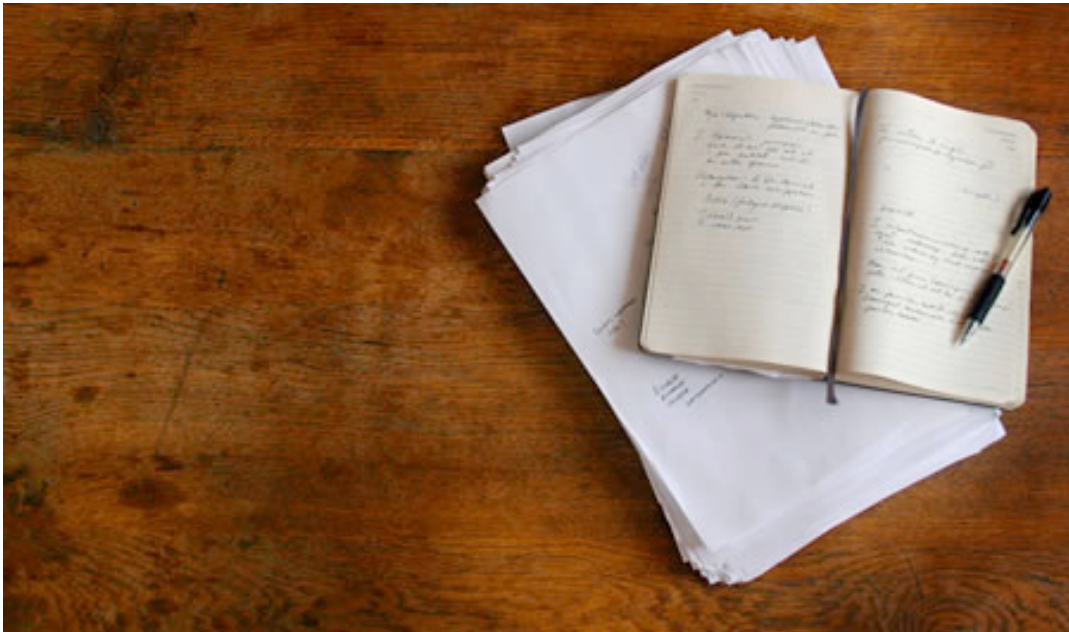


Your Future Transport Career



*Skilled transport professionals are in
high demand and short supply ...
you need to write your own script.*

Transport Futures Institute



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To keep up with the rapid change in the workplace you need to take control of your career choices – by knowing yourself, being aware of new developments and making changes.

At work we actively take on new projects, learn about new technology and look for innovative solutions to the challenges we face. We need to be much more active in managing our careers.

Covey (1994) in *First Things First*, categorises tasks we undertake in terms of importance and urgency. We are caught up in the urgent tasks, even the unimportant ones. We need to make time for the important, but not necessarily urgent, task of managing our own careers.



Key elements of self managing are:

- write your own script, rather than expecting it to be written for you
- be vigilant on your own behalf, identifying and preparing for opportunities, rather than expecting to be guided by someone else. You know yourself best!
- describe yourself in terms of your skills and capabilities, rather than your current job title.

In the future you will more than likely have a number of different careers in your lifetime. Be careful not to choose a job because of the status or because it is expected of you.

If you are in the right job you should:

- look forward to going to work
- feel energised by what you do
- feel your contribution is respected and appreciated
- being enthusiastic when describing your job
- feel optimistic about the future.

New Rules for Career Success

1. Know yourself first

To make informed choices about your future it is critical to understand yourself first – your unique skills, talents and experience, your strengths and weaknesses, preferences and interests.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one way to determine your personality preferences. The MBTI uses sixteen different personality types and each person fits into one of the them.

Knowing your type helps you discover what best motivates and energises you, which in turn allows you to seek those elements in your preferred work choice. You can then match up your strengths and not try to be something you are not!

Reference: Tieger P and Barron-Tieger B (1995) Do what you are.



2. Ensure your marketability

It is no longer realistic to believe that job security exists anywhere, anymore. The security of a job for life career has passed and long service employees will become a rare beast after the current generation retire. So you need to be secure in the marketability of your skills, knowledge and experience. To make yourself marketable:

- think of everyone you work for as a client, rather than a boss.
- know your product – yourself, your experience, knowledge and the skills you have to offer; your strengths, weaknesses, assets and potential liabilities; and how you can add value to an employer or client.
- know your market – where your industry is heading, and what business your current and potential employer(s) or client(s) are in.

3. Think globally

Today's technology allows you to work anywhere, anytime – using mobile phones, portable computers, faxes, modems, internet and air travel. We live in a global economy, so you can work anywhere, anytime.

Globalisation means an expansion of work opportunities, making you less reliant on the local economy. As organisations increasingly move into international markets, they will be looking for individuals who can readily adapt to these challenges.

4. Communicate powerfully and persuasively



People with well developed communication skills have always been valued. Advances in telecommunications and presentation technology, increasing numbers of complex projects and stakeholder interests and everyone's information overload mean that effective communication is needed more than ever. When you read a well written article or hear a good presentation, think about what it was that appealed to you and how it was done.

