availability to as many people as possible through energetic networking, you put the news of your candidacy into as many people's minds as possible, thereby increasing the chances of hearing about open positions.
- For those of you thinking, “I do not have ten people in my network”, think again and be prepared to stretch your limits.
- List your contacts! Make a list of everyone you know...that is not an easy task. Start with the people with whom you are in current contact; then recall people with whom you have lost touch. Include people from all facets of your life: business, professional, and voluntary associations; social, community and religious organisations, University and school affiliations; Military Service. Don't forget customers (past and present), suppliers, lawyers, accountants, bankers, local merchants and relatives. Do NOT leave out someone because you assume he or she wouldn't be useful. You never know who might be very useful. This list now forms the foundation of your networking.
- Facilitate the networking discussion! Help your contact think about your request for his help and advice with your job search in broad terms. If his first reaction is, “I don't know anyone who fits that description”, make it clear that you would value any kind of suggestion, however tangential. Cite examples of where someone led you to someone who in turn knew of someone else who had the information you needed. Intrigue them with this process in order to stretch their thinking.
- If no immediate ideas are forthcoming, forestall a negative response by suggesting your contact mull over your request for a day or two. Make specific arrangements to follow up your call, in a way that leaves no doubt that you will. And then do it!

### **Do not rely solely on social media. Person to person contact is still the most powerful way to obtain information to get the job or career that you want.**

“When one door closes another opens, but all too often there is a long hallway in between.”

- Rick Jarrow



Photo by Rawpixel.com | Adobe Stock\_ 61696401

# Break-through job search strategy



Photo by milosducati | Adobe Stock\_ 76987115

**In a market, the seller and buyer are brought together by mutual interest and the benefit they can be to each other.**

The buyer wants what the seller has to offer; the seller wants the best offer he can get for it. There may be some haggling, but in the end, if both sides are satisfied, a transaction takes place. In short, both sides want something; both have something to offer.

Recruitment is just such a market process. The employer is offering a job. He wants to attract the best possible candidate by making it as inviting as possible.

The **candidates** for their part each want to convince the employer that they are just right for the job, and that they are better than any of the other candidates.

As in all markets there are two sides to the deal, and it takes salesmanship and negotiation to bring them together. Each side has its own weaknesses to guard against, its own aces up its sleeve.

You must also remember that in today's extremely competitive market, you must take the initiative when it comes to finding a new job and you must do this in a distinctive way, so that you stand out from the crowd.

**Your future career will not take care of itself - you must get out and grab the opportunities.**

*"Hello, Mr Jones? My name is Sue Smith. I am an experienced Technical Training Specialist" ...define your offer succinctly.*

## Two alternative approaches to the job search

- 1. Using the mendicant approach**, you can go from person to person and from place to place asking for a job. You become, quite literally, someone begging others to come to your rescue. Eventually, you may find a job, but at great cost to your self-esteem. And what kind of managerial job is offered to a mendicant?
- 2. Using a target marketing approach**, you develop a clear idea of the product that you have to offer, define the type of job and environment best suited to that product, mount an effective marketing campaign targeted at prospective users, and present the product as available for a limited time only.

It doesn't require an MBA to choose between the two. The target marketing approach is clearly the more effective way to carry out the job search.

**“**Be true to what naturally interests you - and be brave enough to turn an obsession into a profession.**”**

- Shelly Branch

# People who listen, learn



Photo by BillionPhotos.com | Adobe Stock\_121929089

## The art of active listening: People who listen learn, those that don't languish!

Throughout my career as both a business leader and subsequently a [career coach](#) I have noted that there are two types of people, those who listen and those who don't...there is nothing in between.

### So why does it matter you ask?

Simply because life is too short and no one can learn everything by trial and error...it's impossible.

Therefore to learn as much as needed, within the shortest time span (90 years if you are lucky) you go to school, university and undertake continuous life-long training. The smartest method of finding a solution quickly is to ask some who has already knows.

In this modern connected society where information is now so readily available there is no excuse for continual ignorance on virtually any topic.

[Career management](#) is based on listening to others who readily impart knowledge and wisdom to career focused people. This is also mirrored in the workplace where training and mentoring is provide by management and specialist trainers. Both of these actions are complimentary where a person wants to develop their career and the employer wishes to develop the worker into a more knowledgeable and effective contributor.

I define active listening as carefully absorbing information and/or advice given, then utilising or acting on it. There is nothing more frustrating to a coach than when people ignore the training or advice provided.

Every individual has to take personal responsibility for their own actions (or inaction) and the consequences that flow.

Take notes, ask questions, clarify issues, then implement and grow from the learning experience.

If you don't listen to others, at least listen to yourself and be honest when considering your motivation and next decisions... are they really in your best interests?

*“No one can discover you until you do. Exploit your talents, skills and strengths and make the world sit up and take notice.”*

- Rob Liano



# Drafting your job application



Photo by Tony Northrup | Adobe Stock\_28430159

## The following suggestions may be helpful in preparing a job application in response to an advertisement (online or otherwise).

Read the advertisement carefully, underlining or making notes on salient points raised - for example, the duties, the type of person sought and the method of application. If phoning is optional, it is generally preferable to phone initially, as they will often try to interview you over the telephone to reduce their workload, and save time by not bringing you in for a personal interview. This could give you the chance to sell yourself or at least find out vital information about the position. You will also find that the people on the other end may give you an immediate indication about your chances. You may possibly determine that the position is not what you wanted, thereby avoid wasting your precious time, effort and resources.

You may be unsuccessful after submitting an application, but at least someone has got to read your letter first, before deciding to reject you for the position.

In writing the application letter to accompany your resume, highlight those aspects of your experience which the employer says they are seeking. One page should be sufficient and unless the advertisement specifically seeks a hand-written application, it should be typed.

However, if it is hand-written, ensure your writing is neat and legible. Check spelling and grammar.

Do not waste time writing lengthy application letters if you are asked to write or telephone for an application. Some consultants and organisations favour this approach, so you should be aware of a few basic guidelines.

Judgments about people will be made on the way applications are completed. They will not be impressed by forms which are incomplete, difficult to read, inaccurate, vague, unconvincing or bearing signs of having been completed without attention or thought.

If an online application form process is being used try to complete it within a couple of days.

Read thoroughly all of the notes on the application form and make sure you understand what is required.

Put the right information in the right sections. Use every space on the form effectively; a neat layout creates a good impression.

### **ALWAYS check your spelling and grammar!**

Draft answers to questions where personal views or long narratives are called for and then cut and paste the final wording into the form (when you are satisfied with it).

### **Be brief and succinct with your responses.**

“Desperation works in job search as well as it does in dating.”

- Darrell Gurney

# Job searching can be difficult



Photo by Gajus | iStock\_000076405055

**Job searching can be a difficult, lengthy and frustrating business and it is best if you plan on the basis that it will be. You require a plan of action and self-discipline to see the plan through.**

On leaving your present job, you may be tempted to take a holiday. In a highly competitive job market, holidays may not be in your best interests in that a break may persuade you that you can put off till tomorrow career development action which should be taken today. It is often possible to arrange to take a break before you start a newly accepted position.

Review your career development activities regularly, say once a week. Ask yourself what have you done in the previous week about getting a new job and what are you planning to do next week. Your answers must be positive and honest. .

The longer you are out of work the more tedious the job search becomes. The first, second and even the third weeks are simple. So perhaps are the first four or five interviews. But you must sound as fresh and enthusiastic in your twentieth interview as you did in the first. A jaded or desperate performance could lose you the offer of a job.

For those people who have been out of work for an extended period we recommend that you accept any reasonable offer of a job that you can do and would more or less enjoy doing - even if it is not ideal. There is little satisfaction in being the best engineer or sales manager who is out of work. Your career plan can then be implemented in the future to obtain that ultimate ideal position (it is much easier to find a new position whilst you are currently employed).

Job hunting requires the same amount of effort (if not more) as you expended in the position you have vacated. Only through good self organisation and self discipline can you effectively meet the challenge.

### **Finally, I want to emphasise five points:**

- How essential it is to adopt a planned and disciplined approach to the job search. By all means, be flexible and adapt your style to experience and circumstances, but be clear that your objective is to rejoin the workforce as quickly as possible.
- Your capability to find another position quickly is directly proportional to the amount of effort you are prepared to expend on the problem.
- The connection between the number of applications (targeted) and ultimate results cannot be ignored.
- The network of connections that you have developed over the years is your most valuable job search asset.
- Technology and social media in particular are the keys to sourcing your next job opportunity, and whilst face to face meetings are important, technology is vital...so don't ignore it.

**66** *If you find yourself in a hole; stop digging.*

- Sharon Cooke Vargas

# Making your mind your friend



Photo by Sergey Nivens | Adobe Stock\_ 87264376

## Disarm your self-sabotages

Self-sabotages take the form of your inner dialogue with yourself. How you see things – the stories you create in your mind - determine your experience of life. External events or circumstances are only triggers for your feelings. If, for example, you go to a job interview but don't get the job you could say to yourself two very different things:

- **Unhelpful thinking** - *"I'm not skilled, educated, young, or old enough. This is terrible that I failed."* Result: you feel bad, stop job searching for a week or longer and miss a great opportunity.
- **Helpful thinking** - *"They thought someone else was more suited for the position. This may be a good thing... there is probably a better opportunity out there waiting for me."* Result: you feel okay, continue job searching and get a position to which you are better suited.

You can see how the same external event or trigger can create two very different results. Whether you feel good or bad stems from how your mind interprets situations. Your mind is very powerful. It will either sabotage your career efforts or allow you to create the career and life path you most deeply desire.

## So what can you do about it?

Pay attention to your thinking. Get to know and recognize your patterns. Say to yourself: *"Oh, that's just my "doubter" working over-time" or "That's just my inner critic giving me a hard time."* Don't worry about it, just step back, observe yourself and then look for an alternative view which is more helpful. To be able to laugh at yourself and your self-sabotages is incredibly empowering... and a lot more enjoyable than getting stuck in them!

While we may not be fully responsible for the programming we received as children, we are, as adults, the only ones who can be responsible for correcting it.

