

# Lifelong Career Management

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## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Today's world of work is unrecognizable from the workplace of only a few years ago. What changes can you identify and what is the impact of those changes on employees?
2. What strategies and approaches can career practitioners use with clients to help them better manage their careers?

## Introduction and Learning Objectives

Several factors have come together over the past decade to impact how we manage our careers. Canadian organizations are grappling with changing workforce demographics, increasing workforce diversity, new technologies, and the creation of **knowledge workers** (Florida, 2002). Besides the threat of outsourcing of jobs, **globalization** has also brought global labour markets, global collaborations, globally distributed work teams, and the global competition for talent. Increasingly workers are faced with changes to employment that are beyond their individual control. However, career development practitioners suggest that individuals can and ought to manage their lives and work to stay employable.

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In this era, careers may involve employment in different types of work and with different employers. Career advancement has become characterized by job enrichment instead of promotions. Today, individuals are responsible for their own careers, as opposed to relying on the organizations where they work. As part of this responsibility, individuals are advised to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to identify employment trends in relation to jobs available and the employment outlook for that field. In other words, individuals need to prepare themselves with skills and knowledge for current and future career moves. Career management is really a lifelong career-planning process that involves choosing and setting personal goals, and formulating strategies for achieving them. It requires an analysis of changes in the job environment and an ability to adapt to meet the changing needs of organizations. Given the organizational changes that have occurred in recent years (downsizing, decentralization, cost-reduction, IT innovation, and performance-related measurement — to name a few), a positive framework is required for approaching the future.

In this chapter you will learn five simple steps to managing your career over a lifetime, regardless of the ups and downs of the corporate world. The focus is on understanding that one's marketability is as important as employability. This chapter is written in a way to directly engage you, the reader, in examining and exploring aspects of managing your own career. Career practitioners are encouraged to answer questions and take part in activities as if they themselves were the client. Practitioners need to have developed career management skills before they are able to instill those skills in others.

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the career partnership approach.
2. Apply the five steps to managing one's career.
3. Put into practice career management strategies.

## Values and Beliefs About Work

In this section two vignettes will be used to show how our beliefs and values influence our understanding of career success. The vignettes provide examples of how today's marketplace requires workers to be fluid and adaptable. Traditional ideas of work-life balance, retirement at age 65, or career movement as upward are being challenged.

### Vignette 1: Being Laid Off

*Sue is a first-generation Canadian of Asian heritage. Her parents told her that it was important for her to have a university education as it was the key to success and job*

security. “My father also told me, if you have a degree you will always have a job. I did all the right things — went to university for business, found a job with a large company, and stayed. I received five promotions in 10 years. To my family I was a huge success. However, I was given my walking papers and a package three weeks after celebrating my 10th anniversary and nine months after my most recent promotion. The department was being eliminated and they did not have another position for me. My father asked me what I did wrong.

Sue is no different than many employees. Our beliefs and values are formed by the advice and guidance that adults of influence pass on to us. Some of us are told education is the key for success; others are told to work for a large company, the government or a bank, and the expected result is a job for life. However, in today’s very volatile marketplace of new businesses, **downsizing**, globalization, and much more, there is no one ingredient for success. You need to apply a number of strategies and approaches to ensure your marketability. You are the only person who can secure lifetime employment.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Is it realistic for Sue to believe that because she received her degree in 2004 she is owed a position for life?

- What was the first piece of advice your parents/adults gave you about working?
- Do you know if your beliefs are in line with the expectations of the workplace?
- Are your beliefs relevant? What challenges will they potentially create for your career in the future?

The true test of your belief and if it still holds up in today’s workplace is to ask “would you give this advice to the next generation?”

### Careers — Then

Through most of the 1900s, career direction was ultimately determined by the corporation you worked for. Organizations were rigidly structured and provided the individual very little flexibility. The following are aspects of this rigid structure:

- traditional hierarchy of management levels;
- well-defined paths for promotion;
- people tend to stay in the same job (or position), doing the same work, for a very long time;
- emphasis is on work, with little regard for a work-life balance;

- narrow definition of success;
- view that the company will look after the careers of its employees;
- expectation that the employee will retire at a set date.

For some people, the traditional organization affords clear goals for advancement and promotion. However, for many, career success is no longer defined this way.

## Defining Your Success

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

What is your definition of success? Is it money, the position, or being recognized for a job well done?

It is important to take the time to evaluate and reflect on your definition of success. You will need to adjust your definition as circumstances in your life change (marriage, children, taking care of aging parents, being downsized, etc.). What factors you should consider when choosing a career will be dependent on your definition of success.

### *Vignette 2: Defining Success*

*Ahalya took the time to redefine success during a period of transition and was shocked to find out that the reason she was currently feeling like a failure at work had nothing to do with her performance and everything to do with how she was defining job success. Ahalya had been a star performer from the time she graduated. Her managers would always rate her at an “exceeds expectations” level in her job. However, during the past two years she was given a “meets expectations” rating by her manager. This evaluation was devastating to her. After attending a career-coaching session she realized she needed to rethink her expectations of performance and success for this period of her life.*

*Her father had been diagnosed with dementia and her mother was critically ill. Her ability to perform at the previous level was not possible with the emotional and physical toll both illnesses were taking on her life, not to mention the fact that she now spent a good deal of time in hospitals. She could no longer put in the hours nor did she have the time to participate in new strategic-initiative projects at her company. When she came to terms with adjusting her expectations and what success looked like in her life at the present time, she was able to feel proud of how she had handled both her work and her personal life.*

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Take the time to write down what your definition of success is today and ensure that you re-evaluate every two to three years or if your life circumstances change.

