Executive career planning and performance development framework
An introduction tailored for “Boomers”

You’re somewhere between your late forties and late fifties — you may even have entered your sixties — and you’ve been working in the corporate world for many years. You understand the business and you’re good at what you do. You have risen through the ranks and achieved a position you are proud to hold. You are confident that your knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise are more than equal to the demands of the job.

And at this stage in your working life, you perhaps believe that career planning and performance development doesn’t apply to you.

If that’s the case, then you couldn’t be more wrong.

Early in your career acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities took you forward in leaps and bounds. Today unless you augment your knowledge base, your know-how and performance will actually diminish.

In the past, the working environment was more stable and predictable. Today’s marketplace is dynamic, demanding and fast paced, and you need to be shrewd about making the most of your expertise and the opportunities you may encounter. This guide offers clarity as to how to exploit your career potential and a framework within which to do it.

For those of you well advanced in your careers, your development is likely to be most dependent on making an accumulation of marginal gains and it is these which will empower you to realise your goals — both for Working Smarter and Living Better.

Maximising your income potential will allow you to meet private school / university fees and / or pursue extravagant hobbies; buying that new convertible, holiday home, or yacht. It can help you compensate for lost net worth following divorce or career break-up, and establish future financial security.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

If you bear in mind that the average age for someone to become a CEO in a Fortune 500 company is 50, the fact is you are in potentially the most exciting period of your professional life. And while in recent years career planning and performance development may have taken a backseat to life’s other demands, now is a good time to take charge, especially if you plan on working another 10 or more years.

So how do you achieve that? You take a strategic approach:

• You create a plan
• You need to take personal ownership for your career development
• You get input from other people

This guide will help you to focus on those three key career planning and performance development areas.

A key factor is that we do not advise you to fly solo; rather we encourage you to buddy up with other people, to become both a mentor and a mentee. If you identify and connect with people above and below you on the career ladder, and from a range of ages and disciplines, then you allow yourself a broad set of inputs. Team up with others, become trusted advisors, and coach one another. If you are facing key challenges such as getting your career back on track, re-aligning your work around new values and priorities, and / or making that next move up into the role of CEO, you should consider engaging with career coaches.

You may already be familiar with a number of the points and guidelines outlined in the framework; however, you are unlikely to be familiar with all of them. What makes this framework differ from other materials lies in the way that it pulls everything together, giving you a complete set of guidelines in one place.

So just what will this framework give you?

• Insight to enable you to be the best you can be – to perform at the highest levels, achieve most senior grades, enjoy job satisfaction and gain professional recognition
• Awareness as to how you can maximise your promotion potential from individual contributor into first line management, from manager to CXO and ultimately CEO
• A greater perception as to how you can exploit your career life-cycle earnings potential – maximise your earnings

The fact that you have already enjoyed a great deal of success doesn’t mean you cannot progress further in the last decade or so of your career. This guide gives you the tools to take charge of your career development and move up to the next level. This framework will enable you to internalise concepts that allow you to better exploit and fulfil your maximum career potential.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

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Your “A” player potential

Developing your performance

To be happy, you need to perform well. Strong performance will bring you satisfaction, enhance your status and elevate you to the highest grade levels. This will, in turn, maximise your position on salary bandings and help get you pay rises, bonuses, generous promotions, and the best projects to work on. In short it will help you secure the best jobs.

In this chapter we want to give you knowledge and insight to empower you to perform to your full potential.

The term “A” player is widely used to describe a company’s best performers and role models. And the best performers in any company, can expect to enjoy admirable standing, security, the greatest bonuses, ex gratia stock awards, promotion and be sought-after by other companies, the prized bounties of the top head-hunters.

Former GE CEO Jack Welch deployed a vitality model. Under his leadership the firm enjoyed five-fold growth, and a 28 times increase in earnings – GE became renowned for its high performance culture, developing exceptional leadership and its executives are highly sought after. Many corporations, have followed Welch’s model, often described as “20-70-10”. In which employees are categorised as “A” (the best people, the top performers, top 20%), “B” players (70%) or “C” players (the non-producers bottom 10%).

This concept may be used to periodically remove the non-producers - something that was widely practiced by GE under Jack Welch.

“A” players  the company’s best performers and role models — top 20%.

“B” players  may not be most driven but are vital because they form the majority — 70%.

“C” players are non-producers and likely to “enervate” rather than “energize” — bottom 10%.

