

Take Charge of your

# Career Development

Around the Globe



# Introduction

Careers can be quite challenging to develop and manage particularly if one attempts to do so at a global level. A multi-market approach clearly requires a lot more effort, research, customization and adaptation but it is feasible and if achieved it can become an important competitive advantage in the job market for those that achieved it.

**How should you go about doing it: There are some simple steps to follow:**

- Set very specific career aims
- Get organized and prioritize your actions
- Do a thorough research of markets you are interested in and decide on target employers or target groups for prospecting clients (if you chose independent / entrepreneurial activity).
- Thoroughly research job permit issues and procedures, if applicable.
- Get in touch with your network and collect possible leads or ideas they may provide you with
- Research each targeted employer as much as possible via internet and other sources as well as possible position openings they advertise and you would like to apply for.

# Introduction

## How should you go about doing it: There are some simple steps to follow (Cont'd):

- Work on your Curriculum Vitae (CV) and customize it appropriately for the employer and / or the job you are planning to apply for so as to clearly demonstrate the value you could add. Customize respective Cover Letters accordingly.
- Prepare yourself for the interviews process and psychometric testing (if applicable).
- Follow up on your applications and the candidate selection processes you took part in.
- After each job experience and at times during an experience revisit your career aims based on your circumstances and / or lessons learned and decide your new course of action.
- Concurrently with all of the above, build on your network of acquaintances and maintain the link. Keep in mind that networks can be very powerful particularly in markets where job openings are filled through referrals and not through advertisements or employment agencies.
- Maintain a positive attitude, be optimistic and present yourself to your prospective employer as a professional with his/her knowledge, skills and abilities that can add value to the employer's company / organization.

# Career Aims

Setting career aims, goals or objectives is a personal challenge a person imposes to himself or herself within a limited period by setting deadlines. It is never too early or too late to start setting career aims and working towards them.

In setting career aims one has to take into account several parameters:

- Personality (introvert, extrovert)
- Skills & Abilities
- Personal Circumstances
- Dreams

There's no guarantee you will bring to fruition every aim you set for yourself. You can increase your odds though. If you use the following criteria when setting your aims, you have a much better chance of success.

- Get organized. When it comes to successful, stress-free career aims, organization is crucial, so it pays to identify the steps required to make things work for you. Revise your list of what you want to achieve this year and then use S.M.A.R.T aims to ensure that your ambitions are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely.
- Be specific. One might say, "I want to be successful." Well, who doesn't? But can you define what success means to you? Success to one person may mean becoming Director of a company, while to another person it can mean getting home from work by 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

