

# A Five Step Model of Career Management

The Five-Step Model sets out exactly what skills, tasks and priorities you need to consider in order to move forward. Each of the steps has a list of questions which might be usefully posed throughout your working life.

This Five-Step Model is built around the following principles:

Values and Skills	Identify what it is that you want from a job. Match this to your values and skills. Establish a satisfying and meaningful role for yourself.
Personal Branding	Recognise and manage your own attributes and your unique brand. Use this to effectively present yourself in a business environment.
Networking	Build a personal network. Exploit it for career opportunities.
Performance	Identify and develop your particular people skills to optimise personal performance in the work environment.
Long-term Planning	Identify long-term objectives. Use short-term goals and actions to achieve them.

## 1. Values & skills

Establish your work life priorities by answering the following questions:

- What is meaningful in your work life? Where do you derive your sense of purpose from? How do you contribute?
- Define the rewards and incentives, financial and otherwise, that are truly important to you. How important is money?
- In which environment are you happiest (an office, working outdoors, from home)? How do you like to work (teams, autonomously)? What would be the ideal culture and environment for you to work in?
- If you had multiple offers to consider, which would be the deciding factors?
- How would you ideally like to balance your work, family and free time? How might this be achieved? What value do you place on your leisure time?
- How important to you is where you live?
- What are your skills, professional and personal? What jobs are best suited to these?
- In what country, industry and company do you want to work? Can you identify 20 companies for whom you would like to work and who could use your skills and experience?
- What makes you different from everyone else? What is your personal competitive advantage? Do you need to ask others (colleagues and family) to identify the latter?

- In what areas could you use more training or knowledge?
- If you are unhappy or dissatisfied in your current role, why is this? Is it something you can change, or do you need to move job?



## 2. Personal branding

Use the following questions to establish your personal brand and decide how best to market yourself:

- Do you have a quality CV that highlights all your achievements? Does it differ in style and tone from the standard business CV? Is it tailored to match each job for which you apply?
- Do you make covering letters individual? Are they specific to each job for which you apply?
- Is your CV up to date?
- Is your dress and appearance fitting for the company for which you are hoping to work or for whom you are already working?
- Have you pre-prepared answers to standard interview questions, including accomplishments, and prepared your own questions? Have you practised interviews? Have you identified your interview style? Do you need help?
- Are you prepared to chase every lead? If you do not hear from a prospective employer, do you follow up?
- What is your reputation in the workplace? How do others see you? What are your perceived strengths and weaknesses?

## 3. Networking

The most effective way to advance your career is through personal networks. Answer the following questions:

- Have you compiled a list of family, friends and business contacts who might be



- able to help you? Have you carefully planned what you are going to say to them?
- Are you networking enough? Do you keep in touch with contacts? Do you do your best to be visible and help others?
  - Are you using all available resources (career fairs, online recruiters, head-hunters)?
  - Do you have a database to keep track of your applications, contacts and progress? Are you in danger of losing telephone numbers or contact names?
  - Have you considered joining professional associations or business forums? If you are a member already, do you network with your peers?
  - Have you identified your job targets? How much do you know about each of them, their history, culture and financial performance? How can you develop contacts in these organisations?



## 4. Performance

Consider the following when managing your career from the workplace:

- Do you effectively deal with office politics? Could you improve on your people management skills?
- Do you have a trusting relationship with your colleagues? Do you have an internal personal network? Do you have a mentor or sponsor within your organisation? [1]
- Are people aware of the good work you do?
- Do you understand the culture and mission of your organisation? Do you understand your own role within that?
- Are you responsive to change and up-to-date with the latest technologies and improvements?
- Are you exploiting opportunities at work to expand your skills and knowledge?

## 5. Long-term planning

Use the following to consider your whole career, and where you wish to go:

- Do you have a professional development plan? Have you considered relevant professional qualifications? Have you contacted universities and professional bodies with a view to obtaining these?
- Do you have an idea of where you would like to be in one, five and ten years' time? How do you plan to achieve this?
- Do you have a careful financial planning programme? Do you effectively manage pensions, savings and debts?
- Do you have a fall-back option if you lose your job today? Are you continually updating your network in the event that you have to use it?
- Have you identified short-term goals? Are they in line with your medium and long-term strategies?

## Conclusion

The Five-Step Model is a simple and concise tool for evaluating and developing your career management strategy. It is appropriate for use both personally, and in conjunction with a present employer. Answering all the questions should give you a complete overview of your career opportunities and challenges.

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[1] A mentor is usually a slightly more senior colleague who provides advice in specific areas of work. A sponsor is typically a considerably more senior colleague who takes an active interest in your personal career development within the firm.

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