These designations apply to all levels of seniority including leadership.

Many respected firms such as Accenture and Microsoft, have chosen to grade people into 5 groups rather than 3 — none the less, the term “A” player is the ultimate accolade. Performance and category/rating heavily influences promotion prospects, and rewards, and people in the bottom buckets are often ineligible to move positions. Whilst most corporations won’t admit to it, eliminating the bottom 10% remains a widespread practice.

* Acknowledgement: GE Corporation, Jack Welch former CEO – vitality model and A | B | C player categorisations.
To be the best you can be and realise your full career potential you need to develop an “A” player mentality.

“A” player mentality

- An “A” player mentality.

An “A” player is someone who is filled with passion, committed to making things happen, open to ideas from anywhere, blessed with lots of runway ahead of them, has charisma to energise themselves and others, and makes business productive and enjoyable.

- An “A” player in leadership.

In management and leadership roles “A” players exhibit the four “E”s of leadership — high Energy, Energise others, the Edge to make difficult decisions and ability to Execute, or deliver on the promise.
Once established into your career, your performance becomes increasingly dependent on making small gains, which taken together achieve big results — we refer to this as marginal gain.

*Marginal gains: “take small steps and turn them into big results”*

Look at how organizations manage their graduate training schemes these days — they often comprise a series of planned assignments and opportunities to broaden participants’ exposure to the business.

This approach rapidly builds a participants knowledge base and tests their skills in different environments, so that within a couple of years, a graduate is often seen as ready for their first line management or big technical specialist role.

Over that same period, their salary has increased significantly and is usually linked to their performance.

However, that scheme takes them to the point where the organization expects the employee to take greater charge of their own career plan. High potentials (Hi-Po’s) may still get significant discussion within the organizations succession planning meetings, but it is easy to slip of the radar with one or two years of OK performance.

So your work performance is important to keep you in the frame within your current organization and in competition for funds from the no doubt stretched Learning & Development budget.

Your work performance as well as your growth potential are what count.

The longer you stay with a particular organization, the more likely you will increasingly spend more time in each successive role. As you scale the hierarchy, the opportunities for big internal moves become more limited, yet the competition is still fierce.

So, it is important that you identify any opportunities, even the small ones to make gain ground and keep learning and developing. Grasp the idea of marginal gain and never let it go.

What separates out the “A” players from the “B” players? It’s largely determined by mentality. “A” players are filled with passion, committed to making things happen, open to ideas from anywhere, blessed with lots of runway ahead of them, have charisma to energise themselves, and others, and make business productive and enjoyable.
Section 1

Developing your “A” player mentality

How do you develop and maintain “A” player status?

Here are 12 critical success factors for you to work on. Your situation and motivations will determine which areas you should prioritise.

1. Develop your “A” player mind-set.
   • An “A” player is someone who is filled with passion, committed to making things happen, open to ideas from anywhere, blessed with lots of runway ahead of them, has charisma to energise themselves and others, and makes business productive and enjoyable.
   • In management and leadership roles “A” players exhibit the four “E”s of leadership — high Energy, Energise others, the Edge to make difficult decisions and ability to Execute, or deliver on the promise.

2. Establish new goals.
   • Your motivations will change over time as your career progresses and you need to recognise this.
   • Most people 10+ years into their careers lack clear goals — whether you are 30 or 50, middle management or CXO, you need goals in order to realise your full potential.
   • For many people goals and career planning have taken a backseat to the pressures of everyday life — they have no plan and no roadmap. You need to have goals which are up to date and relevant.

3. Develop a better understanding of yourself.
   • The foundations for your on-going success are dependent on your personality type, values, motivations, competencies and emotional intelligence.
   • Understanding these will allow you to identify your strengths, and know how these can be best put to use and where development will deliver the best prospects of future success. The importance of your self-analysis should not be underestimated... emotional intelligence (EQ) is so critical to success that it accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs.
   • Consider any recent assessments, appraisals and 360° feedback or alternatively engage a career coach or suitably qualified HR resource to help you.
   • If you have recently completed a personality profiling assessment, make reference to this and if not, consider undertaking one. More about this later.
   • If you have recently completed an emotional intelligence assessment, make reference to this and if not, consider undertaking one. More about this later.
   • Consider what additional information you have or have access to, which may help you better understand your capabilities e.g. appraisals.

   o You may wish to refer to our white papers about “Emotional intelligence” and “Developing a better understanding of yourself”.