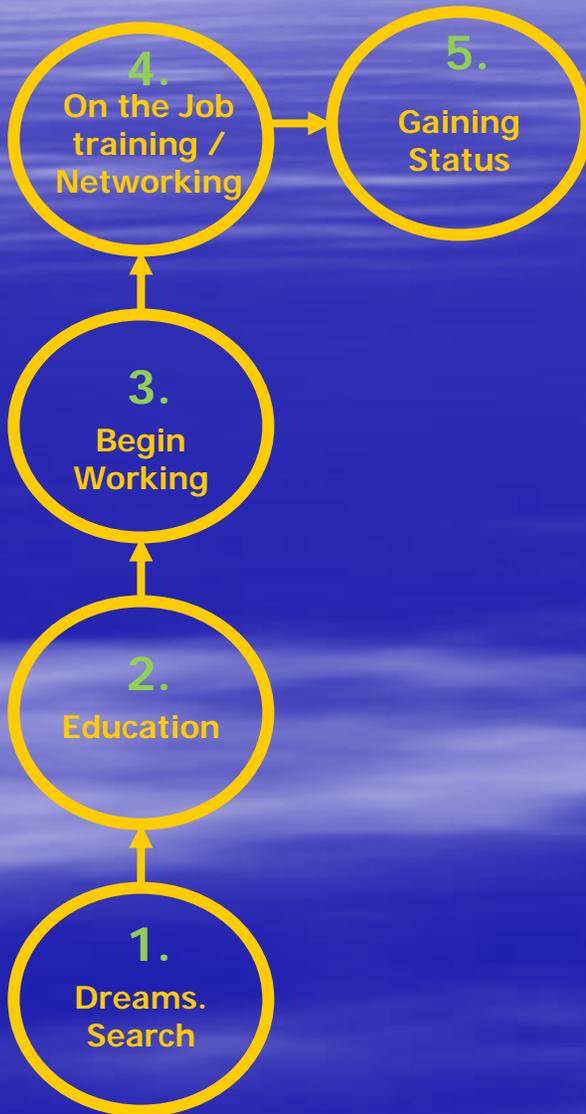
# Career Aims

- **Set measurable aims.** When you set an aim you must include a time frame for achieving it. You can also specify amounts. For example one can say "in three years I want to be Operations Manager for the company"
- **Attainable.** When you identify aims that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, etc to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your aims.
- **Set realistic aims.** To be realistic, an aim must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. An aim can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your aim should be. But be sure that every aim represents substantial progress. A high aim is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low aim exerts low motivational force.
- **Timely.** An aim should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs for example, when do you want to lose it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on your aim.

# Career Aims – 9 Career Stages



# Career Aims – 9 Career Stages



## Stage 5: Gaining Status

The individual is working hard towards attaining status and reputation in the work setting and the market.

## Stage 4: On the Job Training / Networking

At this stage the individual gains experience through on the job training, specific job responsibilities and expectations and realizes the need to perform and network in order to fulfill his/her career goals.

## Stage 3: Begin Working

First contact with the work environment takes place either through gainful employment or work shadowing or service learning.

## Stage 2: Education

Formal education comes into play and the individual makes decisions based on preferences, strengths, weaknesses, scholarly achievements.

## Stage 1: Dreams, Search

During childhood the individual dreams of what they would like to be when he/she grows up. Searches future profession usually from stereotypes.

# Career Aims – 9 Career Stages (cont'd)



## Stage 6: Securing Status

The individual has now gained status and reputation in the work setting and the market and is now one of the "group".

## Stage 7: Mid-Career Redirection

At this stage the individual usually reaches a plateau in their professional development and goes through a mid-career crisis and redirection. He/she may decide to do something different, leave the employer for another, become independent etc.

## Stage 8: Maintaining Course

Following a successful resolution of the mid-career crisis the individual regains status and attempts to find balance between professional and personal life and sets priorities while attempting to maintain momentum at work.

## Stage 9: Wrapping up

For several people this is the stage of progressively reducing their occupational activities and begin to shift their weight more and more towards their personal life until the time comes for retirement.

# Career Aims – Schein's Career Anchors<sup>1</sup>

Edgar Schein at MIT has identified eight themes and has shown that people will have prioritized preferences for these. For example a person with a primary theme of Security/Stability will seek secure and stable employment over, say, employment that is challenging and riskier. People tend to stay anchored in one area and their career will echo this in many ways.

- **Technical/Functional competence**

This kind of person likes being good at something and will work to become a guru or expert. They like to be challenged and then use their skill to meet the challenge, doing the job properly and better than almost anyone else.

- **General Managerial competence**

Unlike technical/functional people, these folks want to be managers (and not just to get more money, although this may be used as a metric of success). They like problem-solving and dealing with other people. They thrive on responsibility. To be successful, they also need emotional competence.

- **Autonomy/Independence**

These people have a primary need to work under their own rules and steam. They avoid standards and prefer to work alone.

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## References

1 Schein, Edgar H, (1990). Career Anchors (discovering your real values), Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Francisco

# Career Aims – Schein's Career Anchors<sup>1</sup> (Cont'd)

- **Security/Stability**

Security-focused people seek stability and continuity as a primary factor of their lives. They avoid risks and are generally lifers in their job.