**For career success** improve your mind as much as possible but don't wait for perfection. Swing into action as soon as you can and learn from your mistakes and your victories along the way. EVERYONE makes mistakes as they try out different jobs – that is all part of the learning process.

**“** If you are not a hero of your own talent story, you simply become a player in one you didn't choose.

- Jay Perry

# Migrant job candidates are often disadvantaged



Photo by olly | Adobe Stock\_62050711

**The above article title / statement may not be news to many, however it does have profound implications for the Australian economy and social fabric.**

Here is a list of some issues that can negatively impact on newly arrived migrants:

- Poor English language skills
- Lack of personal connections and networks in Australia
- Social confusion and inability to quickly adapt to local social norms
- No understanding of Australian employment application protocols and processes
- Reticence to actively 'sell' their skills, achievements and value
- Blindly expecting to achieve in Australia simply because they have previously been successful in their own country

This list is not exhaustive, however it does point out some major barriers and given the high unemployment rate amongst many migrant populations this is an important conversation.

In many instances barriers exist through no fault of migrants, such as:

- Definite reluctance by some employers and recruiters to appoint and train migrants
- The over emphasis in today's workplace on team skills and emotional intelligence which can automatically exclude people attempting to assimilate into the Australia workforce
- Often migrants have been sold the line that many jobs are available in their sector in Australia
- Oversupply of graduates being 'pumped out' of the tertiary education sector throughout Australia

Migrants are advised to review their aspirations and look at sectors in the workforce that have growth and high labour demands. With the Australian economy transitioning from the mining boom and manufacturing decline it is not easy to 'pick winners' without local knowledge and professional assistance.

Over the last seventy-five year's migrants settling in Australia have shown both resilience and an entrepreneurial flair, which today's newcomers should carefully consider...history is a great teacher.

Self-employment is often ignored by both local residents and migrants; however, it can be a valid choice for the right people. It is sometimes said that self-employment is not a real job as it is 'just buying a job' Small to medium size businesses are the largest employers in Australia and are also the engine room of the economy.

Settling into a new country, culture, laws and social structures is a tough journey, but there is no other choice if migrants want to build a new life and career.

“ A mind troubled by doubt cannot focus on the course to victory.

- Arthur Golden

# Critical job search Action Plan



Photo by Mykola Velychko | Adobe Stock\_29182509

## What is the most important document in any person's job search?

Perhaps it is your resume, LinkedIn profile or application letter... [The answer is your ACTION PLAN.](#)

Having a great resume and other job search resources is useless unless they are used effectively to gain access to job opportunities, receive interview invitations and ultimately land your perfect job.

You cannot build a house without a detailed set of plans, and similarly to build a results oriented job search you need a strategic Action Plan.

So what are the major components of an Action Plan? Using the SMART goals (SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RELEVANT, TIME BOUND) a targeted Action Plan can be built, bearing in mind that a mature job search consists of a broad range of activities and not focused only on a couple of actions.

[Actions may be built around the following headings and then broken down into specific tasks](#)

- Print media
- Industry publications
- Online job boards
- Detailed record keeping
- Connections
- Networking
- Industry specific job sites
- Informational interviews
- Direct action
- Target marketing
- Recruiters
- Weekly reviews

In most cases a job search is a long term exercise that is easily derailed by outside pressures, so a well-crafted Action Plan will keep you focused on the task that is really a "full time job" ... a job search it is not a holiday.

Measuring the success of each job search activity needs to be viewed over the longer term as it often takes time to start getting results.

Patience, resilience and self-discipline are key components to any successful job search and this is where a well-designed Action Plan can put structure into any job search.

Remember that your Action Plan will hold you accountable and able to measure your success against a pre-determined set of goals. Nothing like "a bit of accountability to keep people motivated"!

A good Action Plan is also a living document that can be added to once the initial actions have been accomplished, or modified if necessary as additional workplace intelligence is gathered.

At the heart of any successful job search is an Action Plan... a fundamental document that cannot be ignored.

“Every time you have to make a choice about anything, think does this go toward or away from what I want? Always choose what goes toward what you want.

- Barbara Sher

# Career vision



Photo by duncanandison | Adobe Stock\_95994158

**Many people have no idea of what they want to accomplish or how to achieve their career potential. The fact is that a majority of workers are unhappy in their current positions, which all points to a complete mismatch in their selected occupations.**

They have made poor career choices that negatively impact on all levels of their lives, year in and year out, making them feel powerless and like a rudderless boat.

Fulfilling careers are not developed on luck, a whim or by chance!

Everyone has an underlying vocational DNA...in other words what you are ideally suited to based on your personality, traits, natural talents, education and likes. If you work in an environment that matches your vocational DNA then you will thrive and be happy.

Some people jump from job to job trying to find their vocational nirvana and become very frustrated and cynical about their lot in life. So how can you change your life and career?

If you are physically sick you would consult a doctor. If your career is sick, then you should consult a [career development practitioner](#) who will assist you by:

- Conducting detailed assessments to identify your vocational DNA
- Provide reports to validate these assessments
- Develop a clear pathway to gain any new skills and/or qualifications needed
- Build a set of tools, specific strategies and timelines to achieve the necessary mile stones
- Construct a detailed Action Plan for you to work to

[Discovering your underlying vocational DNA](#) is a complex task and is not to be attempted by an untrained person (even if they have the best of intentions).

Following a disciplined set of steps along your pathway is also essential.

Once you have gained a thorough understanding of your career options (aligned to your vocational DNA) then your CAREER VISION will be complete.

The good things in life often require dedication and patience to achieve and so it is with your career transition. So keep your 'eye on the ball' and ultimately become a contented and enthused workforce contributor.

**“ Opportunities are rarely offered; they are siezed.**

- Sharyl Sandberg

# Career conversations



Photo by Andrey Popov | Adobe Stock\_40352714

## With so many statistically unhappy people in their jobs, you have to ask why?

Career conversations with your employer are crucial to all parties to maximise the relationship, and what an important relationship it is.

Don't blame your employer either if these conversations are not taking place. Take the responsibility yourself, after all, it is your career and welfare that you are managing...be brave.

Any employer wants their employees to be productive, happy and engaged. It is simply good business, so develop a mindset of mutual responsibility and start talking to your manager, Human Resources department or suitable others in your organisation.

It is not all about you. It's about your contribution to the common good and profitability of the business. If you only focus on your needs, you are missing the point, and I can understand why your employer may not be promoting or encouraging you to excel.

## How do you initiate career conversations?

- Review your work performance to identify skills that need improving and then ask your manager for support to take on additional training
- Always consider "what's in it for the business", and if you can clearly show a benefit then most managers would consider your suggestion

- Take a keen interest in the performance (profitability) of the business so that you can show your manager that you care
- **Show your manager your CAREER PLAN** and the career objectives that you have developed for the next 3, 5 and 10 years. If you don't tell them who will?
- Never miss an opportunity to ask your manager: "Can I provide extra help?"

## Technology is useful, but TALKING can be so powerful!

Talk regularly with your managers, peers, associates, suppliers, direct competitors, industry groups and professional associations.

Career conversations are not a single event, but rather an ongoing personal code of conduct that empowers others with the knowledge of what you want and what you can contribute.

## Your career progression should then take care of itself!

**“**Failure doesn't mean you are a failure, it just means you haven't succeeded yet.**”**

- Robert H. Schuller

## Negative thinking be gone!

Just say

**NO NO NO NO**

**to negative thinking!**

For over 20 years, I have assisted thousands of clients in developing their careers and lives.

Numerous issues become potential barriers to people and most are minor and are easily solved. However, the significant and recurring barrier is NEGATIVE THINKING...a highly destructive and unnecessary self-sabotage.

Looking for work and developing your career is usually a confronting and complex task for which 99% of people are totally unprepared and unskilled to tackle.

Remember when you had your first driving lesson and then gradually progressed to a licenced driver...you worked at gaining the required skill set to drive a car on the road. Being coached to job search and develop your career requires the same attention to detail, practice, learning and persistence.

Negative thinking can manifest itself in your body language, speech and personal presentation and can be an immediate flashing red light to a potential employer.

People can be so hard on themselves such as:

- "I am hopeless at interviews because I didn't get the job."
- "My resume is not up to standard."
- "I am worthless; so why would an employer want me."
- "Everyone is more experienced and qualified than me."
- "There are no jobs around so why would I bother."

Everyone has talents and attributes to offer. Focus on these and what is great about you.

**Work with a career coach as you did with your driving instructor.**

Job searching and interviews are all learned skills that have nothing to do with your qualifications or technical skills.

Just because job searching is tough is not a reason to become dejected. In fact, it should be empowering as you are being forced to learn new skills that will be of enduring benefit for the rest of your career. Rejection and disappointment are an unavoidable part of any career journey (it mimics life).

**Instant answers and solutions are not part of a job search so prepare yourself for a long ride and only focus on the destination.**

Throw away your negative thoughts and replace them with job search tactics, plans and lots of action.

Don't ponder on what is not right, just put your mind to becoming more employable and valuable via new qualifications, expanding personal connections and always being pro-active.

**Never be a victim; always be a participant!**

“Often people attempt to live their lives backwards...you must first be who you really are, then do what you need to do in order to have what you want.”

- Margaret Young



# Record your achievements

**Top sports people keep records of their trophies, awards and other notable achievements.**

Why not you?

After all the saying that “it is not what you have done, but what you have achieved that counts” is true.

Accomplishment stories are a powerful testament to a person’s value and worth in the workplace, and it does not necessarily revolve around official recognition or awards. Otherwise, 90% of the workforce would have no achievements.

People often say that they just go to work and do their job and that they have never done anything of note. Think about it, and why you have been employed and not asked to move on. It’s because others recognised and valued your contributions.

Think about the time you suggested to your manager that a simple change in procedure could make the task more productive.

Perhaps you worked on a weekend to get a submission finalised for a large project.

There are numerous examples in EVERY PERSON’S career to build great accomplishment stories around. Do be shy, concisely write it down and give yourself a “pat on the back” because YOU DID IT!

Accomplishment stories are compelling real life examples of your contribution to your employer or perhaps local community. Reflect on times when you felt triumphal about an outcome that you achieved (and not necessarily congratulated on). Examine your heart and you will find many examples of when you made an outstanding contribution.