- Identify what you are doing now, and rate your level of performance. Refer to any information you have to help you — role description, objectives, key performance indicators, as well as “soft” relationship skills (behavioural competencies).
- Identify what you should be currently delivering in order to be seen as a good performer. Use any formal or informal feedback information you have — your own objectives, key performance indicators, competencies and company values. Refer to appraisal feedback, role/job descriptions and/or personnel specifications.
- You need to be realistic about assessing your level of performance, strengths and shortcomings in order to further develop your results.

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Consistently exceeds all relevant performance standards. Exceeds them and may have additional merits beyond expectation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeds expectations</td>
<td>Consistently meets and often exceeds all relevant performance standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets expectations</td>
<td>Meets all relevant performance standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below expectations</td>
<td>Sometimes meets relevant performance standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not acceptable</td>
<td>Consistently fails relevant performance standards.</td>
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5. **Bridging skill gaps, continual personal development and re-invention!**

- Focus on learning as a continuum not an event.
- Seek out opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, and the opportunity to apply them. If the skills you are building are key to your success and a gap has been identified, you need to demonstrate you have bridged that gap.
- You can’t play the same tune over and over again, you’ve got to acquire new knowledge and skills otherwise you lose out twice — first, you fail to keep up with everything which is current (modus operandi, pace, expectation etc) and secondly, you’ll forget some of the stuff you previously learnt — so without change and learning, you’ll actually regress rather than progress. Some previous learning becomes obsolete over time — our inventory of useful knowledge can diminish, so refresh it regularly.
- As your career progresses and you aspire to be seen as someone at the top, you need to look and act the part, for the level at which you are operating or aspire to operate at.
  
  o You may wish to refer to our white paper about Brand you

6. **Develop your executive presence.**

- As you progress your career, you need to develop an executive presence. As you move up, you need to look and act as though you belong at the level which you are operating.
  
  - Too many people in their 40s and 50s present an outdated image. There exists the need for the intelligent executive to be seen as being current vs outdated; this means acquiring knowledge, techniques, sometimes changing attitudes and perspectives, and equally importantly, developing an executive presence — “brand you”.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

7. Energizing, self-motivation and discipline.
- It’s no use being motivated and productive one day, one week, or one month but not the next — the challenge is to perform at 100% every day. This requires motivation and perhaps the most over-looked executive performance booster is maintaining energy / energizing!
- To be the best you can be, you need to develop an “A” player mentality. An “A” player is someone who is filled with passion, committed to making things happen, open to ideas from anywhere, blessed with lots of runway ahead of them; has charisma to energise themselves and others, and makes business productive and enjoyable.
- In senior roles “A” players exhibit the four “E”s of leadership — high Energy, Energise others, the Edge to make difficult decisions and ability to Execute, deliver the results.
- “A” players are still team members but being a team player is not the same as being a squad member — you need to be first choice, not a reserve or just there to make up the numbers.
- You need to make energising a ritual: this will translate into being confident, invigorated, happy, connected - being fully engaged and projecting an infectious positivity.
  o You may wish to refer to our white paper about Energizing

8. Marginal gains!
- As you progress your career, making notable gains becomes increasingly difficult to achieve. You’ve learnt most of the big things you can learn and if, for argument’s sake you are 80% effective or 80% capable, increasing this becomes a matter of an accumulation of small gains which collectively become meaningful. You need to identify areas for marginal gain and break bad habits that hold you back. The 80/20 rule applies - it takes much more effort to move through that final 20% than it did to cover the first 80%. There is no low-hanging fruit.
  - Focus your energy — identify what you should stop doing, what you should do more of, and what you should start doing.

- The exception to the above are experiences of a sea-change nature which take your career forward significantly, such as promotions, secondments, new projects, courses bridging key and significant skill gaps or joining a new employer.
  - Opportunities are a reward for the active, not for the passive so what you do to make marginal gains may very well influence whether you get the chance of any break-through transformation..
  - Opportunities to acquire skills and experiences which represent a major step change in taking your career forward may come your way / be presented to you. However, if they are not, you should consider what form such opportunities might take, their relevance, value and possible alternatives assess the pros and cons, and work out how you may be able to make the opportunity happen. “Life is what you make of it”.
  o You may wish to refer to our white papers about MBAs and alternatives.
10. Put yourself out there! Networking and alignment.