- **Entrepreneurial Creativity**

These folks like to invent things, be creative and, most of all, to run their own businesses. They differ from those who seek autonomy in that they will share the workload. They find ownership very important. They easily get bored. Wealth, for them, is a sign of success.

- **Service/Dedication to a cause**

Service-oriented people are driven by how they can help other people more than using their talents (which may fall in other areas). They may well work in public services or in such as HR.

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## References

1 Schein, Edgar H, (1990). Career Anchors (discovering your real values), Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Francisco

# Career Aims – Schein's Career Anchors<sup>1</sup>

- **Pure Challenge**

People driven by challenge seek constant stimulation and difficult problems that they can tackle. Such people will change jobs when the current one gets boring and their career can be very varied.

- **Lifestyle**

Those who are focused first on lifestyle look at their whole pattern of living. They not so much balance work and life as integrate it. They may even take long periods off work in which to indulge in passions such as sailing or traveling.

**Based on all mentioned above and taking into account your personal circumstances (family obligations, spouse / partner s career, work schedule flexibility etc.) set your specific career aims and begin to organize yourself and prioritize your actions.**

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## References

1 Schein, Edgar H, (1990). Career Anchors (discovering your real values), Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Francisco

# Career Aims - Developing & Managing your Career

Knowing how to continually respond to change is essential for success. Regardless if you are now starting your career or you took a break and now decided to continue on or if you had no gaps so far, managing your career involves developing a set of short-term and long-term goals to guide your professional and personal development. It also involves:

- Adapting to the new technologies
- Learning about other developments in your career field
- Reading journals, books, and articles related to your work / field
- Creating a professional development plan with your employer

## Industry News

It is important for you to keep up to date with developments in your industry. Mainly because you will be basing your decisions on this information (this is especially important in the business world).

Showing good industry knowledge can be that vital extra point that helps you progress upwards through your organization, or find success at an interview.

There are lots of web sites out there that provide up to date information about industry news, developments and other factors that will impress your interviewer or boss.

# Career Aims - Developing & Managing your career (Cont'd)

## Develop your skills

You should constantly work towards developing your skills (hard or soft). In terms of hard skills you need to stay abreast with technological and other professional developments. That can be achieved both through self study and / or attending courses. In terms of **soft skills**, you need to be developing these at every opportunity. At no stage in your career will these be perfect. There is always room for improvement.

## These include:

- Communication skills (one to one, phone skills, presentation skills, etc)
- Teamwork skills
- Leadership skills
- Project management skills
- Interview skills
- Time management

Being proficient in these areas will never cease to be of benefit to you. Take every opportunity you can to develop them.

## Develop your skills at work

If you are climbing the career ladder, then you can develop your existing skills at work, as well as learning new ones. It is irrelevant whether or not these skills are of benefit to your final career aim.

Having a broad range of skills will stand testament your flexibility and adaptability and ultimately benefit you in your job search.

# Building your CV

## Collecting your data and writing your CV

### Entry to mid-level experience (Samples & Templates see Appendix II)

#### Tips:

- Decide on the type of jobs you target based on your career aim (s) and market conditions
- Write your CV keeping in mind that you should emphasize your knowledge, experience and / or abilities & skills relevant to the jobs you target (Tailor made CVs)
- Be brief and concise and try to present a few bullet points that support your statements or explain in concrete terms your qualifications (e.g. how your knowledge was acquired, demonstrate your skills & abilities with concrete examples, state specific achievements while at a specific job etc.)
- Make sure you include all necessary basic parts of a CV (i.e. Name, contact details, photo (if required), work experience (if applicable, including voluntary work), education, PC skills, languages, references (if required)). Your CV should not be more than one page. [Voluntary Work: It may be appropriate to list some skills that you developed outside regular employment. For example, you may have developed your team-building skills in the Territorial Army or your flair for organizing events in part-time voluntary work for associations or your duties as spouse/partner of a diplomat. These 'selling points' can be fitted into your skill groupings in the same way as those gained working for an employer. However, the main focus of your CV must be on your achievements in regular employment].
- Maintain a simple and neat format so that dates, positions held or education acquired in chronological order as well as supporting bullet points are clearly visible

