

CHART YOUR PATH

Careful planning is the key to achieving your career goals and remaining employable

THE environment in which we live and work is constantly changing, and as working professionals, it is important that we respond appropriately to those changes.

Skills that were once in great demand can become obsolete as technology progresses and new market dynamics emerge.

In addition, changing business cycles can result in jolts to the demand and supply of jobs.

Three-part plan

Remaining employable and achieving your career goals require careful planning.

A systematic approach towards career planning involves a three-step process that examines your current situation, future goals and ways to get there:

Current situation

First, draft an inventory list or what is essentially a curriculum vitae (CV) of all your experiences, skill sets, knowledge and qualifications that you have accumulated to date.

A well-written CV or resumé speaks volumes about someone and opens doors to opportunities.

Future goals

Every successful professional got to where he is with a clear vision of his career goals and how he could achieve them.

In career planning, it is important to ensure that your future goals are coherent over the short, medium and long term.

For example, if you aspire to be

a director of investments after 15 years in your career, you would look at first assuming an investment analyst role in the short term and becoming an investment manager in the medium term.

Given the volatile external environment nowadays, it is good practice to revisit long-term future goals every three to five years to ascertain if adjustments need to be made to short- and medium-term goals.

3 Ways to get there

Having assessed your current situation and set your future goals, the third planning stage — ways to get there — bridges both steps by putting clear action plans in place.

This final step involves focusing on the practical ways to get to the desired outcomes.

Tip on your list of considerations should include the following:

- Should you accumulate work experience in another function or industry to pick up the skills needed?

- Would retraining or attending courses be sufficient in building up your skills for the role?

- Would accepting a more junior role within your desired job scope enable you to move closer to achieving your future goals?

- Should you get mentoring assistance or guidance from a more experienced person in the industry?

Five useful tips

Besides your three-part plan, here are five tips that are useful at every stage of your career:



Check out what is available in the job market, looking within your industry or in other industries you have an interest in. - AFPpic

- Take personal responsibility for your career. Rather than put the blame on external factors, it is more productive to assume responsibility for every career choice you make.

- At each stage of your career, add value to your employer. If you are looking for a job for the first time, the key selling point is your potential, as you have few relevant skills or little experience.

Demonstrate your potential at job interviews through your self-confidence, communication abilities, a positive attitude and eagerness to learn.

If you have accumulated a few years of work experience, focus on the relevant skills and experience you can bring to the role.

You will need to demonstrate how you perform in specific work situations and how the

company can benefit from your knowledge.

- Develop your soft skills and embrace lifelong learning. Building a successful career involves more than just an individual's efforts. The ability to work with others is equally as important. In addition, enrolling yourself in new courses that are relevant to your profession and career ensures your employability in the job market.

- Beware of losing momentum in your career. This can occur after you have spent some time in the same job and it no longer offers you new challenges.

Speak with your direct superior about how you can develop professionally within the department or, if need be, in other departments within the company.

You should also check out what

is available in the job market, looking within your industry or in other industries you have an interest in.

- Take calculated risks to steer your career to new heights. Ideally, the new role should expand your current job scope and, if it is in a new field, open up new areas of growth potential for you.

Leaving your comfort zone involves some risk, but you will reap significant rewards when the new skills you acquire become more valuable and sought after. - Source: ST/ANN

■ Article by John Koh, managing director of WMRC, an executive search firm that specialises in the banking, finance and insurance sectors.

■ For more on jobs, please refer to category 515 in *Metro Classifieds*.