Now write a dissertation summarising the “how, when and why” of the event and the excellent outcome that you produced. Well done, you now have your first accomplishment story.



**Accomplishment stories are a great tool to use when you are chasing that next promotion, salary increase or looking for your next career opportunity because they clearly validate your value and worth by actual example.**

It is recommended that everyone has at least, six accomplishment stories ready at any given time, and to keep building your portfolio of stories as your career develops. They are potentially invaluable to any career oriented person.

Last, but not least memorise your accomplishment stories to the extent that you can confidently explain to another person what you have done and achieved throughout your career.

## Use the STAR formula to construct each story:

- S** Situation
- T** Task
- A** Action
- R** Result

**66** *Some people make enough, some people don't, and it has nothing to do with their paycheck.*

- Janene Murphy

# Navigate your career ... don't let it founder!



Photo by Andrey Popov | Adobe Stock\_ 107483370

## Do you have a career plan?

### Do you have a vision of where you want your career to be in 5-10 years?

## Do you have a career goal?

All of the above questions are critical in navigating your career journey and achieving your personal life ambitions. Careers are not separate from your life goals...both are deeply entwined and inter-related.

History is a great teacher, so I invite you to consider the life and achievements of that great explorer Matthew Flinders who single handily was the first person to circumnavigate Australia. It is an epic story that I encourage people to read as there is so much we can learn from this intrepid explorer.

That's right, he sailed a boat by himself around Australia drawing detailed maps of the coast line, including reefs and other perils for future seafaring voyages. His charts still form the basis for most navigation around the Australian seaboard almost 200 years later.

### So how does this relate to your life journey and career pathway in particular?

- He had a goal to prove that Australia was an island continent
- He carefully packed provisions and the appropriate equipment for his journey into the unknown
- He was committed to documenting every stage of his journey and to draw detailed maps of the coastline for the benefit of future travellers

In other words, his personal goal was to be achieved by building a positive resource for others (career and personal goals complimenting each other).

Matthew Flinders loved his work and when he finally returned to England many years later became a prolific author on the Australian continent, its geography, flora and fauna.

This was no haphazard outcome! He continually did things and took action to make his career and life an exciting and positive legacy to society.

Taking action is fundamental to every person's career and with action comes risk. Plans and good preparation mitigate risk and actively assist in achieving our goals.

Nevertheless, the major risk of doing nothing is mediocracy, career stagnation and a life of under achievement.

Be bold, plan, initiate action!

Accept the fact that life can be influenced by random events, so be flexible with your plan, but never lose sight of your goals.

Develop a mentor as your lighthouse, navigate the reefs carefully but determinedly, and most importantly help others on your journey.

“ Every time you worry that you could get trapped in some kind of work you don't care about, you are dealing with the problem of meaningfulness. I guarantee that in the back of your mind is the thought that somehow you have to make a contgtribution to something, be acknowledged, do something that matters - or you're just fooling around.

- Barbara Sher

# The powerful pause



Photo by Pixelot | Adobe Stock\_ 32689057

In my occupation as a career coach, I have provided assistance to numerous clients on professionally handling interviews and negotiating remuneration packages, as well as assisting them in all other stages of their career development and/or transition.

The role of a career coach also requires the development and dissemination of resources to help client's learn, grow and ultimately achieve their career aspirations.

During my journey as a career coach not only have my clients learnt and grown, so have I. In fact, I learn every day. It is complex and detailed work, and it can take time to notice trends and links in people's varied behaviours and reactions.

Behaviours and reactions matter as their consequences immediately impacts on a person's relationships, short and long term, plus health and wellbeing.

**So here is my core observation: in general people react too quickly to events and situations without thinking through their response.**

**Solution: PAUSE**

The Power of the Pause is a strong self-management tool for everyone to utilise in their career and personal lives, and powerful it is!

The context of this article is the interrelationship that the Power of the Pause has with all aspects of career development, job search (and personal conduct).

Preparing clients for interviews focuses on both their technical and soft skills, and indeed the ability to answer questions in a concise and informative manner. One of the tactics we coach is pausing and gathering your thoughts before giving a measured and compelling response.

Another aspect of career counselling is assessing and assisting people with their emotional intelligence (EI) which is critical to participating in today's modern workforce. The good news is that emotional intelligence can be a learned skill whereas as person's intelligence quotient (IQ) is fixed by around nineteen years of age.

**So what has this to do with the above topic? Plenty!**

The basis for coaching people to improve their EI is to teach them to listen and PAUSE!

That's right ... the POWER OF THE PAUSE again.

This interrelationship is fascinating and can be used as a learning and self-management tool that transforms lives, not only careers.

Here it is: Power of the Pause is a fundamental tool to manage all of your personal interactions throughout your life.

(Stop and think, have a coffee, go for a walk around the block or defer your response until tomorrow).

May you enjoy much happiness and career success.

“ Try to pause each day and take a walk with nature.

- Lailah Gifty Akita

# Job application tracking systems (ATS)



Photo by DollarPhotoClub\_82072509

**Robots now read your job application, not humans. That's right a robot makes the decision to invite you for an interview, not a person.**

Shock, horror, how can this be right!

This robotic involvement is the reason why many people never get invited to interviews when in fact they are really ideal candidates for the advertised position. Your beautifully crafted application documents are ignored and never seriously considered, rendering the whole exercise a complete waste of your time and emotional energy.

**Q: So how do ATS robots work?**

A: They scan your electronically lodged application papers looking for keywords and phrases that match the criteria that they have been programmed to recognise. If you match, you get an interview, and if you don't, you never hear or get a response. Sound familiar?

**Q: Why doesn't a real person read my application?**

A: We live in a fast-paced world where time is of the essence. Physically reading hundreds of job applications and shortlisting the most appropriate candidates can take an enormous amount of time. Recruiters and human resource consultants cannot afford to waste so much time on one hire.

**Q: Then many highly qualified and suitable candidates are overlooked?**

A: That is correct. Seems silly and certainly makes the recruitment process look dysfunctional.

**Q: Do all companies and recruiters use ATS robots?**

A: It is now very prevalent throughout industry, commerce, and the public sector.

**Q: I cannot possibly match every word and phrase in a job advertisement so what can I do?**

A: [Actually you can](#), and there are specific techniques that can be used to get your application recognised by the robots so that you receive that all important invitation for an interview.

**Q: If ATS robots work like this and second rate candidates get interviews, surely companies and organisations ultimately want the best candidate only...so how do they ensure that these robots are not undermining their talent pool?**

A: They don't advertise any positions and recruit through their own connections targeting the best talent only.

Understanding how these ATS robots technically work is vital information. The ATS robots do not read the printed word on the resume. Technically speaking, they read the imbedded code in the document and interpret this against the specific criteria that have been set.

The implication of the above technical information is profound, because if you lodge a resume in a PDF format (which has no imbedded code), your chances of being selected for an interview are zero.

**HINT: Always submit your application documents in an open Word format only!**

Another way of avoiding the ATS robots is to [talk directly to companies](#) that may need your skill set and expertise. In fact, on average 70% of jobs are never advertised, and this can be a fertile way of gaining your next job and avoiding the ATS traps.

**66** *Opportunities don't often come along. So when they do, you have to grab them.*  
- Audrey Hepburn

# Not happy in your job ... want more money?



Photo by Pixelot | Adobe Stock... 84201622

Generally speaking, we have a disgruntled and unsettled workforce with a high percentage stating that they are unhappy with their current job.

Employers are often blamed! However, this may be unfair to many companies that invest huge amounts annually in maintaining their retention targets. The employee and employer relationship is similar to a marriage with both parties needing to take responsibility to grow the relationship.

Open communication between all parties is critical. The modern workplace now has a much flatter management structure that facilitates easy interaction and dialogue. If you have issues, talk to your management team.

## **Objective self-examination is important to identify the real source of your dissatisfaction:**

- Perhaps the culture of the company does not match your values
- It may be a small business that does not have clear career progression pathways
- It could be in a declining sector and under-resourced
- It could be a very large organisation that is impersonal simply due to its size

Whatever the source of your frustration you need to be brutally honest with yourself so that you do not repeat these issues, and that you have the knowledge to implement steps to address them (sooner rather than later).

Being underpaid is a no win situation for either party. Astute employers understand this and will regularly review each employee's package. If your company is tardy in this aspect, it is your responsibility to talk to them about it.

## **Do your research and identify your 'true value to the market'.**

Print copies of your research to validate your position. Companies will not give you a "raise" simply because you have bought a new house with a bigger mortgage.

The repeated theme of this article is not about job satisfaction and money, but rather workplace communication. Too often people silently grumble about their boss, their job, their pay, their benefits, their colleagues, and on it goes.

A vital component of career development for any level of employee is having good "soft skills". Soft skills are learned skills so if you have trouble communicating your concerns engage a career coach to assist you.



*If you have a job without any aggravations, you don't have a job.*

- Malcolm S. Forbes

# Moving around the job market



Photo by Shutterstock\_108327083

## What a strange expression. I have heard the terms **job search or job hunt**, but never 'moving around the job market'.

What does it mean?

It is the key to finding the job that you want, that important promotion or career related introduction. Never before in human history have we been so connected, and yet so isolated. Sitting in front of our computers thinking that we are doing great things to advance our careers when in fact we are operating in a narrow alleyway and ignoring the adjoining doors of opportunity and possible intersections to prosperity.

Successful job searching is all about people; technology is handy but secondary. In the end, it is always another person who decides to give a candidate the job, not a computer.

The methods for human interaction may have changed, but the fundamentals haven't. People talk, recommend, have acquaintances, colleagues, and friends. Never underestimate the power of people you know and who they know.

Accept that fact that the job market really is only a group of people who need other people with a particular skill set...it is that simple.

Now imagine that you are invited to a party by one of your colleagues and by mistake you go to the wrong house next door that is also having a party. You walk in the door, and nobody there knows you, and you suddenly realise that you are at the wrong venue. So you leave and go next door walk into the room, and your colleague immediately greets you and starts introducing you to like-minded people.

You then spend the evening 'moving around the room' talking and connecting with the right people and you have a fabulous night.