- Make sure you network and are properly aligned and ideally you’ll become involved in shaping the future. Understand what is going on, get yourself noticed and build relationships to be at your best.
- The opportunities for networking are immense. Your profile must be strong and highly visible. Given today’s technology, it plays a significant part in facilitating that networking. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate your “currency”. This also means it is something that needs to be managed carefully to make the right impact. With an increased profile, your behaviours are much more publicly visible so take that responsibility on-board.

   o You may wish to refer to our white papers about Networking

11. Mentoring

- Too many people drift into a solo journey in their careers. You need a mentor; who is capable of making a significant contribution to your thinking and planning with the desired outcomes of developing self-awareness, motivation, focus and objectivity.

   o You may wish to refer to our white papers about Mentoring

12. Building your track record

- Irrespective of your level of seniority, regardless of your role type and notwithstanding that you are employed in a front office, back office or business / business unit — in a commercial business your performance will in some way align with bottom-line business objectives and in 99% of roles, these will be measurable against metrics / key performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Your performance, accomplishments and contribution and the value you add, will determine how secure your position is in the event of down-sizing or rationalization, your prospects for a pay rise, going up a grade level, the generosity of any bonus and your promotion prospects.
- Your performance will heavily influence your employment prospects outside of your current company — what will other people who know you say about you? Will others think you are an “A” player and recommend you to prospective employers? Smart interviewers at the best employers will press you about exactly what you contributed. If you don’t know what you contributed and/or you can’t articulate it, you are not going to impress.
Section 2

Your promotional potential

Promotion bring satisfaction, status and salary rewards...

So how do you realise your promotion potential and what are the implications?

Many people find the prospect of a first line management role less interesting than their current role because first line management roles are widely perceived as being admin oriented. General consensus tends to be that at the next level beyond first line management, the job becomes more interesting as you enter into the realms of leadership.

So, what’s the difference between Management and Leadership?

Management is about putting into effect the people / team and resources to deliver those goals which have already been established. Management is about getting things done. This includes setting operational direction, and organising resources to maximise performance, drive optimisation and efficiency.

Leadership is about determining direction or vision and strategy for a group, which the group will subsequently follow; i.e. a leader will outline a vision and determine goals and objectives. Most ambitious people want the influence and impact leadership / CXO levels bring however to gain this degree of responsibility, you’ve got to progress through management first.
The reality is that with few exceptions you can’t go from being an individual contributor to a senior manager or leader without initially being a line manager.

Furthermore to get to the highest possible level – you must start progressing into management and building skills from an early stage.

Once you are into senior management or CXO level, the further up the ladder you go the fewer seats there are to move into – which means you need to be more conscious about how you can step up – in particular senior manager to CXO, and ultimately to CEO.

Some people postpone progression into management, however, in doing so you miss out on the domino effect: the earlier you start moving up, the more levels of seniority you can move through and likewise earnings.

The average age of a CEO in the Fortune 500 is 50.

It goes without saying that the more senior the role, the greater the earnings you’ll enjoy – as an individual contributor, earning $150k / £100K your earnings over the next 20 years would be $3M / £2M – as a CEO in a Fortune 500 firm / FTSE 100 firm you could expect to earn $10M / £4M in a single year. Not everyone will get to the top, let’s say over the next 20 years you progress two levels up – you could realistically be looking at an extra $150k / £100k p.a., over 10 years this would be an extra $1.5M or £1M.

People who are awarded promotions tend to be those who are seen as best qualified for the role and pro-actively seek out opportunities for progression. You need to take personal ownership for your own career development.

*To secure promotion, you need to earn your rank in the hierarchy.*
So, what do you do next?

You need an action plan - click here to reference our blueprint for your career development.

You need a buddy – a trusted advisor / mentor – this can be a mutual exchange

You need to get smart about your approach and may find the following white papers insightful:

- How to get promoted
- The promotional interview
- Working with emotional intelligence
- Brand you
- Networking
- Mentoring
- MBAs and alternatives

You can find these in the “Your route to CEO” section of our site. (OR web / app designer create click here)
Section 3

Your new job

It’s never too late to land your dream job

1. Understand that as your career progresses and your level of seniority rises, finding a new job takes longer and longer, for executives, finding a new job will typically take 4-6 months. So you need to get smart about it.

