

How did you get into this?

It was at a team development session I ran recently that one of the team asked me "How did you get into this sort of work?"

It was a big question, though less important than the question we were working on – "How do we get this team operating at its best?" But it's been suggested that everyone's favourite subject is themselves...

I broke early into the career mode that is now quite common – changing jobs or career direction frequently. From a first job as a Town Planning trainee, I went into engineering, returned to study, got into publishing and community radio, moved into PR, sold computers and office technology, started consulting in business strategy and training, crossed into the employment field, continued my own training in HR, and established a HR/Management consultancy after a stint in HR Management. If I'd been asked to predict that career path, there is no way I could have. Little wonder that with the choices available today, gen Y and Z often can't say where their career interests lie.

There are ways to work through this, and if you want to do so, put together a "Career Directions" folder. In it, keep your ideas and dreams, news or web items, and anything else relevant – keep building this resource. Later you may be amazed to realise how much you've moved in the direction that was once just a dream.

Do what you can to learn more about yourself: the more we understand our personality, values, skills, and abilities, the more likely we'll find the career that fits. When I moved from engineering to social science, I probably had the technical abilities for engineering but it didn't inspire me! For others, it's the perfect choice.

Explore your career alternatives; there are excellent resources available online and in publications. Good professional help can assist you in moving through transition phases – seek out a suitable career coach. A book such as 'What Colour is Your Parachute?' is a great help.

Now, a few predictions for the coming year in employment.

Downsizing and 'rightsizing'

Organisations are downsizing. There are daily announcements regarding the loss of 50, 200 or 600 jobs. Banking and finance sector jobs are under threat, and many businesses are using the current imperatives as a prompt to 'spring-clean'. Jobs in real estate, insurance, the services sector, manufacturing, wholesale/retail and even mining and resources are under threat. On the other hand accounting, engineering and construction positions are some that can still be hard to fill.

Expect the pendulum swinging back to the employer as candidate numbers increase after years of a tight market. Keep increasing your capability and employability, and keep your contribution up to the maximum...less productive staff are amongst those leaving first, while contributors are increasingly sought after. It's time to be very proactive in managing your career.

Time and productivity pressures grow

Tough economic times mean we'll be working harder, smarter and faster! As organisations downsize, we'll do more with less. Technology will assist.

Increase in e-commuting

With rising fuel costs and increasing metropolitan journey times, there's a push for more e-commuting. Improvements in web performance, videoconferencing and collaborative software are making it more feasible and attractive. Challenges in managing remote workers can be balanced by higher productivity and satisfaction.

Bendigo may not seem an obvious site for e-commuting - most of us can reach our workplace within 20 minutes. But Bendigo and our neighbours are increasingly attractive locations for e-commuters whose workplace is metropolitan or global. Prepare for more e-commuting, and, even in these times of contraction, more growth in Bendigo.

All the best for a great Christmas and New Year...may you move towards that ideal worklife – or workplace – in 09! You are welcome to contact me to discuss the best way to move forward.

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