## Careers — Now

In today's marketplace, careers are fluid and continuously changing. We no longer have to climb the ladder or stay put in one spot in an organization. The choices can be endless to match the many ages and stages of our lives. This means as employees, we are more empowered today than at any time in the history of the corporate workplace. We need to understand how to navigate this new world of work and learn to align and integrate our careers and work life with our personal life so that we can feel successful in both.

## Career Fluidity

Being fluid in your career is like driving a car: You look in the rear-view mirror to see where you've been, and you look ahead to see where you are going. Career fluidity involves being adaptable to the changes and realities of the workplace. This is illustrated in Figure 1, Career Fluidity, below.

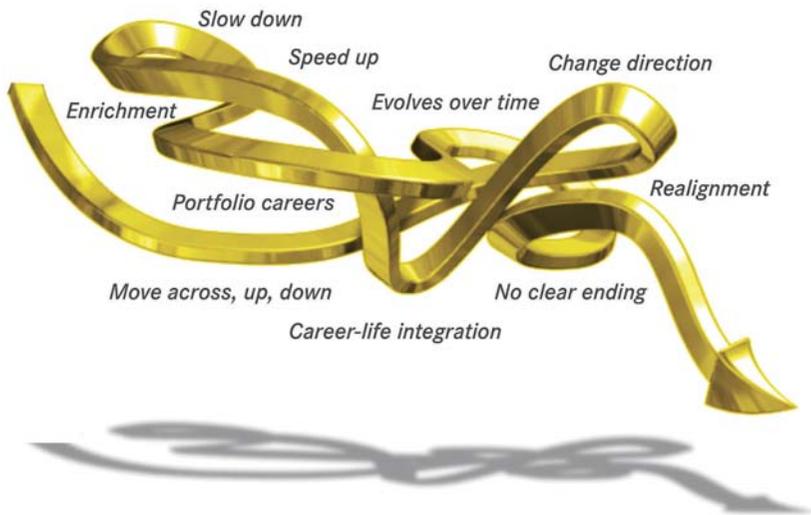


Figure 1: Career Fluidity — Copyright © Knightsbridge.

- Careers today are all about being fluid (or adaptable) in the face of rapidly changing environments, matrix organization structures where employees report across departments or functions, flatter hierarchies, and global reach. People continue to “evolve” their careers by moving up in an organization, across, and even down. A successful career doesn't mean the

only option is upward. People may choose a lateral or junior role to get experience in new areas of a business.

- It's not about work-life balance but career-life integration.
- People don't have to retire at age 65; they may continue to work or even make career changes. We are seeing the evolution of portfolio careers and job seekers working multiple part-time jobs.
- Career direction and options are endless; we set our own direction.

### Three-Way Partnership (Knightsbridge Model)

You are not on your own. When it comes to your career journey, companies do want to help their employees. Companies that invest in career management improve



Figure 2: Knightsbridge Model. Copyright © Knightsbridge.

their employee retention and engagement rates. In a world where companies are competing for key talent on a global level, it is in their best interest to ensure that employees are supported in navigating the complexity of corporations both big and small. The benefits of career management go beyond improving engagement and retention for businesses. In a Knightsbridge career management survey done in 2009, 83% of respondents agreed that career management plays a critical role in achieving the organization's business objectives. Supporting employees in managing their careers is one way for an organization to ensure that employees are engaged.

Many companies are adapting the career partnership approach as shown in Figure 2.

In a career partnership approach (Knightsbridge, 2013a), three different factors come together to form a holistic and integrated approach to career management: (1) manager-enabled supports, (2) organization supports, and (3) employee accountability. Managers, by providing learning opportunities and supporting career goals, help to empower their employees and further their career development. The organization, for its part, has a duty to help develop employees' career-management skills through human resources programs, mentoring, and networking. Lastly, the employees themselves must be accountable for their own development through self-assessment, skills updating, and setting career goals. When these three work together, employees become more engaged and retention improves.

### Vignette 3: Being Engaged

*Alba has worked as an engineer with her company for over five years and is part of Generation Y. In those five years, she has been promoted on two occasions, had the opportunity to work on key projects with senior executives, and was chosen to co-lead a team to develop an innovative approach to recruiting university students with the vice president of Human Resources. She attributes her early success to her attitude and ability to reach out across the company to key stakeholders to let them know of her interest in being mentored and having an opportunity to work with them. Alba explains the cost has been longer hours than many of her workers are willing to invest. Alba knows this will have to change when she and her husband have their first child. "My ability to work these crazy hours will change, but I want everyone around me to know that I am passionate about my work and that will not change because I have a child," she says. Alba expects that her employer will be flexible with work arrangements by allowing her to work from her home office. Her strategy is working and her employer sees her as a highly engaged employee.*

Alba is the perfect example of an employee taking an active role in her career to ensure she is positioning herself as a person who is fully engaged in her work and the company. Alba is also taking a strategic approach to the future by ensuring she makes an impact on colleagues and senior management before she goes into the next stage of her life.

