

## **CAREER ACTION PLAN**

Your career lasts many years and you're likely to want different things from it at different times. However, whatever stage you are at, if you want to progress your career and make positive changes, then it's going to take time, energy and commitment over and above simply working hard in your current role. Systematic and sustained effort will be needed to achieve that promotion, new role or change in career direction. However, it can be easy to become distracted with your day to day job and everyday life and start to lose focus. This is where a written action plan can really help.

Firstly, writing down your career goals makes them tangible and clear, rather than remaining a vaguely expressed notion at the back of your head. Secondly, a plan of action helps break down what can be a fairly big long-term career management project into smaller more manageable tasks. Your plan will ensure you are more realistic and enable you to review progress.

So, how do you go about writing a career plan? Follow the steps below and use the template we've provided to create a career action plan that will help you keep on-track with your career goals.

1. Write down your career goals. These might be both short-term goals and longer term aspirations, but make these career objectives as clear and specific as possible e.g. not "I want to be more creative" but more "I want to move into a marketing role within an organisation with a culture of creativity and innovation". Your goals need to be genuinely motivating for you as well as realistic.

What are the things you can do which will help you to achieve those goals? This might include:

- Developmental goals - such as acquiring the technical knowledge you need to improve your employability, developing your leadership abilities or assertiveness skills
- Bridging skills or experience gaps - such as going on a course, undertaking voluntary work, a secondment or work-shadowing
- Making changes in your current role – e.g. talking to your boss about additional responsibilities or discussing workplace issues
- Tackling the external job market e.g. updating your CV and LinkedIn profile
- Personal goals such as finishing work on time to improve your work/life balance

Break down each activity into its smallest components. For instance if one of your tasks is to update your CV, then this might include buying a book on CVs to help you, conducting some research on your target employers, asking someone you trust to give you feedback on your draft CV, then uploading it to various recruitment sites.

## **2. Scheduling**

You now have a list of tasks, so the next step is to organise them. Which tasks do you need to do first and in what order? Set yourself a realistic target date for the completion of each step and put a reminder in your online or paper diary as a prompt.

Some activities may need to be repeated. For instance, networking will be an on-going activity. Set yourself targets for these too e.g. commit to meeting up for coffee with a good networking contact twice a month or attending a monthly professional forum.

## **3. Help and Hindrances**

Identify any blocks you think could get in the way of you achieving your goals. This might be a practical thing like having limited promotion prospects at work or finding the time to go on a course. It could also be a more psychological hurdle e.g. dealing with an interview rejection. For each hindrance, think of a solution that will help you to overcome it, e.g. asking your organisation to support your training plans, working with a career coach, arranging mock interview practice, finding a mentor or activities to build up your self-confidence. Pull in all the resources you can to help you succeed.

## **4. Review**

Like any plan, it will need reviewing and may change in the light of opportunities or circumstances. Set yourself regular check-in times, after the first month, then at 3 months and 6 months to check you are on-track. Build this into your calendar so it flags up as a reminder. As part of your review, celebrate your successes and achievements by looking at the tasks you have undertaken as well as any results you have started to see. It's important to see how far you've come, not just how long you've yet to go.

## **5. The Plan**

Use the form to help capture your career action plan information and keep it somewhere easily accessible e.g. on your computer desktop with dates integrated into your online diary system.

## PERSONAL CAREER ACTION PLAN

1. My long/short term career goal is.....

2. I will achieve this by ..... (*insert target date*)

3. The following actions will help me achieve my goals:

Action (E.g. Attend finance course)	Target date for completion

4. Help and Hindrances

What might get in the way?	What will help?

5. I will review this plan in....

If you're at a career crossroads you might be interested in our career management programmes. For more information about how we can help please contact us on 01753 888995 or email [info@personalcareermanagement.com](mailto:info@personalcareermanagement.com)