# Building your CV (Cont'd)

## Collecting your data and writing your CV

### Mid to top level experience ((Samples & Templates see Appendix II))

#### Tips:

- Set your next job target based on your career aim (s) and market conditions
- Write your CV keeping in mind that you should emphasize your experience, knowledge, and / or abilities & skills most relevant to the targeted position at the targeted company (ies) [You may need to create tailor made versions of your CV for each targeted employer based on their requirements ]
- Be brief and concise.
- Always include a few bullet points that support your statements or explain in concrete terms your experience & achievements & qualifications in general (e.g. Positions you held and major achievements, demonstrate your skills & abilities with concrete examples, etc.)
- Make sure you include all necessary basic parts of a CV (i.e. Name, contact details, Photo (if required), work experience, education, PC Skills, languages) as well as any other important achievement or distinction necessary to better paint your professional picture. Try to keep the length of your CV to the minimum indispensable.
- Maintain a simple, neat & clearly visible format

# Cover Letters

**Putting together Cover Letters - *This is the letter that will invite the person opening your letter/email to read your CV. It introduces you and sets the tone of your application.***

## **Entry to mid-level experience (Samples & Templates see Appendix III)**

### **Tips:**

- Observe the custom for writing business letters, with your address on the top right and the recipient's address under this on the left. Make sure your spelling, punctuation and grammar are immaculate
- Always address a person (you can phone the organization to ask who to address your Covering Letter to).
- You can keep the general layout the same for all organizations, but it is imperative to tailor each Covering Letter to reflect the things the organization is looking for.
- Flatter the company/employee and show the reader that you have done your company research, mention any news articles that you have seen about the company.
- Never say that the company can benefit you, say how you can benefit the company, give an example of where you have benefited a company in the past.
- The Covering letter should have a polite, friendly, yet formal tone.
- Keep the Covering Letter short, employers often do not have the time to read long Covering Letters, should half of A4.

# Cover Letters (Cont'd)

**Putting together Cover Letters - *This is the letter that will invite the person opening your letter/email to read your CV. It introduces you and sets the tone of your application.***

**Mid to top level experience (Samples & Templates see Appendix III)**

## **Tips:**

- Observe the custom for writing business letters, with your address on the top right and the recipient's address under this on the left.
- Always address a person (you can phone the organization to ask who to address your Cover Letter to).
- If you are responding to a job advert and it has minimum educational or experience requirements, mention that you have these requirements in your Cover Letter.
- Never say that the company can benefit you, say how you can benefit the company, give an example of where you have benefited a company in the past.
- Keep the Cover Letter short, employers often do not have the time to read long Covering Letters, should be half of A4.
- The Cover Letter should have a polite, friendly, yet formal tone.

# Interview Preparation

(For sample job specs, sample questionnaires, interview types & structure, see Appendix V)

## Entry to mid level positions

### A Few Tips:

- Think positively & go to the interview as calm as you can
- Be punctual. Allow ample time to get to the interview place to avoid lateness
- Watch your body language and seat on the chair normally (not too up front and not too comfortable as if you were watching TV)
- Be honest and sincere but answer only what you are asked for as briefly & concisely as possible. Do not offer unnecessary details.
- Use hand movements only if they help you express your points
- Be prepared to present your points to solidly support your background, skills & abilities.
- Try to “sell” yourself for the position you are targeting by placing emphasis on what you have to offer based on your skills set & abilities, knowledge & experiences or multinational experiences (where applicable). Not by making general statements about yourself.
- At the end ask valid questions about the position, the company (make sure you do some research so as to have specific questions to ask) and the next steps regarding the candidate selection process (subsequent interviews, time frame to completion, notification process, etc.
- Avoid questions such as salary & benefits from the first interview.