The job market in principle is no different from the two parties. If you go to the wrong area you will get nowhere, be rejected and waste your time. However, by targeting your efforts at 'the right party' you have a much better chance of accessing that critical part of the job market, and have fun at the same time.

Your job search/hunt needs to concentrate on potential employers that would want your education, experience, and background. Once you define your target market and its various companies, you are at 'the right party'.

Now it is time to 'move around the room', talk to people in these organisations, attend industry related events and professional development activities.

Develop your human profile directly with likely referrers or decision makers within these organisations. By all means connect with them on LinkedIn etc., but keep talking, asking for information, job opportunities and dare I say it HELP (it is not a four letter word).

Technology is great, but people are greater! Move around the job market as if it is a continuous circle because career opportunities abound for the brave.

Just as I am proof reading this article the attached email has just arrived from a current client (this validates all of the above).

*"Last week, I attended the CPA Annual General Meeting and met ----, CEO of CPA Australia. I talked about my current job searching situation and he said that he would send my profile to the division manager. Now -----, CPA General Manager of Victoria would like to arrange a time to meet with me. He is also my connection on LinkedIn."*

**“** I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.

- Thomas Jefferson

# Building your network

**The most significant resource for career development is a person's network, the people they know and then the people these people know (and on it goes).**

Forget about online job applications and similar websites as on average 70% of jobs are never advertised in any form of media. Astute employers recruit through their own sources and recommendations because in most cases they get a better quality of candidate and employee.

**Accessing this 70% of jobs** (hidden job market) is via your network and subsequent recommendations. Therefore, building your network is critical to your career development and is a task that cannot be completed overnight.

**Treat your network as a precious plant**, water it, feed it and love it...then watch it grow and flower. All active workforce participants need a good network and your occupation is irrelevant (bricklayer, CEO or whatever).

## **Include everyone you know in your network**

Start with friends and family, people in your workplace and industry, look outside your sector, include your doctor, dentist or accountant, never ignore people you meet at work events or private gatherings, in fact everyone.

## **Be friendly and show a genuine interest in everyone that you meet**

When you meet someone smile, show interest in them and listen to their story. Ask them out for a coffee and get to know them...maybe there is something you can do for them.

## **Offer assistance If a person needs assistance, then do it for them as a favour.**

This will often let them see your capabilities and in doing so learn a lot about you. People will then be happy to return favours and possibly even recommend you to a connection for your next job or promotion.

## **Advise everyone that you know about your career plans**

If you are currently out of work let everyone in your network know. This does not mean asking for a job, rather spreading the word. If you are currently employed, let people know about your ambitions and where you want your career to be in 5 to 10 years' time. Be careful not to bore people with your needs and weave these facts into various conversations over time.

## **Be active on social media**

Social networking is where we are today. Like it or loath it you ignore it at your own peril (it can be a career killer if you refuse to embrace it). Many people find jobs on Facebook and Twitter



through friends that they have made online. Use social media to interact with people in your sector, follow and engage online with industry leaders (movers and shakers). Add value and don't simply talk about yourself.

## **Manage your LinkedIn profile**

LinkedIn is the key career management social media platform. It is now more important than your resume or any other career resource...everything revolves around LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a good place to find job advertisements and to make professional connections. Hiring managers and recruiters are constantly looking at profiles to identify suitable talent and to approach them directly about opportunities. Join LinkedIn groups, contribute articles and engage in conversations on topics of interest (all of these actions enhance your public profile).

## **Do volunteer work**

An often neglected activity is volunteering to help others in need. Not only do you provide an excellent community service, but you also meet people, other volunteers and professional support personnel. Add these people to your network as they have seen you in a semi-professional capacity and understood the value that you can bring to an organisation. They can also become excellent referees for you at a later date.

## **Maintain contact**

Being continually active within your network is fundamental to developing relationships and your professional image in the broader community. Contact is important when you are in work, as well as when you are sourcing new opportunities.

Best of all if you nurture and grow your network properly, then you will probably never have to apply for another job.



*Action is the foundational key to all success.*

- Pablo Picasso

# Applying for lower jobs can be a 'career killer'

**Applying for positions lower than your skill set is often a waste of time and effort, plus it may also damage your personal brand.**

Your career is a long term project, so don't undermine it and always position yourself to advance your opportunities. How will your resume read in five to ten years, or will you be able to explain adequately why you went backwards and took an inferior role.

Over the years, it has been a recurring theme that people rarely succeed in applying for positions below their level, professional expertise and background.

HR view it a dangerous practice to put a more experienced candidate into a position (below their level) where others may perceive them as a cultural threat to their own situations. Managers may feel intimidated by their presence, plus HR may also assume that you are only using it as a "filler position" until something more suitable comes along.

There can be many reasons. However, the bottom line is that it rarely works even though in theory you would be perfect for the job.

Dumbing down of your CV exposes you to later being viewed as deceitful, and/or manipulative as the true picture will ultimately come out.

It's a dilemma that applies across all sectors and occupations.

Endeavour to match your skills, expertise and experience to the position description as much as possible...the closer the FIT the higher your chance of being considered as a real contender for the job.

Carefully research the opportunity and employer, plus always speak to any nominated person in the job advertisement and never shy away from asking probing questions to elicit core information essential to your decision-making process.

People often waste a lot of time and effort applying for lower positions that they actually have zero chance of obtaining, while unknowingly expose themselves to career ridicule years down the track.

“Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty, and persistence.”

- Colin Powell





# Job search structure



**Every successful job search will have a structure. It is not a meandering journey, it is a focused and systematic set of actions which obviously have a beginning and an end...it is what happens in between that is paramount.**

Technology has made people lazy. They believe that little effort beyond submitting a few online applications is required. Nothing could be further from the truth.

**An effective job search is demanding.**

Employment opportunities are not effortlessly delivered by drones or email. They are hunted down by stalking employers, gathering intelligence, talking to real people and positioning yourself to be available and known.

Think of it as a military operation and consider the massive planning that went into the "D Day" landing in Europe. That's the way to approach a job search...minimal effort will not cut it.

Challenged job seekers (currently employed included) will tell you that there are no jobs available, their resume is not up to standard, the economy is bad, the system is broken and on it goes. The problem in most cases is with them and not tackling the job search task correctly (as above).

**So what are the components of a structured job search?**

- Beginning...initial trigger to start looking for a new position
- Self-analysis...understanding your skills and value to the market
- Tools...resume and supporting documentation
- Research...sourcing employers and sectors that need your skills
- Gaining knowledge...understanding the current employment market
- Data mining...conducting research and identifying key people

- Talking to people...networking and continually talking to the right people
- Obtaining advice...listen only to people who really know (not those who think they know)
- Presentation...ensure that you look and are seen as a quality person
- Learning...gaining appropriate qualifications to support your career objectives
- Practicing interview skills and related tactics
- Personal discipline...keep doing the above over and over until you reach the end

**The above are just components of a structured job search, they are not the structure!**

The structure is similar to the steps on a ladder as they force implementation of the components within a prescribed and known format. A structure is both predictable and disciplined, with the ability to be evaluated and modified along the journey.

An unstructured, undisciplined and haphazard approach can be disastrous and totally unrelated to your workplace skills and abilities. In other words just because you are good at your work, it does not mean that you are good at job searching...in fact most people are not.

The assumption that because I am a good ENGINEER (?) then I must be good at finding a new job is often the pathway to despair.

The same career management/job search mistakes are repeated everyday throughout the nation and across all occupations. Listen to people grumping on about it at parties, in cafes and in public transport to confirm this.

It's all about the structure...

**66** *The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds came home to roost.*

- Arthur Miller

# Corporate / staff career development strategies



Photo by WrightStudio | AdobeStock | 119904438

## Does your organisation have a clear staff career development strategy...if not why not?

### Providing career resources is not an employee perk.

It is a deliberate strategy to guide individual aspirations and personal skill-building in a direction that is most beneficial to the enterprise. Many career initiatives arise from poor employee engagement scores (employees rate their company poorly on career opportunities) and a strong concern for losing key talent. But organisations that have deliberately focused on career and career conversations have seen improvements beyond just survey scores and retention.

There are six steps to implementing a robust staff career development program irrespective of the size of the organisation:

- **Develop your strategy** by identifying the level and numbers of personnel involved, the program objectives and the support the participants will receive
- **Evaluate your organisation** and identify the types of roles available and your proposed human resource requirements over the next five years
- **Provide an online resources program** that makes it easy for participants to actively participate either at work or after hours at home. This is a critical component and “buy in” from the involved personnel...so make it as easy, flexible and accessible as possible
- **Measure each participant’s progress** with up to date tools and technologies (usually provided by any progressive career development practice)
- **Engage your employees** on the insights and knowledge gained from the career development program. Continue to leverage off this information for continuing career conversations to develop realistic career pathways for your employees

- **Accept that some participants will not be of value to your organisation in the long term** and assist them to find alternatives by providing a caring and supportive exit strategy

A well designed and managed corporate/staff career development program enables management to closely understand and monitor each employee’s aspirations as well as performance. Plan more accurately for future staffing and training needs, plus work with dissatisfied or underperforming people to either improve their contribution or plan to develop their careers outside your organisation.

When organisations change their thinking about what career development is, and show their employees that anything they do to build new skills and add to their skill toolkit is development, they can start to shift how employees feel about opportunity within the organisation. At the same time, employee commitment and engagement builds, which impacts business results.

**The technologies available today now provide businesses with the opportunity to effectively engage with any or all levels of employees (whatever their location) in ways that were previously unattainable.**

A recent report from Deloitte clearly states:

“... focusing on career management will give your company endurance and agility.”

# Outplacement for HR Managers



Photo by Gajus | AdobeStock\_ 79747464

**Unfortunately, recent Court decisions have aimed directly at human resources personnel, resulting in significant personal liabilities being incurred, and heavy fines awarded against individual HR practitioners...not just companies.**

Time to get the redundancy process right or possibly suffer personal liabilities and loss. Outplacement is not only for the retrenched worker, but it also assists to protect the employer and their human resources personnel against serious litigation.

Liability for the health and safety of affected employees can continue for many months after the completion of a downsizing project. It all comes down to the process, scope and quality of support that was provided at the time the retrenchment occurred.