Many organizations seek to create **organization-manager-employee partnerships** to promote career ownership and accountability. In the future, employees will be encouraged to take charge of their career, with the manager and the organization

providing the support and resources. It is no longer acceptable for employees to sit back and wait for the tap on their shoulder to join a team, seek out a promotion, or be asked if they want mentoring or training.

Employers must generate a culture of meaningful career development, stressing that growth can come from **horizontal or lateral movement, stretch assignments**, mentoring programs and training.

Employees need to show up and be present in their work and ask how they can contribute to the success of the company. Employees need to take the time to understand the vision and strategy of the company and work to ensure they are contributing to corporate and department business goals. In turn, the company will help employees with personal growth and career success. Career success today is partly defined by “**discretionary effort**” and going the extra mile to contribute to the business.

## A Place for Quality of Life in Career Development

by Geoff Peruniak

Quality of life is the ongoing creation of an enduring state of well-being over the realms of a person's life experience and lifetime (Peruniak, 2010). Quality of life is heavily influenced by our structures of belief that originate from our sociocultural heritage; our immediate reference groups including family and community; and from our class, gender, and race. The career practitioner helps clients tune into their beliefs, acknowledge the ones that are helpful, and change the ones that are dysfunctional. This puts the onus on the practitioner to tune into their own beliefs first.

## Five Steps to Managing Your Career

The following five steps to managing your career will help you strategize a vision for your career.

### MANAGING YOUR CAREER

1. Gain insight about yourself
2. Identify your value proposition — how your strengths can add value to the organization.
3. Develop your “brand” — a vision that will enhance your marketability in the workplace.
4. Build your network.
5. Share your goals.

Table 2: Managing Your Career. Copyright © Knightsbridge.

By the end of this section you will be equipped with a “toolbox” of simple and practical strategies to take charge of your career.

### Step 1: Gain Insight

#### Opening Story

*Bruce has been working as a marketing manager for a tier-1 consumer-packaged-goods company for the last five years. He has performed his job effectively but has found it to be a struggle and not very stimulating. He really likes the company but doesn't know what other jobs are available. He knows he has the skills and the experience to do the job, but he no longer looks forward to going to work. During a career conversation with his manager, it became apparent that Bruce didn't really know what he likes to do in terms of work. He wasn't able to articulate his interests and skills and what factors were important in a job. His manager asked him some great questions to which he was unable to provide answers. Bruce came to the conclusion that he would like a new position but needed to determine what was important to him in terms of work, values, and interests. Because Bruce did not know where to start, a friend suggested he talk to a career coach to begin the process of assessing his skills, interests, and abilities to determine the nature of his next job.*

#### Assess and Evaluate

Successful career management is founded on truly knowing yourself. The first step is to assess and evaluate yourself fully. Be realistic in analyzing and reviewing: (a) your interests, (b) motivators, (c) accomplishments, (d) strengths, (e) development gaps, and (f) hard and soft skills. This is an introspective look at what interests and motivates you, the strengths you bring to your work, your limitations or development needs, your career accomplishments, and your future goals.

Depending on your job or your profession, you will need to ensure that both your **hard and soft skills** are in demand and of value to the organization and/or marketplace. Taking the time to identify the skills for which companies in your industry are recruiting is one way of understanding the areas where you may need to invest time and/or money. This is a journey that never stops, even when you finish school or master skills. You will always have to re-evaluate to ensure that your skills are up-to-date and in demand. You will have to take the time to understand not only what the company you work for values, but what the job market considers as valuable. On an ongoing basis, you should speak to recruiters and review job boards. If you are currently working, take time to learn about your company's competitors — what type of skills and attributes do they require from their employees?

Four key methods will help you gain the insight about yourself needed to manage your career: (a) conduct self-assessments; (b) get feedback from teachers, friends, work colleagues, and parents; (c) draw on past performance reviews; and (d) keep a journal of your accomplishments.

You should be revisiting these methods at least once a year and also during times of transition within the company or in the marketplace, or during times you do not feel aligned with your work. If the organizational structure of the company changes and you find yourself reporting to a new manager, you will have an opportunity to review your skills and attributes based on what the new boss determines is needed for the business. Business restructuring, mergers, and acquisitions will also give you the opportunity to research what the new expectations are for employees. The ever-changing workplace (new technologies and processes, emerging markets and businesses) requires that you keep your skills and motivators in line with these shifting expectations. During times when you feel you are not aligned to your work, you need to reconnect with what is important to you and what drives and inspires you.

### *Keep an Accomplishment Journal*

*Every year just before her evaluation with her manager, Shawn would scramble to recall what it was she had been working so hard on, what projects she had completed, and what were her major accomplishments. “I would try to remember all this the night before I had my yearly evaluation. I would always ask myself how I could be working so hard and not remember what I was doing and what the result of it was to the company and my manager. At one point my manager became irritated with me and tried to explain the importance of being able to state my contributions to the organization. My explanation was I had been working so hard I did not have time to think about what I had accomplished over the last year. The reality check came when my manager asked if I was applying for the customer service manager position and, if so, what accomplishments I would mention during the interview. He was also quick to point out the other person who wanted the promotion was an outstanding self-promoter and could easily and effortlessly articulate all he had accomplished for the business in the last year. That was the motivation I needed to start documenting my accomplishments.”*

In an accomplishment journal you should record and measure the following on a regular basis: (a) specific accomplishments, (b) important projects, (c) notable recognition or examples where you exceeded expectations, and (d) particular activities outside your job description.