You must be able to:

- write clearly, persuasively and with impact
- quickly capture your listener's attention and get your message across
- use words to paint a picture, tell a story, present information clearly
- focus on key concepts and tailor your message to the reader's/listener's requirements.

5. Keep on learning

With constantly changing work and skill requirements, life long learning and continuing education becomes a necessity. Rules of life long learning include:

- stay current in your field and continue to develop your skills and knowledge
- broaden your knowledge and understanding about related fields – more and more we need to be a specialist in a particular area, but also have a broad knowledge about transport
- take courses, attend seminars and conferences, read books and journals, develop and practice new skills
- consider investing in your future by taking 'time-off' to undertake full time education.

Consider new developments in learning, beyond traditional institutions or modes of learning. New education opportunities are being provided using short courses and flexible learning using the Internet, at your own pace and time.

6. Understand trends in transport

Many people have only limited knowledge or understanding of specific trends and developments in their profession and even less knowledge of broader community and business trends – whether economic, demographic, political, technological or social.

Test yourself: Can you identify three significant trends that will have significant impact in the transport industry in the next five years? Do you know what new technologies might shape transport in the next five years? Do you know what the potential threats and opportunities are to your profession?

In a very complex and rapidly changing work world, it is crucial to be aware of key trends in business, society and politics. You need to have a broad understanding and keep current on key developments that may have an impact on transport.

Get information from a variety of sources and maintain an independent and critical perspective.

7. Prepare for areas of competence, not jobs

Don't prepare for jobs, prepare for areas of competence. Like many of yesterday's jobs that have now vanished, the "hot jobs" of today may not exist in the future.

It is important then, to think of roles, not jobs. You may have a single job title but many roles: leader, problem solver, team builder, mentor, facilitator, project manager, analyst, expert, etc.

Think also of the marketable skills that are independent of your technical abilities, such as resilient, resourceful, opportunity seeking, risk-taker, reliable and market driven. These are some of the self management attributes employers are also looking for and that will help determine your future success.

8. Look to the future

You can't rely on the accuracy of long-term occupational forecasts, nor should you try to make career choices on what kind of work you think will be hot, rather than what you are best suited to. It is important to be aware of demographic, economic and social trends.⁹ Build financial independence



When your finances are in good shape, you can make career decisions based on what is really important to you. A financial planner can help you take steps towards financial independence.

Rethink your relationship with money: does the stuff you buy contribute to your happiness (especially if you hate your well paying job)? If not, could you trade off buying some things for a more satisfying, yet not as well paying job, or getting out of the rat race of seeking out continual pay increases?

Reference: R Kyosaki (1999) Rich Dad, Poor Dad

10. Think lattice, not ladder

Corporate downsizing and flattened hierarchies have carved many of the rungs in the traditional career ladder. Now the career ladder is more like a lattice – you often have to move sideways before you can move up.



In a lattice everything is connected. Each step will take you somewhere, though sometimes in unpredictable directions. You must measure progress in new ways. Each new work assignment should contribute to your portfolio of skills and experience, increasing both your breadth and depth. Be creative in seeking out new opportunities.

If your feeling stuck in your current role, consider the possibility of job enrichment – a lateral move into a new work assignment or a different project that offers opportunities for learning and development, coaching less experienced staff, participate in task forces or undertake interesting education programs.

Track your career progress by your work skills, knowledge and experience, not your level. Judge your progress by the breadth and depth of skills, knowledge and experience and its importance to the organisation and to customers.

11. Generalist or specialist

Will you be better off in the future as a specialist or a generalist? The answer is, BOTH. You need to have strong enough specialist skills to get you in the door – something that makes you unique and puts you in a place to add value to an employer. But that is no longer enough.

You also need to be able to use those specialist capabilities in working with teams of people from different disciplines. You need to be able to organise your work, manage your time, keep to a budget and sell your project.

So the answer is not so much one of either/or, but one of degree. Should you be more of a specialist or more of a generalist?

If you prefer to specialise, conduct a searching self-assessment to make sure you have what it takes to rise to the top of your profession. Take an equally careful look at

market conditions to make sure that you are investing your career assets in an in-demand speciality.

Stay on top of the newest trends and information in your profession. And develop you will more than likely have a number of different careers in your lifetime your generalist skills.

12. Manage time

We are working in a world where there are so many demands on us, it's crucial to be ruthless in managing time.

Evaluate every time commitment. Are you doing something because it needs to be done or because its there? What are you not doing that may be more important? Become assertive in saying no to excessive work demands. Know your limitations. Work smarter rather than just staying busy. If you work excessively long hours over an extended period of time, you will become less effective and lose productivity.

Set priorities, including personal priorities. Use the weekend and holidays to refresh yourself.

Refer: S Covey (1994) *First Things First*.



13. Be realistic

Set realistic expectations and learn to live with the best you can do. Regularly keep track of your successes, no matter how small and take credit.

Regularly update your portfolio, including information on your achievements.

Instead of beating yourself up over things that didn't work out, remind yourself of your success and achievements, and celebrate them.

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