# Interview Preparation (Cont'd)

(For sample job specs, sample questionnaires, interview types & structure, see Appendix V)

## Mid to top level positions

### A Few Tips:

- Think positively & go to the interview looking & feeling professional
- Be punctual.
- Make sure you don't come across arrogant or aggressive or intimidated because of your diplomatic status
- Be honest and sincere but answer only what you are asked for as briefly & concisely as possible. Do not offer unnecessary details.
- Use hand movements only if they help you express your points
- Be prepared to present your points to solidly support your past work experience, accumulated know-how, skills & abilities.
- Try to "sell" yourself for the position you are targeting by placing emphasis on what you have to offer based on your past work experience, technical & market know-how, set of skills & abilities and multinational experiences (where applicable). Not by making general statements about yourself.
- At the end ask valid questions about the position, the company (make sure you do some research so as to have specific questions to ask) and the next steps regarding the candidate selection process (subsequent interviews, time frame to completion, notification process, etc).

# Psychometric Tests

(For more details, sample questionnaires, role plays and other test components please see Appendix VI)

Psychometric tests are used widely for selection purposes in the European, US & Asian markets— across industries and for a multitude of positions. Regardless of the post you are applying for (management, graduate, professional, IT, administrative, engineering or any other), you are likely to face a psychometric test either before, during or after the job interview.

Psychometric tests include a wide variety of **aptitude** tests and **personality** tests.

These tests are designed to gauge your aptitude skills in particular areas as well as your personality profile and determine how appropriate it is for a particular job.

The test battery differs from one assessment to the other, however most include two sections:

- a behavioral psychological section which includes a face-to-face interview, a personality test or questionnaire, a group exercise and an in-tray exercise (for managerial roles)
- a testing unit which includes a range of aptitude tests - verbal critical reasoning tests, numerical reasoning tests, abstract (diagrammatic) reasoning tests and in some cases specialty niche tests.

# Psychometric Tests (Cont'd)

## Psychometric testing falls into three main types:

- Ability testing
- Aptitude testing
- Personality questionnaires
- **Ability Testing:** Ability tests measure a person's potential, for instance to learn the skills needed for a new job or to cope with the demands of a training course. Ability tests are not the same thing as *Tests of Attainment*.
- **Aptitude (Skills & Competencies based) Testing:** There is no widely accepted definition of the difference between ability and aptitude. Most people would agree that to some extent the two terms refer to the same thing: **aptitude** referring to **specific ability**, and **ability** referring to **general aptitude**. We could probably view ability as underlying aptitude, and aptitude as being more job related than ability. For instance a computer programmer might score highly on a verbal ability test and highly on a programmer aptitude test but not the other way around.
- **Personality Testing:** Personality is a term which is commonly used in everyday language but which has been given a particular technical meaning by psychologists. When we discuss personality we must remember that it is not a single independent mechanism but closely related to other human cognitive and emotional systems. A **personality test** aims to describe aspects of a person's character that remain stable throughout that person's lifetime, the individual's character pattern of behavior, thoughts, and feelings. An early model of personality was posited by Greek philosopher / physician Hippocrates. The 20th century heralded a new interest in defining and identifying separate personality types, in close correlation with the emergence of the field of psychology. As such, several distinct tests emerged; some attempt to identify specific characteristics, while others attempt to identify personality as a whole.

# Following Up

(Sample letters see Appendix VI)

Following up after the interview is very important as it can demonstrate the candidate's level of professionalism.