### *Questions to Help Identify Accomplishments*

Did you:

- Identify a problem in your department or company that had been overlooked?
- Help to improve productivity?
- Take the initiative to improve something or respond to an immediate need?
- Solve a particularly difficult customer problem or identify a new need?
- Save your department or company money?

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- Implement or improve a new system or procedure in your department or company?
- Present any new ideas that were put into effect?
- Undertake an assignment or project that was not part of your job, just because you were intrigued by the problem?

When you are composing your accomplishment journal, it is important to have old résumés, performance reviews, and job descriptions around you. Ask yourself the questions above as a starting point and remember to think of accomplishments from the viewpoint of the impact they had on you or other individuals, teams, the organization and/or the customer.

### ❖ *Challenge Action Result (CAR) Exercise*

Use the CAR formula of Challenge, Action, and Result to help you gather all the information you can about the problem. What was the challenge or problem; what action did you take to resolve it; and what was the result of your action?

#### *Story: The Million-Dollar Customer*

**Challenge:** Mikyla was a sales representative for a large retailer. Her team was in jeopardy of losing a million-dollar account. The customer said he was unhappy with how his firm was being treated and threatened to take his business elsewhere.

**Action:** As the junior person on the account team, Mikyla didn't think she would have much influence with the customer but she did know him and had established some rapport. Mikyla asked to meet with him. Her goal was to truly understand the customer's concerns. In their meeting, the customer told her that he was disappointed at how his firm was being pressured to pay an invoice, especially considering the amount of business they provided to the retailer. Mikyla took the time to explain how important his firm's account was to her company and they arrived at a win-win solution for the payment of outstanding invoices.

**Result:** The customer agreed to stay with her company and acknowledged that he was looking for more personal attention and someone who would listen to their concerns. In the end, this customer stayed with their organization and Mikyla became the account lead for this million-dollar account.

## Step 2: Express Your Value Proposition

### *Opening Story*

When Mandeep started his search for his first full-time position after finishing university, he was at a loss as to what his **value proposition** was to the job market. "I could not think of anything that I had done that would be a significant benefit to a full-time position in the

## YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Circle your level of agreement with each of the statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Add the circled items in the columns. Determine your total score and use the evaluation guide to interpret.

**Legend: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.**

I know what values are most important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I am clear on what tasks/projects I find most and least interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
I can clearly articulate examples to support my three greatest strengths.	1	2	3	4	5
I would feel prepared to sell myself at a job interview tomorrow.	1	2	3	4	5
I could confidently articulate my greatest accomplishments over the last year with my manager at a performance review.	1	2	3	4	5
I understand what has contributed to my career successes and failures in the past.	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of what my areas of development are.	1	2	3	4	5
I know what kind of experiences or exposure I need to gain in order to grow in my career.	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly seek feedback from others to ensure my self-perceptions are in line with how others see me.	1	2	3	4	5
I keep track of my accomplishments on an ongoing basis.	1	2	3	4	5
Column Totals					
Total of Columns					

## Evaluate Your Total Score

40–50: It looks like you have a solid understanding of your work environment and how you can fit within it to add your value. Keep your eye on the horizon to ensure you maintain that understanding.

25–39: It looks like you have given your value proposition some consideration but could benefit from making sure you're crystal clear on what you have to offer. Review your lowest-ranked responses to prioritize which items to action plan.

10–24: It looks like you're not quite ready to express your value. You may wish to do some more assessment work in order to gain further insights and also conduct research with others who know you so that you can express your value more clearly.

Tip: Ask yourself – what are the top three areas that require focus and improvement?

Table 3: Your Value Proposition. Copyright © Knightsbridge.

financial or banking industries. I had only done some unrelated part-time jobs, two student co-ops, and volunteer work for various organizations.” With the help of his career advisor, Mandeep became aware that he did indeed have a value proposition. Over the last five years he had worked part time in a well-known retail store serving customers, handling cash, and organizing employee schedules. Acting as interim manager Mandeep had also volunteered at a number of charities. At one, he organized, with his fellow students, a two-week trip to Haiti to help build houses. Mandeep headed up the excursion, managed a budget of \$30,000, and was also in charge of the fundraising committee. He completed two co-ops at a small brokerage firm that required him to review corporate stock trends and create weekly update reports for stockbrokers. Mandeep demonstrated a number of skills and attributes, including leadership, team work, budgeting, customer service, organizing, and analyzing information. Mandeep was astonished at all he had accomplished. This new awareness helped him feel confident in his ability to articulate his value proposition.

### *Know Your Value-Add*

How well do you know your value proposition? Use Table 3 to rate your value proposition.

In articulating your value proposition, there are two key areas to consider: You need to understand your interests, skills, and knowledge, and you need to recognize customer, organizational, and team needs. Know how you personally contribute to team and department goals as well as how proficient you are at meeting customer expectations.

Once you understand yourself, look at your external environment. Research the current and future talent needs of the job market. What talent do companies need right now? What does the future look like in the corporate world? What will managers expect from employees?

