

SEVEN STEPS TO CREATE A CAREER MAP

Accept responsibility for your development

Personal development can impact all areas of your life, so take control of the choices you make. Do you want to move on, up or increase satisfaction in your current job? Can't decide? If your current role does not inspire you to achieve, your employer's values do not match your own and there is little or no scope for change, it's probably time to move on.

Skills audit

Take time out to run a self-audit on your achievements and career ideals. Are your goals pipe dreams or realist challenges? Identify what you need to do to achieve them. Identify explicit skills for a specific job and regularly top up transferable skills. Think. Do you need to develop a portfolio of broad experience rather than climb a ladder of logical job titles?

Work backwards

Set yourself a career goal for 12 month's time. What is the immediate step before you reach that point? Work backwards to define the actions you need to take.

Action plan

Write one. Be clear about your objectives. Make them realistic and accept key changes are likely to be long-term, not instant.

Market yourself

You need to become a visible commodity – internally and externally. Volunteer for additional assignments or for secondment. Look at your responsibilities and those of your peers. What are the challenges facing your boss? Explore how you can help yourself by helping others achieve their objectives. Start networking; attend conferences and seminars, and make mutually beneficial contacts in other areas of your organisation. Ensure you sell yourself to prospective employers – do your homework and arm yourself with examples of how your experience matches their specific needs.

Do you need help?

Decide whether you are the type of person who would benefit from an external perspective on your career plans. A professional, experienced coach will keep you focused, motivated and receptive to feedback.

Feedback and evaluation

Ask your boss, colleagues, family and friends for their impressions of your new approach. Be open to comment, remain objective, be flexible. Take time to regularly reflect on the success of your career plan to establish what is relevant, what has been achieved and what remains a clear goal.