Enforced workplace change is all about the employee's experience and how the former employer managed the total process. You are sure that you have complied with the Fair Work Act, but what about your Common Law exposure (which is potentially unlimited)?

A redundancy project is fraught with possible violent reactions, with volatile personalities capable of extreme actions against their employer, themselves and their families. It is probably the most dangerous and complex set of circumstances that any HR manager can be called on to manage and get RIGHT (an almost impossible task in most instances).

A [well designed Outplacement program](#) can support the HR manager's legal and moral obligations to assist the transitioning employee to re-enter the workforce systematically in a professionally managed and caring process. It is not simply about a new resume and LinkedIn profile (that constitutes only about four percent of an Outplacement program). Outplacement programs that are limited in time, sessions or [consultant availability](#) are useless in covering both the HR

manager's and employer's legal exposure. Only a proactive 24/7 program that comprehensively assists the affected worker back into meaningful employment should be considered and engaged.

If an Outplacement program is not an unlimited case management process, then it is fundamentally flawed (possibly exposing the HR practitioner and the employer to ongoing liabilities, as mentioned above).

In the event of litigation, a HR manager must be able to demonstrate clearly to a Court that they did everything possible to support the retrenched person. I can assure you that it is a 'very high bar that you have to jump over'.

If a recently retrenched employee suicides or harms others as a result of their depressive state, and their actions can in anyway be reasonably linked to their retrenchment, then a Court is unlikely to be sympathetic to the HR manager and/or the former employer. A clearly documented demonstration that everything possible was covered (and more) will be needed to avoid liability.

Any old Outplacement program will not impress a judge...the comprehensive nature and scope of the program will!

Enforced workplace change places a huge onus on the employer for the welfare of the departing staff, their personal health and safety, including their family's well-being during this difficult time. Remember, the employee has no choice in this matter...they are automatically viewed as a victim.

The worst case scenario of not providing quality Outplacement support is actually reckless and irresponsible to all parties.

“What defines us is how well we rise after falling.”

- Anon

# Career progression



Photo by Gajus | AdobeStock\_96781297

## Careers do not stand still!

They either progress or wither. Life never stays the same and so it is with your career (even if you do not like the concept).

Nature never stands still, the life force is ever present, changing, growing and adapting...this is an underlying truth.

*"But I like my job and social environment, and just want it to stay that way".* In ten years time many things will have changed in your life, and if you do not manage that change along the way, you will be disillusioned and left behind.

Career management and planning should be invigorating and inspiring; otherwise, you are probably in the wrong job and should consider a career change NOW.

*"If I change my career and take a risk then, my partner will be upset, and my parents may feel that they wasted all that energy on my education".* Another truth is that to advance in life, you will always upset someone.

Really? Think about you and a fellow worker competing for a promotion. There is only one position vacant so if you get the appointment then the other person is going to be upset, and the reverse applies if you don't.

Be ever vigilant and restless...

Therefore, you will need to take the following steps:

### Assess your career fitness

Could you leave your job tomorrow and be quickly 'snapped up' by a major competitor. In other words, are you attractive to another employer?

### Evaluate your skill set with a market ready focus

Develop a list of your skills and match them to job advertisements. Do they match at least 90% of job specifications?

## Reflect on your suitability to your current sector and employer

- Do you like working in your current sector and does it match your values?
- Is your employer a supportive and progressive organisation or simply a plodder?

## If you had the choice of any job etc. what would it be...think about your interests

Perhaps you like photography, fitness or any other activity.

## Identify the deficiencies that you have discovered and explore options to address and/or improve them

Congratulations, you are now on the way to developing a career management strategy.

A detailed career management evaluation should be an annual task that represents an honest assessment of your career position and how to drive it to the next level.

The point is that nobody will do this for you. You have a personal responsibility to develop your career via constant reflection, planning and action.

Effective career development is both complex and vital to stay relevant in this ever-changing workforce. Obtain professional assistance and develop a close relationship with a qualified career counsellor/coach if you cannot manage these tasks yourself.

There has been extensive publicity on the changing nature of the workplace due to robots, drones and driverless vehicles. It's happening now, and all any person can do is to keep relevant and nimble to capitalise on these new opportunities (and not get left behind).

Accept the fact that career progression and growth does not happen overnight. What you do today will directly contribute to your career health over the next ten years, and beyond.

**66** *Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.*

- George Bernard Shaw

## Job hunting advice

# JOB HUNTER



If you are like most people already part way through your working life, you will have spent much more time doing a job than looking for a career. Initially the prospect of reviewing your career, developing career options and then searching for opportunities and attending interviews can be daunting.

The purpose of this article is to put forward some practical hints to job hunting, to explain what action is involved, and to make sure you are aware of other sources of information and help, public and private, which could be useful to you.

To be successful in your job hunt you should tackle it the same way as you would any other task. That means you should start by defining your problem based on research and analysis.

Then you can identify possible courses of action and decide which to take. Once you have embarked on a particular course you will need to assess and review regularly how effective it has been and change direction if things are not turning out as planned.

Consider investing in a professional career [coach /consultant](#) to assist you throughout this vital and complex process!

### Motivation and attitudes

You must understand the difficulty of the task you are embarking on and realise that it will require a great deal of hard work, dedication and tenacity.

You must accept the fact that finding a new position or career is a full-time job in itself. Jobs are to be found and success will be yours if you set about this in a business-like way, and if you work at it methodically and diligently as you worked in your past job. When you accept that your job hunt is going to be very demanding you will start off on the right foot.

It may be demanding, but you can have a lot of fun along the way. You will meet new people and see new places of work.

### Checkpoint list on termination of employment

#### 1. Relationship with your present Company

If it is humanly possible never leave your existing firm on bad terms. It is worth the effort to smooth over difficulties with Senior Executives even if this is the main reason for leaving.

#### 2. Resignation

“Never shut one door till another door is open”. Do not resign unless you have an alternative position to go to. Begin to market yourself as soon as you are sure that you wish to leave your present employment.

#### 3. Redundancy

If you are being made redundant make sure that you receive at least the minimum legal requirements with regard to: termination allowance, holiday pay, superannuation and any other funds. Register for unemployment benefits as these take some weeks to come through, and the regular payments may be a help to you during the period of your job hunt. Insist that your firm to pay the full cost of [Professional Outplacement Services](#).

#### 4. References

Obtain references and Letter of Service stating your job specifications and areas of responsibility and experience.

Telephone referees are the most likely outcome as many firms now forbid their staff from giving written references (don't be personally offended by this).

### Hidden job market

Most people can come up with 25-50 names at first, and then they will gradually remember dozens more as time goes on. These are your primary contacts, the ones you know directly. They do not have to be people who have job openings, but rather, they become part of your communication system, your publicity agents and your information sources.

... continued on next page

More important, some of them will give you names of their business contacts, which could provide you entree to your target companies. These secondary contacts form a bridge for you to get to see the decision makers in your target companies.

This is a much more potent way of soliciting interviews than writing letters or even meeting recruiters. The decision makers will often be aware of their human resources needs long before an official job vacancy is declared...you are now tapping into the "hidden job market".

### **Linked networks are usually the most effective source of job opportunities.**

Studies consistently show that the biggest contributor to career success is having an OPEN NETWORK. In other words, people who connect with others will enjoy much better career prospects.

Using LinkedIn now forms the core to your job hunting, and as with your resume it needs to be developed to the highest professional standards.

### **Personal contacts and their importance**

It is absolutely vital that you use your personal contacts to the fullest advantage to help you in your job search. These may include:

- Former superiors
- Former subordinates
- Senior executives in other companies
- People who have been your clients or customers
- Former suppliers or people who you have been a customer of
- Personal contacts at seminars or functions
- Social friends

It is impossible to over-state the importance of using the contacts you will have from your business and personal life. A successful job campaign is more than just finding a job - it is about finding a job that suits you.

Many people are reluctant to use their existing contacts, but this is not the time for modesty or embarrassment in letting others become involved in your job hunt.

You should compile a list of personal contacts and then send an email with your CV attached. Most personal contacts only know you in a certain way and do not know the total you. Telephone follow-up is most important. These contacts should be as meaningful as possible by involving the people concerned in your job hunting plans. For instance, give them all the facts and information about yourself, ask them for names, contacts, suggestions or any information that could be of help to you.

You could be very pleasantly surprised at how successful this will be. Many of our clients have been offered a job through this method of using personal contacts.

### **The primary resource during the job hunt is people**

One of your most precious resources during a job hunt is people. You may have some strong feelings about "using people" and you may be reluctant to ask for help. After you complete your job hunt however, you will realise that the majority of the information which led you to your final destination came from people.

Technology is great for research and connecting, however never forget that at the end of any recruitment process there is a real live person or persons making the final hiring decision.



*In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.*

- Albert Einstein



# Salary negotiation



Photo by Andrey Popov | Adobe Stock\_62050711

## Unlock your true potential remuneration package value.

Simply stated when you are negotiating your next salary package you need to be informed, strategic and competent in salary negotiation techniques.

**Many employers and recruiters play on people's lack of knowledge to ensure that they pay the least for your valuable service...don't let this happen to you!**

Obtaining the best possible salary package often depends more on attitude and negotiation prowess rather than your professional skills and expertise.

Our salary negotiation program is designed to ensure that you achieve the best possible remuneration outcomes (whether you are a C Level executive or simply a rising star).

Your salary negotiation is a journey. With our online systems, 24 hour unconditional hotline support and the help of our consultants we will ensure that all efforts are targeted at obtaining the best results for you...coaching you throughout the process.

Become skilled to concisely present your case and conduct salary negotiations effectively without compromising your overall position...effective negotiation requires knowledge, tactics and vision...negotiating is tough and often unpleasant work but necessary if you want to be paid fairly, get a raise or that next promotion.

- Assistance from a qualified [career management consultant](#) to provide tangible solutions and specific techniques to maximise your short and long term remuneration levels.