You will also have to think of goals of the team and of the organization. What are the organization’s goals, strategies, and vision? What are the organization’s current challenges in the marketplace?

### *SWOT Exercise*

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is a tool that organizations use to concisely analyze the critical factors in their current business environment. Doing your own personal SWOT analysis (see Table 4) will give you insight into who you are, how you operate, what is standing in your way, and where you can grow. Keeping your SWOT analysis up to date will help you:

1. Recognize the areas where you excel.
2. Reveal gaps in your skills or knowledge.
3. Uncover opportunities to step up your game.
4. Anticipate threats to your career success.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Internal	What are you particularly good at? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• differentiated skills</li> <li>• distinct knowledge</li> <li>• unique perspective</li> <li>• valuable relationships</li> </ul> What would others say about your strengths?	What are the areas where you most need to improve or grow? What are the most important skill gaps you want to fill? What would others say about your weaknesses?
External	OPPORTUNITIES How could you leverage your strengths better? Where can you make a difference in our organization? What opportunities await someone with your skills? What is going on in the economy that might require skills for future of a business?	THREATS What poses a risk to your own career development? What threats exist either internally or externally to your organization? How do they impact your career?

Table 4: SWOT Analysis.

### Step 3: Develop Your Brand

#### Opening Story

Alex had been working for a large financial institution for three years as a human resources consultant. This was her first position after completing her master’s degree and she was determined to be a rising star. Everything was going well until the day her manager gave her some very devastating feedback during a meeting. “My manager explained that I was being perceived as ‘high maintenance’ by the senior HR team and business leaders we support. It was the last thing I expected to hear and not the brand I wanted to convey.” Her manager explained that she was very pleased with Alex’s quality of work, attitude, critical thinking, decision making, and project co-ordination. The feedback and perception of high maintenance came from the simple fact that when she was given a project by senior managers in her client group, Alex would constantly check in with the managers, asking questions, probing for additional detail on what to do and how to do it. The result was that she was seen as a person who could not make decisions on her own, needed a large amount of hand holding, and was not confident in her abilities to manage the project. One manager explained that for the amount of time she spent guiding Alex, giving her feedback on every little decision and answering daily questions, she could have handled

the project on her own. Alex was also told by her manager that one individual said she would not use Alex again as it was too much work to have her manage a project.

Alex thought that by being this detailed, asking questions and checking in with the managers daily, she was being diligent. Alex worked with her manager to shift how people perceived her and change her approach to managing projects. She was now on her way to again being regarded as a high-potential employee at her company.

### *Brand Discussion*

Brands are designed to communicate a message: They are a critical component of marketing, and affect how clients or customers perceive a product or service. Branding should convey ideas of value, quality, and overall reliability of the organization and its products. The development of a brand is an important part of the marketing process and becomes central in promoting a consistent message to clients and customers about the nature of an organization or product. A brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers” (Rowley, 2006, p. 418). To impart this powerful message, brands consist of a shorthand expression in the form of a name, term, design, and/or symbol that fully represents the organization’s personality, image, core competencies, and characteristics. A brand, ultimately, is a promise to the customer, facilitating trust and maintaining a loyal customer base. A successful brand should:

- deliver the message clearly,
- confirm your credibility,
- connect to your market,
- motivate the buyer,
- create user loyalty.

### *Having a Personal Brand Is Not Optional*

The following are qualities that are crucial to the success of your “brand” or reputation regardless of the level of position or the type of profession you choose.

- **Credentials** are your “résumé” and include your education and background experiences. You can strategically build your credentials to prepare you for opportunities. Credentials are also about your skills and competencies. Do people perceive you as having the right skills to do what you’re doing?
- **Track record**, or your record of past successes, contributes to your credibility. Ask yourself if you are seen as a good risk. Remember that not everyone will be familiar with your track record, especially as you move within a company or pursue a position with a new company. Look for

opportunities to make your wins more visible to your audience. Do you have a reputation for following through on assignments?

- **Being authentic** is revealed in what you say and what you do. It means speaking truthfully, accepting failure, apologizing when mistakes are made, and behaving ethically. People respond to authenticity in others with more openness because they know what they can expect from them, and know they can trust them.
- **Demonstrating respect** involves hearing others' perspectives, really listening, and adapting based on what you hear.
- **Earning trust** is about being credible to others. There are different levels of trust: trust that you will do your job effectively; trust that you will not mislead others; trust that your motives are genuine; and trust that you will not hurt others. Trust is an outcome of authenticity.
- **Building relationships** means developing rapport with others. As you advance in an organization, your relationships with your colleagues and peers become increasingly important as you work more with other people to complete projects rather than on your own. The more relationships you can build within your organization, the more likely you will have people who will help you achieve your goals.

### *Brand Exercise*

Credibility takes time to establish. You build credibility through what you do day-to-day and through your attitude. Arriving at work late frequently will have a negative effect on credibility. Being on time for work and meetings will demonstrate that you are reliable. Consider how each of the following activities or attitudes can impact how your supervisor and co-workers will view you.

- your initiative,
- your ability to work (collaborate) with others,
- what you say and how you say it,
- productivity,
- flexibility,
- your thoroughness,
- your responsiveness,
- participation in meetings,
- how you present yourself,
- openness to new ideas.