To effectively follow up:

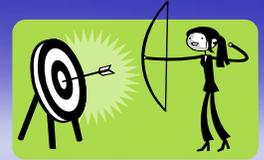
- **Do** ask at the end of the interview when the employer expects to make the hiring decision.
- **Do** be proactive and consider follow-up a strategic part of your job search process. Follow-up can give you just the edge you need to get the job offer over others who interviewed for the position.
- **Do** use these follow-up techniques to continue to show your enthusiasm and desire for the position, but **don't** make it seem as though you are desperate.
- **Do** obtain the correct titles and names of all the people who interviewed you. (Ideally, **do** get each person's business card.)
- **Do** write individual thank you notes or letters to each person who interviewed you -- within two business days. Each letter can be essentially the same, but try to vary each a bit in case recipients compare notes. **Don't** ever fail to send a thank you -- even if you are sure the job is not for you. And **do** write thank you notes after every interview.
- **Don't** make a mistake by sending your thank you letter through the wrong medium; make sure you know the best method of reaching the employer, whether by regular mail, email, or fax (find out which one they prefer).
- In your thank you letter, **do** show appreciation for the employer's interest in you and **do** remind the employer about why you are the perfect person for the position.

# Following Up (Cont'd)

## To effectively follow up:

- **Don't** ever have any errors (misspellings or typos) in your thank you letters.
- **Don't** stop job-hunting, even if you feel confident that you will get a job offer. Do continue to interview and attempt to find other opportunities.
- **Do** follow-up with a telephone call to the employer within a week to ten days (or sooner, if the employer had a shorter timetable) to ask about the position. And do continue to build rapport and sell your strengths during the phone call.
- **Do** be patient. The hiring process often takes longer than the employer expects.
- **Do** continue following-up, especially if the employer asks you to. Just **don't** go overboard and annoy or bother the employer.
- **Don't** place too much importance on one job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you.
- **Do** use other job offers as leverage in your follow-up -- to get the offer you really want.
- **Don't** burn any bridges if you do not get a job offer. And do try and turn the situation into a positive by bringing the interviewer (s) into your network, possibly even asking them for referrals to other contacts.

# Balancing & Revisiting your Aims



- a. After each employment experience and before you proceed to the next try to assess your career up to that point and the experiences you accumulated. Identify specific skills & competencies that you acquired or developed / strengthened through these experiences
- b. Check all of the above against your career aims. Are these aims served by your experiences? Are your career aims still valid? Are there specific personal / family conditions that prevent you from realizing your career aims? If yes, maybe you need to adjust those aims for a while to your specific life situation.
- c. Deviating from your preset path to your aims does not necessarily mean that you need to totally give them up.
- d. Based on new experiences gained, new career aims may surface. It is perfectly normal to decide to change your course.

**This is a good opportunity to do a self appraisal. It will help you to assess what you have done so far, where you are and thus assist you in making well thought out decisions for your future career steps. At the same time, such a self appraisal will be extremely beneficial when searching for a new job and will greatly help you to achieve high scores in job assessment centers.**

## Balancing & Revisiting your Aims (Cont'd)

For a self appraisal exercise please see Appendix VII. This a Self Appraisal by Penna Consulting Plc. and it is one of the best in the market.



***Staying in touch with who you are and what matters most to you is critical to your professional success and fulfillment. With each transition, the self-assessment phase begins anew as you develop new aims, plan for career advancement, or new career directions.***

# Building & Maintaining a Good Network

(For networking strategies see Appendix VIII)

## Maintaining a Good Network



- It is very important for your career to maintain a good network
- Collect reference letters from previous employers and maintain a good log of their contact details
- Maintain contact details of people you have met and keep in touch from time to time.
- Maintain an up to date log of key information that you have learned which could help you in developing your career next steps or help you in your current job

# CD Appendices - Index

#	Description	File name
1	7 steps in the Career and Life planning cycle by Helen Alm	Appendix I
2	Questions to determine your career aims	Appendix II
3	CV Samples & Templates	Appendix III
4	Cover Letters Samples & Templates	Appendix IV
5	Sample job specs, sample interview questionnaires, interview types & structure	Appendix V
6	Psychometric Test Components, Sample Questionnaires, role plays, assessment / development centers	Appendix VI
7	Follow up / thank you sample letters	Appendix VII
8	Revisiting your Aims – Self Appraisal Questionnaire by Penna Consulting Plc.	Appendix VIII
9	Networking strategies	Appendix IX
10	References / Bibliography	Appendix X

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