- Intensive personal and online support, plus researched assistance at all stages of your salary negotiations to ensure the classic "win-win" solution that leaves everyone feeling they have accomplished something positive.
- Final contract perusal and recommendations. Nobody should enter any contract without knowing exactly the implications...unfortunately many people simply sign employment contracts because they are so complex and detailed, and feel pressured to quickly finalise the documents to "get on with the job", while endeavoring to keep everyone happy.
- 24/7 (toll free 1800 CVITAE) telephone hotline support service. This is probably the major resource of our program having an objective/skilled person available to speak to and advise you during those critical, tense and highly emotional negotiation moments.
- Learn life-long salary negotiation skills to ensure the maximisation of future salary increases. In most cases the benefits of our program will endure for many years to come.
- Defining your professional worth in the job market NOW means setting the standard for all future salary negotiations over the next 5 to 10 years (and beyond).
- Accept the fact that you don't get the salary you deserve; you get the salary you negotiate!

**“Human potential is unlimited...do not let someone else steal yours and your future prosperity!”**

- Anon

# Job satisfaction

**Do you**



**your job?**

**Job satisfaction varies according to the individual. It can be elusive and hard to attain, however it is ultimately one of life's most rewarding experiences.**

Achieving job satisfaction is a journey that commences with your initial entry into the workforce. Studying and gaining workplace experience are the building blocks to job satisfaction.

Careers have specific stages comprising of both professional and personal growth, and it is not until a level of maturity is developed that most people reach career satisfaction..."know thyself". This is not necessarily an age factor as many young people achieve career satisfaction early on in their careers.

### So what is it?

It can be defined as "a feeling of belonging in which time and effort become meaningless when engaged in your daily activities". Note the absence of the word WORK in this definition as many people find satisfaction in activities that are not directly related to workforce participation.

### How to achieve it?

As previously mentioned career satisfaction can be a journey. This may involve short term sacrifices to ensure long term satisfaction...making decisions based on immediate career satisfaction can be short sighted so it is important to balance both.

Consider what you are good at and what you enjoy doing. Are you interested in people or need a more technically focused approach etc.? Whatever you pin point can be critical to your choice of an occupation that will suit your personality, skills set and social standing.

If you are currently dissatisfied with your career identify what you don't like and avoid it...select an occupation that does not require you to perform or become involved in these tasks.

To clarify your thoughts write a small essay on what you like and how you view your ideal job...keep it honest and practical. Everyone is different in their view of the world, so don't let others influence your thoughts and be true to yourself.

Now it is time to match jobs, industry sectors and organisations to your wish list. At this point it can be confusing and you may need professional help to finalise your career direction as it is a complex task to get right.

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your character,  
Your character becomes your destiny.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



# Era of the independent worker

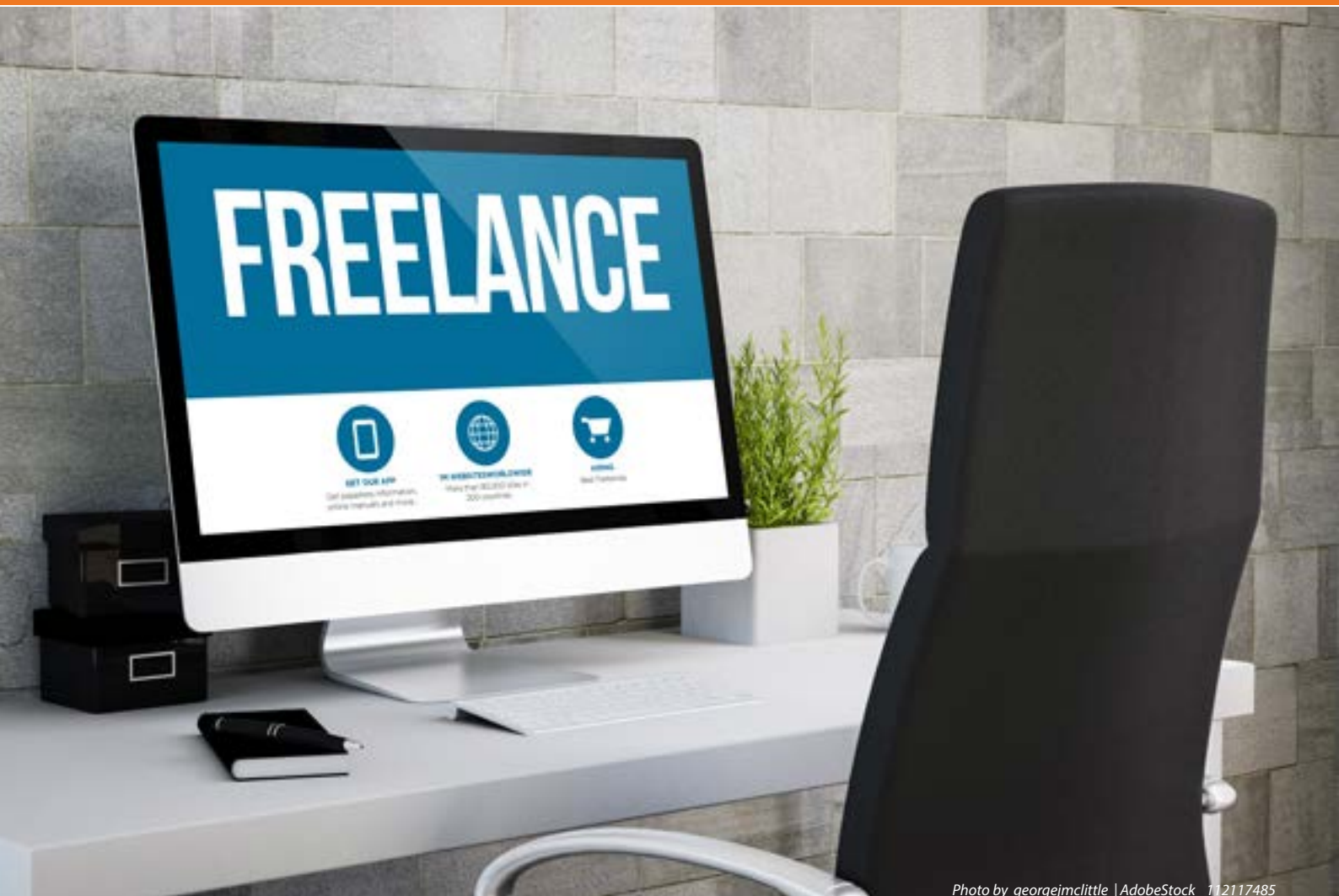


Photo by georgejmclittle | AdobeStock\_112117485

## The worker in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a very different person compared to 20 years ago!

People born after 1985 understand the concept of the independent worker, however those born before 1985 struggle with this fundamental change. This often leads to a disconnect at both management level and people in a current job search.

In essence each worker now has a skill set developed through both education and experience that is valuable to a potential employer, which then enables people to move quickly from job to job or project to project, and with different employers if necessary.

The concept of a single job with one employer for an extended period is long gone.

While pre 1985 people may lament these changes it actually gives a worker the freedom to move employers, work from home or overseas. This is all contingent on the worker ensuring that their qualifications and skills are constantly updated to ensure currency and relevance in the modern workplace.

Today's worker is really their own little micro business and as such marketing their skills via continual social media management and personal networking is critical to a person's ongoing value to the market.

Attention to career planning and multiple fast evolving industry developments are major components of any freelancer's tool kit.

The workplace now accommodates this "freelance style" of working with hot desks and use of mobile devices provided and/or encouraged by employers.

## This is the world of work in which we now live!

Do not ignore it, do not fight it, simply embrace it and enjoy the benefits and freedom never dreamt of in prior generations.

“Independence is happiness.”

- Susan B. Anthony

# Maternity leave career management



Photo by Halfpoint | AdobeStock 82319889

## How a woman manages her maternity leave can either make or break her career!

That's unfair I hear you say, and you are right. However, that's the reality and any woman going on maternity leave needs to personally initiate actions and certainly not leave it to your employer or HR department. After all it is your job, career and future.

A new addition to the family means significant changes in both your home and work life. Properly managing these changes is the key to your career transition over the short and long terms.

Career development never ends and requires anyone to continually adapt and change to personal and workplace conditions.

Set out below are some basic guidelines to assist and covers three important stages:

### 1. Prior to taking maternity leave

Clearly explain any special needs required up to the time that you leave work. These can be physical or otherwise and may well include flexible working options.

Develop a set of procedures for your expected return to work.

### 2. Throughout the maternity leave period

Keep in touch with your employer during your absence to show an ongoing interest in the enterprise and your ultimate resumption.

Keep relevant by maintaining your networks and completing ongoing normal professional development.

### 3. Return to work

Discuss your return to work date and specific needs for work-life integration. Be alert to any changes in the role that you left, and how the employer will manage and upskill you.

Consider what flexible work practices can be developed to assist you in your work return, plus new life responsibilities.

### It's all about good communication.

Some women lose confidence during their maternity leave and find it difficult to reassimilate both professionally and socially back into the workplace. Things change, and that can be daunting!

### Try these tips:

- Always act with a "can-do" attitude
- Ensure that you are valuable to the business
- Focus on your pre-maternity leave career accomplishments
- Attend courses, lectures and seminars to improve your skills, knowledge and industry connections

As previously stated career development is an ongoing process, similar to your resume and LinkedIn profile it is always a work in progress. Career planning is vital for working women, as taking maternity leave at a difficult time and can be a career killer if not properly managed. Careful planning NOW and into the future is highly recommended career insurance.

Maternity leave can also be a blessing in disguise and a time for many women to reflect on their values and priorities. Some discover that they are better out of the workforce at this stage in their life, and that is an entirely valid option.

“Maternity leave and parental leave is absolutely vital for strengthening families. It's an issue for men and women.

- Quentin Bryce

# Interview preparation basics



Photo by WavebreakMediaMicro / AdobeStock 59726086

Preparing for an interview is like running in a marathon...you would not even think about entering unless you had done the necessary training, so follow these basic steps:

## Research the company

Make sure that it is a company that you will want to work for

## Use your Resume as a marketing brochure

Learn your selling points off by heart and be able to relate them specifically to 'any' job requirements

## Draft a list of 'agenda of points'

Those are points that you want to make during the interview.