### *Define Your Brand*

We all have a personal brand, whether we are aware of it or not, of who we are and what we are known for. To make sure the right people know the right things about you, it's important to think about, manage, and clearly articulate your brand. It may be time to consider re-branding yourself if you want to be known for something new.

- Who are you? Your personality, style, values, interests?

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- Who is your target audience? Who values your expertise? What do they need from you?
- What is your key service offering? What expertise do you provide? What unique perspective or approach do you offer?
- What makes you unique?

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

1. What are you known for?
2. What do you want to be known for?
3. What is your vision for yourself?

### Step 4: Build Your Network

*The currency of real networking is not greed but generosity.*

— Keith Ferrazzi

### *Opening Story*

*Todd graduated in 2010 with a college diploma in computer technology and has a solid two years of work experience with an insurance company in IT. His goal was to become an IT consultant with a professional-services firm. After six months of researching the top three companies in the consulting field, watching for new postings on the job boards, and applying to recruiters, he was getting nowhere. “I spoke to one recruiter and she advised me to start networking with people I know and go on LinkedIn to connect with people who worked at the companies I targeted. I started with LinkedIn and found two people I knew working for these companies. One was a person I went to high school with and the other was a woman in my mom’s book club. When I reached out to them they agreed to help me. I was not comfortable with contacting people I didn’t know; however, one night when I was out with friends for dinner I told everyone at the table that I was looking for a job and I named the three companies I was interested in working for. A friend’s boyfriend told me his sister worked in the human resources department of one of the companies. He provided an introduction to his sister. A week later I had an interview and within two months I started my new position.”*

### Networking Is About Investing in Future Possibilities

Networking is the key to success wherever you are. This is a skill in which you need to invest. That may mean attending workshops or reading books to acquire the proper tools to build a network of contacts. Many books, articles, recruiters, and human resources professionals will tell you that over 60% of jobs come through making contacts. Social networking sites like LinkedIn and Facebook are very helpful, but you also need to be able to meet and talk with people face-to-face and over

the phone. By making contacts you are informed of possibilities and you develop connections as you move from one position to the next in a company. Generally networks can contribute to building your professional knowledge. In a company, interacting with others can help you to navigate complex organizational structures to acquire resources for projects and information. It is important to develop a style and comfort level that suits you. This can be done by gaining as much information and knowledge on networking as possible so that you can learn this valuable skill set.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

1. When you think of networking, how do you feel?
2. What do you see as the benefits of networking?
3. What do you see as the negatives to networking?

### *Defining Networking*

Many networking concerns come from a misconception of what networking is and isn't. Networking is building relationships and involves a very simple process:

### *Conversations > Information > Opportunities*

Networking is developing and maintaining a line of communication with people you know, or would like to know, for the purpose of getting and sharing information for mutual benefit. Be mindful that different people can help in different ways — don't make assumptions.

#### **Networking is not ...**

- manipulative,
- “schmoozing,”
- unplanned,
- asking for a job!

#### **Networking is ...**

- planned,
- purposeful,
- ongoing,
- reciprocal.

### *Assess: How Strong Is Your Network?*

In order to assess the strength of your network, you need to consider diversity, weak ties, hubs, and bridges (Hansen, 2009).

Your network should be diverse and include people of different skills and expertise, in various geographical locations, and in varied business units/levels. Rather than aiming for a massive network, focus on building an efficient one. This requires knowing people with different skills and viewpoints. They should be different from you, of course, but also different from one another.

Build *weak* ties, not strong ones. This might seem counterintuitive. After all, wouldn't your closest friends — your strongest ties — help you the most? But remember, strong ties are the people you already know well and talk to frequently. A strong tie is probably someone who knows many of the same people you do, whereas

a weak tie forms a bridge to a new people who can provide you with new information. To keep a weak tie, you only need to contact them a couple of times a month.

When facing a problem at work, most of us will ask a close contact for help. Because we tend to befriend people at our own level, our closest contacts are unlikely to know more than we do. Instead, identify the *hubs* or those people who are already great organizational networkers and ask them to connect you to someone who knows more. Hubs tend to be long-tenured people who've worked on a variety of teams and projects.

Lastly, seek out *bridges* by finding those who seem to know everyone — they will often know someone who can help you.

### *How Strong is Your Network?*

Rate the state of your current network using Table 5.

### *Networking Tips*

1. Go to work events and challenge yourself to meet new people.
2. Get to know the “influencers” in your company/association/alumni.
3. Join relevant organizations and gain access to their membership.
4. Establish/maintain your online profiles.
5. Attend and/or speak at conferences and seminars.
6. Volunteer within your professional or personal community.
7. Record the names of everyone you know and take the time to keep in touch
8. Join networking groups.
9. Become a member of industry associations, business networking groups, rotary clubs, school alumni, et cetera.
10. Keep in touch with people you have previously worked with (many companies have “former employee alumni”).
11. Help people along the way. The individual who is great at networking is always willing to give out more information than they will ever receive.

