

10 ways to future-proof your career



By Carole Brown

In these times of ever-changing work places and economic uncertainty, it is even more important that you are pro-active about managing your career. Here are 10 tips to help you future proof your career, so no matter what your work and life circumstances, you can be confident that you will always have options to pursue.

1. Know what you want and what you have to offer

The keys to future proofing your career are knowing where to look for opportunities and connecting these to what you want and what suits you, meets your needs and aligns with your motivators and values. Conduct an audit of your skills, your work values and interest. What do you do well? What do you have a track record in? How could these skills be applied elsewhere? What makes you want to get up and go to work each day – how well are these preferences being met in your current job?

2. Connect to opportunities

There are multiple ways to identify job opportunities including through contacts and networks, on-line job boards, social media, professional associations, recruitment agencies, directories, journals and newspapers. A knowledge of the current job market combined with clarity about what you want, puts you in a strong position to develop your career.

3. Maintain strong networks

Contacts and networks are highly important to career success in identifying industry trends and opportunities because most jobs are not advertised. Aim to be well connected through a variety of networks and be active in keeping healthy and diverse professional relationships beyond your immediate work place.

4. Commit to ongoing learning

Whether it be through formal education and courses or on the job training or learning from a mentor, continue to update and extend your skills. This is a requirement for success in modern workplaces to ensure you are competent in required skills and knowledge.

5. Develop a career strategy

Think about your options and map your career ideas for the next 2-3 years. Try to think as laterally as possible. Combine some big ideas within a healthy touch of realism to set SMART goals for yourself. Be open to opportunities and avoid the trap of staying in a job for too long.

6. Strive for a healthy work-life balance

Decide what is most important in your life and organise your priorities accordingly. Remember that everything doesn't have to be accomplished all at once. Balance activities that nurture mind body and soul. This requires commitment and discipline and a willingness to give some things up or re-arrange priorities.

7. Aim for a fulfilling career

No matter what your age or stage, pursuing a fulfilling career leads to increased performance and wellbeing in the workplace. This is good for employers as much as it is for individuals. People who pursue healthy careers will also have more opportunities open to them as they are typically more energetic, achieve at a higher level and are much more attractive to employers and marketable.

8. Keep your resume up to date

With an up to date resume you have a current record of the skills, experience and achievements of your working life. There are many ways to format a resume and lots of varying advice out there about the best approach. The key things are to keep it relatively short (2-3 pages in most cases), showcase key skills and experience on the first page and ensure it is well presented and current.

9. ALWAYS have a Plan B.

No matter how happy you are with your current job or career, there are plenty of examples, where people have not been resilient in the face of unexpected changes such as funding cuts, a change of management, a re-structure. Ask yourself, if your job were to end today, or things turned bad at work, what would you do?

10. Invest in the services of a qualified career professional

The benefits of engaging a professionally qualified career professional is the same as for any profession in that they bring experience, expertise and qualifications to an area that most people only have a small amount of knowledge about. There is no doubt that if you engage the right practitioner for you, you will achieve enormous progress much more efficiently and avoid falling into traps that can impede your success. For a listing of qualified career practitioners go to: www.cdca.org.au

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