## Practice your 'one minute responses'

This ensures maximum impact and a 'close off', of the topic. You must not allow an interviewer to dwell on a point as it reduces the time available to sell yourself

## Ensure that you are talking 60% of the time.

If the interviewer does most of the talking, then you have nothing to lose by interjecting when they take a breath

## Make sure that all your responses to negative or hard to understand questions about yourself are 'positive'.

If you can't, make sure any negatives have been turned into strengths by personal development

In every response you must demonstrate that you are 'willing', "able" and "manageable"

## Start your preparation by:

- Familiarising yourself again with the work of the organisation and the services it provides together with any other issues significant to it
- Reading the organisations recent annual reports and any other publications of relevance, especially their website

- Examining the duty statement and other information available to gain an appreciation of the tasks and responsibilities of the position
- Researching the interviewer on LinkedIn to see how you can quickly build rapport.

## Be prepared to answer questions about:

- The reasons you applied for the position
- Any inquires you made about the position
- Knowledge and understanding you have of the duties and responsibilities
- Experience you have had and how it relates to the position
- Qualifications, both formal and informal
- Your career aspirations and how they fit in with the organisation
- How you see yourself carrying out the duties of the position
- The contribution you believe you could make to the organisation's endeavours
- Initiatives you have taken in the past
- Position related community and leisure interests

## You might ask questions about:

- What you will be doing and with whom you would work
- What training facilities are available and study required
- Future career paths and prospects within the organisation
- Any special projects you have heard about
- The effect of change within the organisation

## Have some additional information about yourself to give to the interviewer/panel when the opportunity arises:

- Anticipated study
- Other skills that you have
- Relevant special interests
- Your career objectives

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

- Benjamin Franklin

# If you want to get lucky - take action



## TIME FOR ACTION

Photo by Sikov | AdobeStock\_116508764

“Nothing will be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.”

- Samuel Johnson

### It is widely recognised that successful people are people of action.

They may make mistakes but they pick themselves back up, dust themselves off, and try again. The more you get out into the world, talk to people, and have a go, the more successful you will be in the long run.

Now is a good time to remember some of the words that call us to action:

“Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it! For boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now!”

- Johann Goethe

“Our doubts are our traitors and make us lose the good we oft might gain by fearing to attempt.”

- William Shakespeare

### Just do it!

(As declared by Nike’s well-known footwear advertisement)

The reflection, research and planning recommended above will strengthen the effectiveness of your actions. However there are some things that need to be learnt by trial and error. Goethe went so far as to say, “Self-knowledge is best learned, not by contemplation, but by action.”

You will also maximise your chances for “getting lucky” with your career by being active and engaged with the world.

You can improve your career by five action-oriented skills that will make you more ‘lucky’ with your career:

- **Curiosity** – exploring new learning opportunities
- **Persistence** – continuing to exert effort despite setbacks
- **Flexibility** – being open to changing your beliefs, ideas and attitudes when called for
- **Optimism** – viewing even challenging situations as offering possible opportunities
- **Risk taking** – willingness to take action in the face of uncertain outcomes

If you stay open and alert for unexpected opportunities and new possibilities your career will reap the rewards!

“Failure is not the worst thing in the world. The worst is not to try.”

- Unknown

# Broaden your career horizon



Photo by Andres Rodriguez | AdobeStock\_55154993

**Irrespective of your life or career stage recognising your career potential can be limited by your view of the world and lack of understanding of the broad range of jobs and industry sectors across the employment market.**

It's a big world out there, abounding with opportunities and the need for talent.

Simply assuming that because you have worked in one sector for many years, then that is where you fit is "tunnel vision", with "comfort zones" often being a critical limiting factor.

A good example is an electrical engineer working in the power generation industry who imagines that he/she can only get another job in the same sector. Nonsense, electrical engineers, are required in multiple industries so the career options are plentiful.

This example should not be limited to technical skills either, as there are numerous employers insisting on people with high quality "soft skills" (and on the list goes).

Many aspiring candidates become limited by job titles and are surprised to be advised that there is no set standard for job titles. You can be called anything really...it's the job tasks that you perform and your skill set that is important.

It does not always revolve around qualifications. Your actual skills, expertise, experience and prior career achievements are a powerful set of tools in many instances. Work closely with [your career consultant](#) to identify these and document your attributes, plus learn how to present them in a compelling and professional format to an employer.

There are literally hundreds of sectors and thousands of jobs in today's modern economy...so what is the problem? People often get overwhelmed with both the complexity and numbers involved with career selection which is entirely understandable.

[Professional career coaching](#) is focused on assisting people through this maze by targeting the following points:

- Identify and acknowledge their real value
- Ignore the money (initially) and look at the opportunity
- Embrace career achievements
- Deeply, understand their skill set
- Document expertise developed over a lifetime of work
- Match all of the above to jobs and sectors
- Present the total package to a potential employer

Career opportunities are lost every day because people are unaware of them, and needy employers have no idea of the value individuals present.

This lack of knowledge and mismatching costs the economy billions of dollars annually in lost production so it is not a small problem.

The good news is that it is a "fixable problem", providing you have the right advice and guidance.



*Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.*

- Confucius

# Redundancy experience



Photo by baranq | AdobeStock\_ 139823802

**In most cases when people are told of their redundancy, it comes as a shock. It is an emotional hit on par with a death in the family, divorce or other similar awful events.**

The [first 24 to 48 hours](#) is a critical time for retrenched workers as they come to terms with their new situation. Enforced workplace change is confronting and very unpleasant.

These emotions are perfectly normal and will diminish in time, so redundant people should understand that it is a passing phase only and there is life after redundancy.

People sometimes feel ashamed because they have been made redundant, and even try and hide it on their resume or not tell friends and associates about what has happened. Being overwhelmed by these events will not get you into another job...only a planned and strategically executed job search will get you back into the workforce.

**Remember that it is the JOB that is redundant NOT YOU!**

Be kind to yourself and family, take a break and refocus as this is an opportunity to re-evaluated many aspects of your life and work.

**Use it as a positive time to reflect, review and go on to better and greater times...this does happen!**

While there is definitely a period of healing involved it cannot continue forever. Allow yourself 14 days to recover, then get on with your job search, engage a [career advisor](#) to assist and start being proactive.

Recruiters and employers deal with people moving through the redundancy cycle everyday so this fact will be neither new to them or a barrier for you. So 'throw out' your negative thoughts and concentrate on your skill set, work and personal

achievements and document how you can add value to your next employer.

In the modern workforce it is common for people to have at least six career changes in their lifetime, and particularly if you have been with one employer for many years it is probably time that you moved on anyway, so perhaps your former employer has done you a favour.

Approach your redundancy as a chance for you to explore new employers, industry sectors and to broaden your career horizon. It is a big world out there, abounding with opportunities and possibilities. Being with one employer over a period can lead to tunnel vision and becoming limited/trapped by your comfort zone.

This is a time to learn new skills, gain additional qualifications, meet new people and embrace change.

Job search is very difficult without [professional assistance](#) so ensure that your redundancy package includes [outplacement support](#) paid for by your employer, and if it is not automatically included, then it is time to become assertive and demand this industry standard benefit. Employers will be wary of any brand damage and possible internal staff ructions if you are not treated fairly, so you probably have more leverage than you realise at this point.

In general, the wider you set your career options in relation to job title, industry sector and location the easier it will be for you to transition into your next position. Some people can be flexible and others cannot due to family commitments etc., however, these are critical factors to be considered.

Enjoy the journey as you deserve a great outcome!

**“** It always seems impossible until it's done.

- Nelson Mandela

# Career change strategy



Photo iStock\_000053155410

**The words ‘career change’ easily roll off the tongue; from then on it becomes very complex. Think skills, expertise, personality, time of life, geographical limitations, strengths, weaknesses, values, education, qualifications, team skills, leadership skills, soft skills, literacy skills, numeracy skills, employment history and much more...**

**Career change** and/or career development (at any stage or level) need to be carefully managed to get the right outcome for each person. The 21st century employment market has grown highly competitive and sophisticated. Inadequate knowledge and preparation can result in lost opportunities, frustration and rejection. People often settle for less with resultant loss in income, job satisfaction and career path.

Career change is about getting a “good outcome” not simply finding a new job...people often confuse the two. It’s about moving into a completely new sector or occupation and certainly involves challenging your personal comfort zone.

**Professional assessment** and intensive research are required to identify current transferable skills, or to develop a strategy to gain the necessary skills and additional qualifications.

Identifying companies and sectors that have growth are also critical to a person’s long-term career prospects.

As previously stated career change is a complex process to get right and may require a number of steps over a period of time to properly finalise. **Specialised career and strategy planning** to effectively manage the process is the key to a satisfactory outcome.

ACMA has also developed an extensive online library of over 150 career development/job search resources and tools that ensure clients have access to the latest international and local vocational information, plus current occupational research and technical methods in order to systemise and accelerate the career management/job search process.

Career development success is achieved not just in knowing the right strategies, but in applying them in a consistent, systematic and proven manner...building a satisfying career is much easier if you have **the right guidance**.

A typical job seeker’s approach is often haphazard and unfocused, blended with a complete lack of career management knowledge. People report applying for numerous jobs and not getting a reply, let alone an interview or a job. A huge amount of time and emotion are expended for little or no results, leading to disappointment, loss of income and self-esteem.

Career change is a specialist field managed by experienced and tertiary qualified professionals (contrast this with the above paragraph).

It can be a highly rewarding life transforming journey or a disaster...it all depends on how you manage your career change and transition process.

Career change can be likened to a fifty piece jigsaw puzzle! You have to get all the pieces fitting perfectly or nothing will be achieved.

A clear strategy, involving self-discipline and personal resilience are the foundation of a successful career change.

Wow! You make it sound so hard (people say). Well, that’s the inconvenient truth...failure is easy.

The willingness to listen and learn from a career management professional is the key to success. Tips from good hearted family and friends can quickly sabotage your career change. Everyone knows a little about job search, **but only a professional knows A LOT and what is relevant to you.**



*We know what we are, but know not what we may be.*

- William Shakespeare

# Using informational interviews



Photo by Skiiov | AdobeStock\_ 133547392

## A confronting job search fact that job hunters eventually learn is that applying for jobs online is often a waste of time and a 'black hole'.

There are many reasons for this that I will not address in this article, except to say that any level of job seeker must broaden his/her job search tactics.

On average 70% of jobs are never advertised, and this is where a targeted campaign directly to companies that would be highly likely to want your skills and expertise is a sensible strategy.