### *The Eight Deadly Sins of Networking (Messmer, 1999)*

1. Making promises you know you are incapable of keeping.
2. Making promises you're capable of keeping but failing to keep them.
3. Having a hidden agenda. For example, you call someone and announce you have a question you want answered when what you really want is a favour.
4. Using someone's name as a door opener without first clearing it with the person whose name you are using.
5. Not being considerate — that is not taking into account when you ask someone for help how difficult it may be for them to provide that help and being resentful when they don't respond quickly enough.
6. Discussing business at inappropriate times, such as at a wedding or sports event

<b>HOW STRONG IS YOUR NETWORK?</b>					
Circle your level of agreement with each of the statements below using the following key: <b>Legend: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = agree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.</b>					
<b>CAN YOU SAY?</b>	<b>SCORE</b>				
<b>Diversity</b>					
<b>I have many different types of connections in my network with:</b>					
✓ Different skills/areas of expertise.	1	2	3	4	5
✓ Access to different technologies.	1	2	3	4	5
✓ Different geographies.	1	2	3	4	5
✓ Different business units.	1	2	3	4	5
✓ Different organizational levels.	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly reach out to people outside of my group to diversify my network.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Weak Ties</b>					
I have many people in my network that I would describe as "acquaintances."	1	2	3	4	5
I periodically reach out to these connections in order to sustain the tie (through a quick email or by forwarding an article of interest, just to name a few examples).	1	2	3	4	5
I have hubs within my network who seem to know everyone and everything.	1	2	3	4	5
I give back to these people periodically.	1	2	3	4	5
I have many bridges within my network.	1	2	3	4	5
I give back to these people periodically.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Column Totals</b>					
Total of Columns					
<b>Evaluate Your Total Score</b>					
What are the top three areas that require focus and improvement?					
1. _____					
2. _____					
3. _____					
See the previous page for networking tips to support your actions.					
Table 5: How Strong is Your Network? Copyright © Knightsbridge.					

where the other person is doing his best to forget about business.

7. Not showing your appreciation when someone has done you a favour.
8. Putting persistent pressure on people who've agreed to help you.

### Step 5: Share Goals

#### Opening Story

*At 26, Rochelle was determined to be a success at the pharmaceutical firm where she has been working for the last 5 years. Rochelle started in finance, then moved to marketing and for the last year has been in administration. In the last 3 months, she had applied for two positions and had been turned down for both. After the second, she requested a meeting with the human resources manager and asked her for feedback. It was explained that both managers who interviewed her felt she lacked clarity in her career path and had no real goals. "I was told that I left the impression that I just wanted to jump from job to job without any specific goal and was not clear about the reason. Upon reflection, I came to the conclusion that I had not linked my career path with my skills, passion, or readiness for movement. I felt that if I was not happy or challenged it must be time to move, and if I was moving from job to job I would appear successful. Instead, I created confusion for myself and everyone else." Rochelle made the decision to sit down to determine her career goals and aspirations and then share this with her manager before making her next move. Her manager was able to help her gain insight into what action steps she needed to take before she made her next move.*

You are now ready to set career goals. Begin this process by first thinking through what you would like next at this stage of your career (e.g., deciding on a career, finding a position, promotion, lateral move, enrichment, support, or new direction) and then ask yourself these key questions:

- What is the next logical upward move?
- What are some lateral or cross-functional moves?
- How can I enrich my current role?
- Where can I get mentoring, training, or assignments that would stretch me more in my area of interest?
- What would be a new career path?

For each possibility, ask yourself ...

- Am I ready? If not, when will I be?
- What are the skills, knowledge, or experience required to make me ready?
- What are the benefits of doing this? What are the obstacles, risks, or tradeoffs?

Recall your strengths and opportunities you identified in steps 1 and 2 — gain insight and express value. Consider the different career opportunities available to you. Begin to focus your thinking on how you could leverage your strengths to deliver greater value and achieve new levels of professional satisfaction in the future. Identify the gap between where you are today and your image of your future. Focus your thinking on a few priorities that are of highest impact for you and the organization.

### *Set SMART Goals*

As you set short- and long-term career goals, review in light of SMART goals and activities to evaluate whether you are achieving them. The acronym SMART stands for:

- S = Specific
- M = Measureable
- A = Achievable
- R = Relevant
- T = Time-bound

### *Sharing Your Goals*

You will be more successful in your career goals if you enlist the support of those around you — friends, colleagues, and leaders can help you here, so you need to be sure to:

1. Frame the conversation.
2. Discuss current role or position in your career journey.
3. Share career goals.
4. Ask for feedback and support.
5. Determine next steps.
6. And lastly, demonstrate to others how you plan to help yourself.

### *Be Prepared for Questions From Your Manager*

The role of your manager or mentor is to have constructive career-coaching conversations with you. Expect your mentor to ask questions to help you move forward towards your goals. Before meeting consider how you will answer some of these common questions, so that you can make the most out of your manager's time. Being prepared will also demonstrate your commitment towards achieving your goals.

- What are your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What interests you in this position?

## Lifelong Career Management

- What strengths would you bring to the position?
- How could you build on your existing strengths?
- How could I assist you in the next 6–12 months to gain the additional experience you require for this position?
- What do you see as potential roadblocks to achieving your goal?

