STAY ON TRACK

Self-assessment is the first essential step in building a proactive Career Development Plan, explains TERESA ROBERTSON.

KNOW YOUR SKILLS

The skills, abilities and competencies that we acquire belong to us, not the organisation we work for; they are ours to transfer to other roles, departments and organisations. Even if your role is processing or producing reports, the skills themselves are: data output, researching, information analysis and IT competency.

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When asked the interview question, 'where do you see yourself in three to five years' time?', do you answer honestly in line with your career plans, or do you fall into the trap of being so eager to get the job that you tell the interviewer exactly what they want to hear?

It's not wrong to do this – it may be the job for you, even for a short period of time – but don't lose sight of your own aspirations in the process. Your Career Development Plan will evolve over time as you progress and make choices, so it is important to keep checking that it is well aligned with your overall objectives.

Self-assessment is the first step to support your career planning.

1. Start by asking yourself four questions:

WHAT DO I WANT FROM MY CAREER?

Promotion?
Higher salary?
Happiness?
Recognition?
Flexibility?
Challenge in my role?
Cultural fit?
Work-life balance?
A managerial position?

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME IN MY CAREER?

Flexibility?
Happiness?
Work-life balance?
Little or no travel?
Autonomy in my role?
Status and level of role?
Recognition?
Money?
Cultural fit?
Personal development?
Line manager?

WHAT ARE MY PERSONAL AND CAREER GOALS?

To achieve a managerial or leadership position?
Not to be a manager or leader?
Personal development?
Flexibility and family?
Pursue a career doing something I love?
Work for an organisation that's culturally right for me?
Higher salary?
Challenge in my role?
Doing the same job but in a different organisation?

WHAT DO I WANT MY CAREER TO OFFER ME THAT I DON'T GET NOW?

Challenge in my role?
Autonomy?
Happiness?
Recognition?
Higher salary?
Flexibility?
Work-life balance?
New line manager?
Personal development?
New skills and knowledge?
Cultural fit?

Most people rank money, role and status as the top three things they want from their careers, but more flexible working patterns and personal development opportunities have led to a shift in what's important to us. Ask yourself, what are your top three?

2. Next, ask yourself:

WHAT ARE MY TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS?

What am I good at?
What skills (interpersonal and technical) do I have from my current and previous jobs?
What skills do I offer my current role and/or organisation?
What skills can I transfer to another role or organisation?
What skills or competencies do I need to be a manager or leader?
What skills do I have outside of work that would add value to my current or any future role?
Can you easily answer the interview question 'what are your top three transferrable skills'?

WHAT ARE MY WEAKNESSES AND HOW DO I OVERCOME THEM?

Ask yourself:
Am I lacking knowledge or skills that would help me achieve my next career move or long-term career goals?
Do I need to undertake training?
Do I have to admit that I have weaknesses?
Could having a mentor help?
Ask colleagues for their support and help – they may observe weaknesses before you do.

3. The answers that you have given so far should help you to consider the final three self-assessment questions:

- Which companies do I want to work for and why?
- **Do I need to undertake training? If so, do I have the time, money and commitment?**
- Do I need to take a pay cut to transfer to another role to improve my transferrable skills?

A PERFECT FIT?

Investing time in researching a company can be very worthwhile in supporting your long-term career aspirations. Glassdoor.com is a great website to help you find out more about the culture of an organisation – and whether you feel you could be successful there.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Achieving your career goals is all about setting out your strategy and objectives, then planning and taking the necessary action in order to achieve them. Once you have completed your self-assessment, it's time to set out (and track) how you will build the skills and knowledge you need to reach these short and long-term goals in a Career Development Plan.

Once you start planning your career, you are taking control of it. Even if you find yourself in a rut, being focused and driven will help turn it into a positive situation. When we are in control of our careers, we are continually adding skills, knowledge and experience – we are self-marketing ourselves. CB

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Get planning

- Teresa's recent webcast is available to view at: **www.charteredbanker.com/knowledgehub/webcasts/**
- Download your career development template and get started today: **www.charteredbanker.com/careerdevelopment**