2. And the job-hunting process is significantly longer where there is a lack of understanding of the workings of job market. Using a career coach and or CV Resume writing services, is likely to be one of the times in your career when you can gain maximum benefit from working with professionals – when the stakes in these circumstances are at their highest There is nothing more frustrating that falling over what turn out to be the low hurdles.

3. If you are employed, setting aside the time required for job search and attending interviews will be challenging – you need to be smart about your approach. Time is at premium, so investing in a career coach will be good value.

4. If you are unemployed, if job search takes 2 months longer than it should do, you’re faced with a potential loss of income of perhaps upwards of $20k and for many people a protracted job search may mean you end up compromising on the quality of opportunity you ultimately assume.

5. The right new opening, presents you with the possible opportunity for increased earnings, a move up the ladder, better scope for career & personal development and increased job satisfaction. How much is that worth to you?

Tools to help you….

- Locate a professional to help guide you or create a winning CV Resume using our career coach directory
- Action plan – our guide to help you plan your job search
- Executive CV / Resume template, example layout and tips.
- The executive interview white paper includes competency based interviews, presenting at interview and salary negotiation
- Intelligent networker

You can find all this in the Executive Job Search section of our site.
Section 4

Are you at a crossroads in your career?

Common career crossroads

• You have been made redundant
• You feel stuck in a dead end job
• Middle aged crisis
• Your values have changed
• The industry sector in which you work has disappeared or is in a state of decline
• Your employer company is in a weak position
• Your skills have become outdated or are no longer in demand, or though once having a high value add, are no longer valued or are of little value
• The role type in which you work has become extinct
• You have passed your sell by date! Over time, your attitude may become outdated, views become outdated, approach become outdated and the way in which you present yourself and your views outdated.
• Women face different challenges – men making decisions, jobs for the boys, confidence
• Maternity transition e.g. return to market.
8 pointers to help you at a career crossroads

Implications in this kind of situation are significant. The following set of pointers should help you, to realise realities and what your options may be.

1. Consider engaging the services of a career coach. There are various critical stages in your career and the feeling of being at a crossroads is very much one of them – so this is a time at which you stand the most to gain from investing in working with a coach. Don’t forget, you pay an electrician, an accountant, a personal trainer – why not invest in yourself, in your happiness and in doing so you will help develop your income potential and take your career to a higher level. Remember – all the top sportsmen have a coach!

Career change should not be undertaken lightly and for those people who are mid-career, working with a career coach will help you. They will help you evaluate your capability to make the move. They will throw some light on the nuances of the direction in which you look to move. They will help position you to make better informed choices. They will guide you through the planning process. They will be an invaluable point of reference through the implementation stages, when it gets difficult.

2. It’s extremely important that you get a very good reality check! There is a reality attached to a change of career direction. For most people scope to change career is either limited or in some cases just simply not a possibility.

   i. Changing job function mid-career will often mean you have to start again at the bottom or at a level below what you have become accustomed to.

   ii. Career-change can mean a loss or reduction in income.

   iii. A move into a new area can also mean having to take a lower level job and mean a loss in level of seniority / status.
3. Identify your options...If you are at a career crossroads, it is particularly important to reflect and take stock, consider your options, review your progress, assess your current position and plan for the future. Be sure to read our sections about:

i. Developing a better understanding of yourself

ii. Smart and creative brainstorming - determining options as to how you can apply your competencies into areas which you will find most fulfilling.

iii. Personality profiling

iv. Engagement with others - speaking with diverse sets of people to get different perspectives which may open your mind to a meaningful career direction

4. Consider several choices rather than just one. People always have choice and there will always be multiple ways in which you can progress your career.

5. Can you undertake a trial project? If you are thinking about making a fundamental career change, consider whether you can try out either your planned new career or a significant part of it before potentially making a big (and expensive) mistake. Can you undertake a project outside of work or inside work which will both enable you to work out if you enjoy it and in doing so, create experience or skills for you, to support your career change? Consider contracting yourself in as a temp or assuming responsibility for projects which may help you build experience or skills relevant to the requirements of the position you wish to assume.

6. Attend training courses to build your skills and credentials – re-training or gaining new qualifications may position you better to successfully make a career change – check out our article about MBAs and alternatives.

