

Control Your Destiny: Effective Career Management

Eileen McCulloch

Associate Director, MBA & Graduate Career Management Center &
Director of Supply Chain Management Corporate and Student Relations
W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University
480/965-6424; Eileen.McCulloch@asu.edu

Jim Clayton

Sr. Associate Director, MBA & Graduate Career Management
W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University
480/965-6424; Jim.Clayton@asu.edu

90th Annual International Supply Management Conference, May 2005

Abstract. For many, managing one's own career seems far more overwhelming than managing a corporation's sourcing and supplier performance that involves millions of dollars and impacts worldwide shareholder, customer, and stakeholder value and profitability. Yet, the skills, best practices, and process orientation you have already mastered are exactly what you need to ensure your own career satisfaction and growth. Today we will explore a four step change Personal Change Management model based upon a change model created by Angelo Kinicki. We'll demonstrate that when this process is employed, it will reduce the ambiguity of managing your career, enabling you to be in control of your own destiny.

Assumptions. The Personal Change Model (PCM) is based upon the following assumptions:

- You are the owner and responsible party in charge of directing your career.
- There are no free lunches. Sacrifices are almost always required to accommodate significant career changes.
- You might not always get what you want, but you can usually get what you need. Be flexible and consider making trade-offs as you prioritize your goals.
- Change can be scary. Be confident in the fact that most individuals already possess basic skills necessary to manage significant career change.
- Applying processes and tools to objectively analyze what to change and craft solutions almost always creates better outcomes.
- An effective personal change process/model can assist you in gaining control of your career and establishing a higher degree of satisfaction in your life.

Overview. The Personal Change Model illustrated below is a four step process that incorporates benchmarking, gap analysis, project management, and evaluation.

- Step #1: Determine the world as you would like it to be by identifying the "Current State" of your world and prioritizing your "Desired State" of the world.
- Step #2: Set SMART goals to bring about change and to bridge the gap between your "Current" and "Desired" states of the world.
- Step #3: Identify barriers/solutions to the goals and create an implementation plan.
- Step #4: Set a time to re-measure your "Current State" of the world, evaluate effectiveness of implementation plan and make adjustments, and re-evaluate your goals.

Personal Career Management Change Model

Step 1: Determine what you want your world to be

- Establish the "Current State" of your world
- Create and prioritize the "Desired State" of your world

Step 2: Set SMART goals to bring about changes

- Create SMART goals to bridge the GAP between "Current" and "Desired" States

Step 3: Identify Barriers/Solutions & Set Plan

- Identify potential Barriers that would prevent you from accomplishing your goals
- Brainstorm Solutions that will help you accomplish your goals
- Set a plan for each goal by applying Solutions to overcome potential Barriers

Step 4: Set time to re-measure "Current State" of world

- Determine timeframe to measure success
- Reiterate process (Steps 1-4)

The Model in Detail.

Step #1: Determine What You Want

Determine the "state of the world" as you wish it to be. Frequently, when planning for the future, we fail to recognize the importance of everyday things we take for granted. In this step you need to create a list of important satisfactions, as well as dissatisfactions. In Addendum A, we have identified some of the most common identifications. Your list may be entirely different.

Once you have a list that contains several things you would like to change and several that you do not want to change, you must prioritize all the items on your list, with "1" being the most important to you. This is a difficult, but strategic, step. In order to effect personal change, one typically must make sacrifices. The sacrifices you are or are not willing to make will determine your ability to set goals that are SMART.

Step #2: Set SMART Goals

Set SMART goals to bring about change. Each goal must be

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time bound

Step #3: Identify Barriers/Solutions and Set Plan

As you consider your goals, you'll need to recognize the barriers to achieving those goals. And also identify the solution(s) for each barrier. You will take these into account as you finalize written goals. For example, you may be a procrastinator. Your solution may be to schedule a weekly time to work on your career management and block off that time on your calendar, or you may choose to use project management software to create and track your own deadlines.

Now it is time to write your goals. If they are not SMART, you may wish to re-evaluate your prioritization in Step 1. It's easy to forget that managing personal change is more inclusive than effecting physical change. Sometimes we identify the need to change our mental perspective and thus, achieve a greater degree of acceptance/satisfaction.

With your goals beside you, you can now create an implementation plan by approaching this as a project. You'll need to identify tasks, prioritize tasks, and create a timeline for deliverables.

There are a variety of useful tools to utilize during the implementation stage. While these are not the focus of this workshop, we have listed some of the most useful tools in Addendum B.

Step #4: Set A Time to Re-measure

The final step is to set a date for you to re-measure your "Current State" of the world and reiterate the four step process. As change is achieved and tasks are re-evaluated, your goals, implementation plan, and timeframe change.