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

#### *Action Plan for Managing Your Career*

Because acting on your career goals is critical to achieving them, we've developed a template (Table 6) to help you take action to strategically manage your career. You may want to go back to those ideas you wrote down earlier, and write down one SMART goal for each step in the five-step process.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO:	ACTION STEP	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED
1. Gain Insight			
2. Express Value			
3. Develop Brand			
4. Build Network			
5. Share Goals			

Table 6: Action Plan Form. Copyright © Knightsbridge.

## Summary

In a world of unprecedented change, career development has become a process of managing, learning, training, and working throughout the lifespan. The topics covered in this chapter provide strategies for taking an active and purposeful approach to one's career.

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## Glossary

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**Branding** is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these developed to identify and differentiate the goods and services of one organization from those of other organizations.

**Discretionary effort** is the difference in the level of effort one is capable of bringing to an activity or a task versus the effort required to simply get by or make do.

**Downsizing** is the permanent reduction in an organization's workforce. Downsizing occurs when management seeks to "streamline" a company through corporate restructuring in order to increase profit and maximize efficiency. It may also result from a merger of two companies, or when a company cuts a product line or service.

**Globalization** commonly refers to the spread and connectedness of production, communication, and technologies across the world. That spread has involved the interlacing of economic and cultural activity. The speed of communication and exchange, the complexity and size of the networks involved, and the sheer volume of trade, interaction and risk give what we now label as "globalization" a powerful and potentially damaging force.

**Hard skills** are quantifiable accomplishments gained through experience and education. Examples include speaking a foreign language, typing speed, a degree, and proficiency in computer programming.

**Horizontal or lateral movement** involves a change to another functional area without necessarily undergoing a change in status or salary. Lateral moves are fast becoming a way of demonstrating adaptive abilities and broadening skills, learning about other areas of the organization, and developing new talents.

## Lifelong Career Management

**Knowledge workers** have high degrees of expertise, education, or experience, and the primary purpose of their jobs involves the creation, distribution, or application of knowledge.

**Organization/manager/employee partnerships** promote ownership and accountability. Career development, for example, is a partnership between employees, managers, and organizational leaders, therefore managers and organizational leaders must commit to employee development.

**Portfolio careers** are a non-traditional approach to jobs, the job market, and career management. The term “portfolio career” is attributed to the British management expert Charles Handy who predicted that the model of having a full-time job working for one employer would not endure. Instead, he envisioned a model in which an individual works for multiple employers, sometimes simultaneously, performing a series of short-term assignments. In this new model, everyone would be self-employed and responsible for planning and managing his/her own career.

**Soft skills** are largely intangible and represent personality traits and interpersonal skills. Examples include organizational skills; reliable, motivated and committed; a team player.

**Stretch assignment** is a task or project that you perform within your non-profit role that goes beyond your job description, challenges your current skills, and requires you to learn one or more new skills.

**Value proposition** is a business or marketing statement that summarizes why a consumer should buy a product or use a service. This statement should convince a potential consumer that one particular product or service will add more value or better solve a problem than other similar offerings.

## Discussion and Activities

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### Discussion

1. Building and maintaining a high-profile professional stature in the careers community as a career management specialist requires a unique portfolio of qualifications. What special talents, personal qualities, skills, et cetera, would be beneficial in this specialty area?
2. What do each of the “high five” principles mean to you as you work towards your goal as a career practitioner?
  1. Change is constant.

2. Encourage the heart.
3. Focus on the journey.
4. Learning is ongoing.
5. Build relationships.

## Activities

### Checkpoint Activity

This exercise is intended to be completed at least annually in order to learn more about what you bring to the table and what you are looking for in the next steps of your career.

Who are you?

- What are your personal characteristics and traits?
- What do you value?
- What interests you?
- What does your ideal “day off from work” look like?

What do you have?

- What knowledge, skills, and abilities do you have?
- What is your educational background? What certifications do you have or professional development completed?
- Most importantly, what have you done with the skills, knowledge, ability, and education you have?

Where are you going?

- What are your goals in the next six months? In the next year? 3 years? 5 years?
- What are you going to do when you get there?
- How will you use your newest opportunity to help you meet your ultimate career goals?
- What projects are you going to seek out?
- What people are you going to try and meet and for what purpose (mentoring, networking)?
- How can you tailor this latest opportunity to ensure you are gaining the necessary skills for your next career step?

Career management “plans” can seem daunting. However, all of us have time, once a year, to ask some career-related questions. We can take the time to assess the answers, realize how they changed from the prior year, and determine the steps that can change our career path to meet our current needs and goals.

## Personal Mission Statement Exercise

A personal mission statement addresses three questions:

1. What is my life about?
2. What do I stand for?
3. What action am I taking to live what my life is about and what I stand for?

A useful mission statement should include two pieces: what you wish to accomplish and contribute, and who you want to be — the character strengths and qualities you wish to develop.

- (a) Describe your ideal day. This is not about being practical. It is designed to include as many sides of you and of your enthusiasms as possible: creative, competent, artistic, introverted, extroverted, athletic, playful, nurturing, contemplative.
- (b) Imagine that it is your 35th or 50th birthday (or another milestone in your life). You have been asked by national print media to write a press release about your achievements. Consider what you would want your family, friends, and co-workers in your profession and in your community to say about you. What difference would you like to have made in their lives? How do you want to be remembered? This is designed to inventory your actions and accomplishments in all areas of your life.

## Resources and Readings

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### Resources

#### Websites

#### Career Management

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