7. Determine the risks involved in making a career change!

   **High risk | Low risk | No risk**
8. Upgrade yourself! Sometimes you’ll reach a ceiling or feel frustrated simply because circumstances have changed and time has moved on. This may take the form of you feeling as though you have been passed by, you have been overlooked or perhaps you no longer feel valued. Sometimes people don’t realise it but having been in a role type or environment for some time, you can become out of touch and other people around you may have fresher perspectives, more energy and a better knowledge base or approach which drives their performance above others. Most employers, bosses and peers, want to employ, promote and work with people who are energised, positive and possess an up to the minute psyche.

i. People often become complacent and lose their edge, as if in a time warp, not keeping current. We’re not talking about people in their 50s or 60s, this often applies to people in their 40s.

ii. Many people into their 40s and maturing beyond, let themselves become outdated. An outdated manner implies you are out of touch, displayed by closed mindedness, lack of curiosity and an ignorance to what is going on. When people become stale, they begin to lack a sense of urgency and for all too many, an old fashioned appearance. The more mature need to be cognizant not to be seen or act like a dinosaur.

iii. Time for you to become more aware about energising yourself.

iv. Re-inventing your image, consider your executive presence and brand you – link to article.

v. Time to get your branding right! Contemporary CV Resumes and sharp LinkedIn profiles with smiling photos, want to know more read here

vi. Stop talking too much, start asking more questions, get a better curiosity.

vii. Touch more people – the more interactions you have, the more you will broaden your views and psyche. Be sure to make these conversations diverse.

9. Address any issues with loss of confidence, disappointment or frustration. Sometimes it can simply be a matter of self-motivation – often just working for the wrong employer for too long can lead to these feelings or maybe because you’ve not taken ownership of your own career development. This situation requires a “pick-me-up” – Get involved in mentoring others – this will provide a confidence-boost, or engage the help of a mentor to address feelings of disappointment.

10. You may find our Intelligent Networker executive job search guide invaluable, in this 360° roadmap you will find suggestions to help you brain-storm ideas about how you can apply your skills into aligned areas.
Section 5

A blueprint for your action plan

Realise your goals | Exactly what would you like to accomplish?

1. Understanding yourself

When considering your goals, consider what is realistic, how you can best apply your strengths & skills and what your motivations are. The foundation for your on-going success is dependent on your skills and motivations.

Understanding your values, competencies and emotional intelligence – will allow you to identify both strengths and areas to be developed.

Take into account any recent assessments or appraisals, or alternatively consider engaging a career coach or suitably qualified HR resource to help you.

- If you have recently completed a personality profiling assessment, make reference to this and if not, consider undertaking one.
- If you have recently completed an emotional intelligence assessment, make reference to this and if not, consider undertaking one.
- Consider what additional information you have or have access to which may help you better understand your capabilities such as appraisals.
- You may wish to review our white paper “Developing a better understanding of yourself”.

•
2. Skills appraisal

- What qualifications do you have? What are the implications of these if any?
- What have your managers and colleagues said about you and your skills?
- Identify your competencies

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<th>Achievement Orientated</th>
<th>Analytical Ability</th>
<th>Communication Skills (Oral, written, presentation)</th>
<th>Creativity / Innovation</th>
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<td>Decision-Making Skills</td>
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<td>Flexibility / Adaptability</td>
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<td>Persuasiveness / Influencing</td>
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<td>Planning and Organizing Skills</td>
<td>Problem-Solving Skills</td>
<td>Team Building / Team Work</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
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You will excel, in areas in which you have well-developed competencies and to succeed in different role types, and at different levels of seniority, you’ll need to develop specific competencies further. You can find out more about competencies in our white paper “developing a better understanding of yourself”.

- In what areas have you excelled? What are your accomplishments and achievements?
- In what area/s do you have specific skills which are valuable? What specific experience and qualifications do you have relating to industry sector know-how, role type / discipline expertise / functional areas? What track record of accomplishment do you possess? Consider your five or six most significant areas of expertise.

Ask yourself if you are leveraging your highest point of value? Using full skill level, selling yourself out at your max billing rate… Some environs value people more than others and some pay more than others.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

Your personality type, competencies, skills, emotional intelligence, motivations and values will collectively shape your strengths. Harnessing these strengths will allow you to excel and realise your full career potential so make them the foundations on which you develop your career plan and path.

3. **Goal setting**

Determine your motivations and priorities. You need to step back and think about what you want to achieve, in the medium and long term. You need to be clear about what you want to achieve (your goals) and what you need to do to accomplish them.

Consider how your personal attributes can be best put to use, and how you can develop them to realise your full executive potential – whether you are a subject matter expert, middle manager or senior business leader.