Developing an action plan based on research and analysis is excellent preparation and fundamental to obtaining a suitable position. A haphazard or 'give it a go' approach to job search is the reason many job seekers struggle.

Informational interviews can help you explore your options in the following ways:

- Getting valuable information for your [job hunting and career planning](#) (e.g. choosing an academic qualification or career). It's a good way to 'reality check' what you've read, heard, and think
- Learning about a particular organisation, how you might fit in, and what problems or needs the employer has. Knowing these things will help you slant your qualifications towards the needs of the organisation
- Gaining experience and self-confidence in [interviewing with professionals](#) through discussing yourself and your career interests
- Enlarging your circle of "expert" contacts in the area. Remember, it is who you know (or get to know) that gets you a job. It's never too early to establish contacts

- Asking for other referrals (e.g., "Can you suggest some other people that I might talk to about jobs in this field?")
- An informational interview is an appointment that you schedule with a particular individual for the purpose of gaining current, regional, and/or specialised information from an 'insider' point of view. If you are in the process of choosing a training course, making career choices, changing careers or beginning a job hunt, then informational interviews may help you explore your possibilities
- Unlike job interviews, informational interviews do not require that you sell yourself to an employer and do not depend on existing job vacancies. Informational interviews are arranged with those likely to provide information directly or with those who can refer you to persons with information
- The gathering of market intelligence (information) is not new. Organisations conduct market research all the time, so why not you. It is a proven method of professionally and proactively assisting in your quest for the 'right job with the right employer'

There are many tools available for both [job search and career development](#) purposes, and informational interviews are 'one of those important tools'.

“The voyage of discovery is not in looking for new landscapes, but looking with new eyes.

- Anon



# New job search paradigm



Photo by Brian Jackson | AdobeStock\_83362614

**The job search process has changed forever. Today's job search has changed dramatically and if you are unaware of this new paradigm then you will be left behind in the recruitment process.**

Most workforce participants have not conducted a job search for many years, and although the majority now have excellent technology skills it is far more complex than simply emailing your resume to a new employer.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century employment market has grown highly competitive and sophisticated. Inadequate knowledge and preparation can result in lost opportunities, frustration and rejection. People often settle for less with resultant loss in income, job satisfaction and career path.

- The resume/CV has been replaced as the most important document...it is now a secondary component
- LinkedIn (and Google to certain extent) is THE CORE of your job search, with your LinkedIn profile now being the "go to resource" for recruiters and hiring managers
- The resume has become a summary document, with LinkedIn providing a more detailed online marketing presentation that is always available online for review
- Social media now reigns supreme in the job search process, and if you are not social media savvy then you will be obscure and irrelevant to today's recruiters and hiring managers
- Cover letters and resumes aren't read on paper anymore. Computerised Application Tracking Systems (ATS) are widely used to manage applications

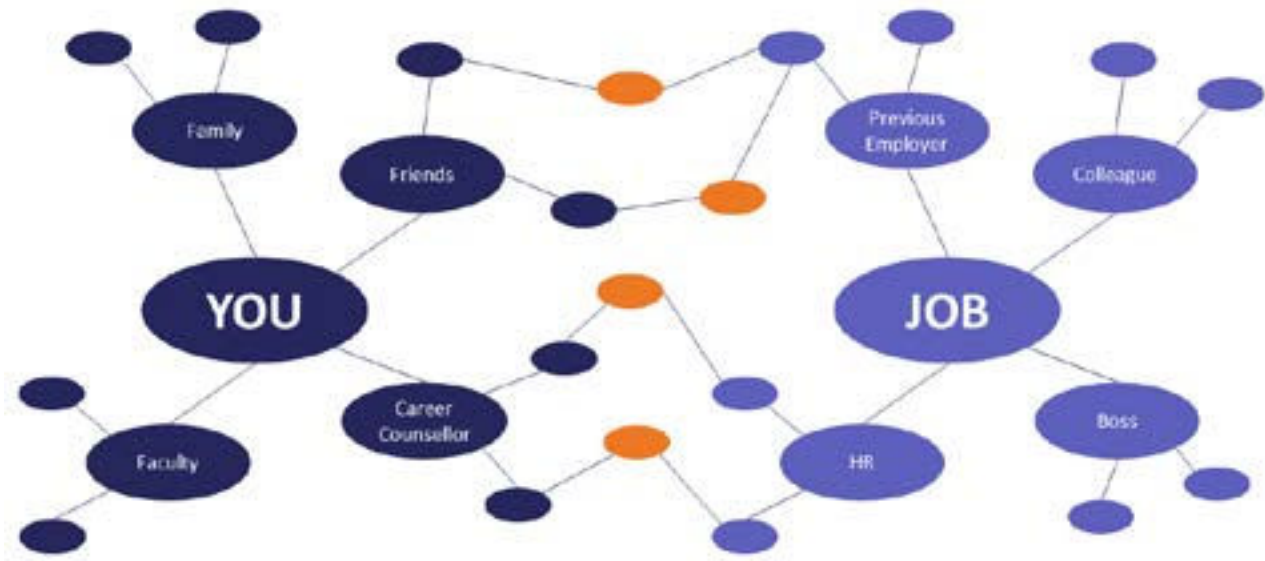
- Optimising your applications and knowing how ATS systems work is critical to getting noticed and being invited to interview
- It is also vital that you focus on industry sectors that have growth (not contraction) so that you have an excellent chance of advancing your career over the coming years
- Discover vital information on the specific skills necessary and needed in today's job market, and what is your "value offer" to the employment market
- Career development success is achieved not just in knowing the right strategies, but in applying them in a consistent, systematic and proven manner
- Multiple factors including your personal values and aspirations need to be addressed, and if you get just one factor wrong then disastrous consequences may follow

It is a new world in the recruitment process...ensure that you don't get left behind and become irrelevant to employers. Technology is a wonderful thing, especially if you're in career transition and/or looking for a new job. Perhaps you don't know how to conduct a contemporary job search...so much has changed!

“A person without ambition is like a lifeless object and when you work with ambition, no goal is difficult to achieve.”

- Anurag Prakash Ray

# Networking – your core job search tool



## What is networking?

It does not matter whether you are looking for a job or just endeavouring to meet people (to develop your career) in your profession or sector; networking is the core activity.

**Networking is all about building connections** with like-minded people and organisations that you may like to work for in the future...people with similar backgrounds, education and experience.

Networking is not new, with most people doing it all the time without formally recognising and naming it.

## Is networking essential?

Think about a time when you went to a function full of people that you did not know, and suddenly you see a person that you have met before. Who are you likely to approach first? Right, the person that you are familiar with. The focus of networking is to build connections between people you know and when you need some information or help you have a pool of people to contact...especially when you are developing your career.

Many jobs are never advertised and are often filled by personal recommendation via word of mouth. It is what is called the "hidden job market", and the best way to access these jobs is via your network. It does not have to be directly from your initial contact as they know at least six other people and on it goes (build connections with your primary contacts connections).

While jobs are advertised in newspapers or websites or via recruitment agencies, many are not. This may seem like a bad thing when you are the one looking for a job. But the good news is it means that there is a hidden job market that you can tap into if you know that it's there – and the best way of tapping in to it is by making the most of your connections and creating and building others as much as you can.

## Creating networks

Your very own personal network is comprised of your group of friends, relatives, neighbours, current and past work colleagues, community groups and various acquaintances that you meet on a daily basis (first connections). This personal network always intersects with other similar networks (second connections), and on it builds. These first and second connections mean that you actually already have an established network on which you can immediately build. Your network never stops growing, providing you continue to nurture consistently and develop all of your expanding connections.

## Result

People who develop mature networks will often never have to apply for an advertised again (in many cases). By utilising your connections, you will swiftly obtain referrals and direct approaches from potential employers interested in your expertise.

**Career development based on networking** is a powerful tool applicable to all skill and job levels in the workforce.

**“Networking is marketing. Marketing yourself, marketing your uniqueness, marketing what you stand for.”**

- Christine Comaford-Lynch

# Work closely with your referees



Photo Fotolia\_35374114

## Good referees are very valuable - don't take them for granted!

Be sure to ask their permission to have them as a referee. Keep the relationship strong by remembering to do little things such as send them birthday cards, Christmas cards, copies of articles which you think might interest them, plus the usual ongoing social media contact.

Let your career consultant guide you on choosing and coaching the most suitable people as referees.

Once you have their permission, in general, don't bother them every time you put down their name as a referee. However, you should make it clear to the employer or recruiter that they should tell you if the selection process gets to the point where they will soon be contacting your referees. (This is normally only the top applicants after they have been interviewed.)

When you know they will soon be contacted, call your referees and send them the position description or job advertisement, a copy of your application, and a concise list of your major achievements while working with them.

The purpose of this list of achievements is to prompt their memories and prepare them to make you sound like a million dollars (or whatever your salary will be) when the employer contacts them.

Professionally managing the entire pre and post interview strategy is critical to achieving the outcome that you want.

## Your referees are also at the heart of your network.

Connecting with your referees on LinkedIn is obvious, however, how to then leverage off their personal connections is the key to targeting and shortening your job search, and to rapidly expand your LinkedIn connections.

### Step 1

Carefully examine all of your referees' connections on LinkedIn and invite all of them to connect with you (on the basis that you both know your referee).

### Step 2

Once you have connected with your referees' connections, repeat Step 1 instructions to connect with this new set of people.

### Step 3

Develop a list of companies that all of your new connections work for and refine down to twelve potential companies that you would like to work for.

### Step 4

You now have a list of companies to directly target market and follow (all of which will be relevant to your background).

As you can see, your referees are 'truly magic' people to actively assist you to obtain your next position and drive your career to new heights.



*Only in the darkness can you see the stars.*

- Martin Luther King Jr



Photo back by Nata-Lia | AdobeStock\_7290038



*Cover photo iStock\_000055713590*

**A C M A**

**Associated Career  
Management Australia**

**National Head Office**

National telephone: 1800 245 380

Email: [info@career-manage.com.au](mailto:info@career-manage.com.au)

Website: [www.career-manage.com.au](http://www.career-manage.com.au)

**Office Locations**

Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth,  
Adelaide, Canberra, Cairns, Darwin &  
Auckland