Make your goals **SMART** ones:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time bound**

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4. Prioritise and organise
• Focus on a manageable and realistic set of key goals, we’d suggest 3 at any one time.
• Focussing on 10-15 keys goals isn’t focus. Sure be cognizant of issues but make sure you are focusing on doing the right things, and executing well on those things which count most.
• It’s essential you make energising yourself part of your routine.

5. Seek the input of others before making conclusions and after which determine your plans
• Don’t plan your career solo.
• Get yourself a coaching buddy, you can mentor them and they can mentor you.
• Don’t restrict yourself to just one other person’s point of view. Gain a number of diverse perspectives to gain a smart and holistic overview. Review and revise your plans, and get inputs on a semi-regular basis – perhaps annually, more often if there is appropriate reason.
• Consider engaging the services of a professional career coach or performance coach.

Make your goals SMART ones:
Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound
Executive career planning and performance development framework

A blueprint for your action plan

Realise your goals | Exactly what would you like to accomplish?

Jot down what you wish to achieve at work in the next 10 years!

10 years

Your long term goals. Map out where you want to be, or what you would like to have achieved 10 years from now. What do you need to do to make this happen?

5 years

Your medium term goals. Jot down what you’d like to have accomplished 5 years from now. Think ahead about what you need to do in this period, to position you to realise your long term goals.

3 years

Your short-medium term goals. Write down realistic goals. Don’t forget the importance of shorter term goals, as ultimately these lead to achievement of your long term ambitions.

1 year

Your immediate goals. Initiatives you should be working on right now. You need to consider what you need to down now, to realise your goals in the mid and long term.
A blueprint for your action plan

Now consider what you want out of your personal life.

You can always earn more money but you can never buy your life back. Jot down what you want to experience in your personal life over the next 10 years!

10 years
Put pen to paper about what you would like to see happen in your life outside of work over the next 10 years. For example: relationships, family, travel, sports car, social pursuits, houses, learning, getting that new convertible sports or yacht, buying that second home on the beach or ski slopes, adventures and extravagances like designer label clothes. Consider your work-life balance.

5 years
Jot down what you’d like to have experienced or accomplished in your private life between now and 5 years from now?

3 years
Make a note of what you’d like to have made happen in your domestic life over the next 3 years?

1 year
Write up what you’d like to see happening in your life outside of work in the next year?

Your work and your personal life are not mutually exclusive. Now compare and contrast how your goals professionally and personally align. Contemplate any implications relating to your work-life balance and your earnings. Does your earnings potential support your personal goals?

Make your goals SMART ones:
Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound

Having brainstormed your professional and personal goals, you should now feel better equipped to set out what you want to accomplish and determine realistic timescales.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

A blueprint for your action plan
Realise your goals | Exactly what would you like to accomplish?

GROW model: Developing clarity around your goals

| G | Goal | This is the end point, where you want to be. The goal has to be defined in such a way that it is very clear what you want to achieve. |
| R | Reality | The current reality is where you are now. What are your issues, your challenges, how far are you away from your goal? |
| O | Obstacles | There will be Obstacles stopping you from getting from where you are now, to where you want to be. If there were no obstacles, you would already have reached your goals. |
| | Options | Once obstacles have been identified, you need to find new ways of dealing with them if you are to make progress. These are the Options. |
| W | Way forward | The Options then need to be converted into action steps which will take you to your goals. These are the way forward. |

Ask yourself...

- What do I want to achieve?
- What is my ideal?
- What are my goals?
- Where am I now?
- What is my reality?
- Using our blueprint – reflect on yourself and undertake a self-analysis.
- Who can I get feedback from? (AIM more than one person.)
- What can I do to bridge the gaps between where I am and where I want to be?
- What are my options?
- Who can help me? What do I need
- What actions do I need to take?
- Commit yourself to the actions.
- What are the steps I need to take?
- In what timeframes do I want to realise these goals?

Clear goals give you energy and motivation....

Having clear goals will boost your energy levels, and increase your motivation.

Make your goals **SMART** ones:

**Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound**

Acknowledgement: no one person can be clearly identified as the originator of the GROW model however Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, Sir John Whitmore made significant contributions.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

A blueprint for your action plan

To realise your goals and career potential, you need to set aside dedicated time to focus on achieving them.

Consider beginning with the end in mind and working your way backward: what do you need to do to accomplish your goals? Break your goals down into manageable and realistic steps and specify the timescales in which you wish to make them happen.

Prioritise and organise, and think ahead: schedule your goals into an action plan. Develop short, medium and long term milestones, and timetable these weeks, months, quarters and years ahead.

When planning your time, incorporate quick wins which can raise your performance now and mid & longer term initiatives to improve your prospects for development.

What can you do, to move yourself forward? What positive new things do you need to accomplish to move forward? What bad habits, which are holding you back, do you need to break?

Make your goals SMART ones:
Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Relevant | Time bound
Developing and implementing your action plan using the GROW model

Most people at a mid or advanced career stage have either no plan or the wrong plan for their on-going executive career development. It simply takes a backseat to life’s other demands.

When considering and planning your career development don’t approach the task solo, but get diverse / multiple opinions – this will help address shortcomings, including many of which you may be unaware.

**GOAL** What’s on your mind? (career crossroads, new job, promotion, performance improvement) Your goal represents where you want to be. It is essential that goals are clearly defined and that it is very clear what you aim to accomplish. If you do not know exactly what it is you are working towards, you run the risk of failing to achieve what you want. Your goal or goals need to be the right ones!

**REALITY** The current reality is where you are now. Discovery & self-assessment. (What competencies, skills and track record do you have, are you in the right occupational type, are there things holding you back?) You may wish to read and review our white paper “Developing a better understanding of yourself” or work on this with a career coach, perhaps even sit a personality profile or emotional intelligence test. What are your issues, your challenges, how far are you away from your goal? Take sufficient time to reflect and consider your position. An honest assessment of where you are now combined with your knowledge of where you want to be will allow you to plan to bridge the gap. Get input from outside sources to build an accurate, holistic picture. Find out how others see you.
OBSTACLES There will be Obstacles stopping you from getting from where you are now to where you want to be. If there were no obstacles, you would already have reached your goals. What obstacles stand in your way?

OPTIONS Once obstacles have been identified, you need to find positive ways of dealing with them if you are to make progress. Some of these are likely to be developmental needs, skills or experiences you need to learn or develop. These are the Options. When considering your options you may wish to look at not just how a single career route might look (single track) but also how multiple tracks may play out for you. Map your ideas out as per our image on pages 25 & 26 taking into account what you might need to do / what are the implications of your different options.

WAY FORWARD The pursuit of your goals. Options need to be converted into action steps which will move you towards your goals. These are the way forward. Plan for success. To realise your goals and career potential, you need to set aside dedicated time to focus on achieving them. Focus on three goals at any one time. (They will be stepping stones to your ultimate objective.) Identify people who can help you. Consider specialist and generalist mentors, and how long you will work with them. Consider people you can mentor in turn. Investigate coaching and training opportunities. Consider how you can gain more or broader experience. Plan and prepare, but be prepared to be flexible. Things may happen that are outside your control or that you cannot currently anticipate, so it is wise to have a contingency plan. Ask yourself “What if …?” questions: e.g. What if I am made redundant? What if economic or market forces impact adversely on the industry? While you can’t control every aspect of your life, by being prepared and actively undertaking self-development you will become stronger and better able to capitalise on opportunities and developments. You need to plan ahead, set yourself milestones and diarise them – and regular reviews – into your calendar.
Executive career planning and performance development framework

Methodology

Original research conducted by Intelligent Executive (Armstrong Hall Ltd) both qualitative and quantitative research and analysis relating to all aspects of the development of this executive career and performance roadmap...

- Interviews with 1000s of executives at every level and across all domains
- Interviews with 100s of HR professionals
- Interviews with four domain experts

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Framework content: Developed by & intellectual property of Intelligent Executive (Armstrong Hall Ltd), contributors to the frameworks are: Robert Tearle (founder Intelligent Executive), David Clark (Performance and Career Coach, CIPD, MA) and Linda Denny (Specialist Career and Leadership Coach/Mentor).
Executive career planning and performance development framework

White papers to help you

Performance

- Developing a better understanding of yourself.
- MBAs and alternatives
- Mentoring
- Networking
- First 100 days
- Energizing

Promotion

- Brand you
- Women on board
- How to get promoted
- The promotional interview
- Working with emotional intelligence
- Your route to CEO

Executive job search

- Executive job search
- Intelligent networker
- The executive interview
- CV / Resume template
- Linkedin profile