Surprisingly, most people overlook one of the most critical variables to successful career management. If you are fortunate enough to have a personal support group, such as family or friends, it's crucial that you communicate your goals and plans. Adhering to your personal schedule of change and self commitment requires the support and understanding of those closest to you. Sacrifices must be made by all. Managing your career involves personal, as well as professional, time. At certain stages you will need to borrow time from personal obligations if you are to meet your professional goals. These goals most typically embrace and include the goals of loved ones. Your supporters need to understand how your commitment to their, as well as your, goals will affect your home routine. The mixed blessing is that they are more likely to keep you on task, so it will become more problematic for you to avoid the career management tasks you least enjoy!

Conclusion: You already utilize the management skills needed for successful career management. By utilizing the Pragmatic Change Model, you can harness and focus those skills to adopt a routine business approach to a very emotional need. You have far more power and influence than you may think! You really can control your own destiny!

Addendum A

Step #1: Determine what you want your world to be.

Some of the most frequently mentioned items that are positive or negative include:

Category	Positive	Negative
Lifestyle	Travel time to and from work is acceptable	Travel time to and from work is not acceptable

	I have the leisure resources I need	I lack the leisure resources I need
	I have the cultural options I seek	Cultural options are too limited
	City/State educational institutions are acceptable	I want more/better city /state educational institutions
	Cost of living is maintainable	Cost of living is too high for me to achieve my goals
	Low/Acceptable crime rate	Crime rate too uncomfortable
	Healthcare is good	Healthcare is not good
	Mass transportation is acceptable	Mass transportation is unacceptable
	I have the social opportunities I need	It's difficult for me to create a rich social life
Compensation	Benefits are good	Benefits are not adequate
	My salary reflects my skill & job level	I am underpaid
	I'm making an adequate salary to meet my most important needs	I must increase my salary
Communication	My goals & performance expectations are clear	My goals and performance expectations are not clear
	I get meaningful feedback	I do not get meaningful feedback
	I feel my contributions are valued	I don't feel my contributions are valued
	I have a good working relationship with my boss	I do not have a good working relationship with my boss
	I do have a good working relationship with my superiors	I do not have a good working relationship with my superiors
Career Development	There are good opportunities for advancement	There are not good opportunities for advancement
	There are opportunities for cross functional development	Professional development is restricted to SCM
	My company supports my professional academic development	My company does not support my professional academic development
	Mentorship is available	Mentorship is not available
	Supply Chain is a strategic partner in corporate goals	Supply Chain is not a strategic partner in corporate goals
	I have the resources to do a good job	I do not have the resources to do a good job
	I work for a growing industry that will need my skills in the future	I work for an industry that will likely include lay-offs for my function
	I have multiple networking	There are few, if any, networking

	opportunities	opportunities
Career Development	My job leverages my strengths & capabilities	My job does not leverage my strengths & capabilities
	My job satisfies my need for variety	My tasks are too repetitive and don't offer enough variety
	I have access to executives	Access to executives is difficult or infrequent
Culture	My company culture embraces change	My company culture is too resistant to change
	My company values diversity	Workplace diversity insufficient
	My company is family friendly	My company does not offer the work/life balance I need
	I enjoy the workplace pace	I don't enjoy my workplace pace
	My company's culture reflects my own ethical values	My company's culture does not reflect my own ethical values
	My company encourages and rewards positive teamwork	My company rewards individual competitive effort more than positive teamwork
	My annual performance evaluation is congruent with department & company goals	My annual performance evaluation is not congruent with department & company goals
	I enjoy the people I work with	I don't enjoy my colleagues
	I like my autonomy	I am too micro-managed
	My work benefits society	My work provides too little benefit to society

Addendum B

Step #3: Identify Barriers/Solutions & Set Plan

Common tools used in implementation plan

Identifying and developing tools is critical and typically requires the greatest discipline and openness to change. Some of the most useful tools include:

- Your resume. An effective resume must include not only what you have done, but must demonstrate your effectiveness by utilizing metrics to prove your competency. Note the difference between “Managed 30 indirect suppliers” vs. “Managed 30 indirect suppliers to identify annual cost savings of \$1 million in inventory and decreased delivery time from 35 to 20 days.” One’s resume should be updated annually as a matter of routine.
- Your cover letter. How likely is it to be read? The more white space on the page, the less time consuming it appears. The purpose of a cover letter is to persuade the reader to examine the attached resume. The cover letter is not about you; it’s about the prospective company’s needs and how you might satisfy them. It is not a summary of your resume! Rather, it is like a movie trailer that shows some highlights of a future movie. Just as you watch a movie trailer and think to yourself, “Yeah, I want to see that one!”, you want your reader to think, “I want to read the resume!” A best practice format includes an introductory paragraph that demonstrates why you want to work for this particular company, three to four bullets that

highlight your skills and areas of expertise, and a concluding paragraph that demonstrates your knowledge of their needs and how your expertise can satisfy them.

- A list of your personal attributes.
- A list of your professional skill sets.
- A list of your professional qualifications including level of education completed, certificates, professional designation, etc.
- A contact database. Sort through your collection of business cards and capture the people you've met who might be of assistance in the future. You'll want to capture their name, title, company, mailing address, email, phone numbers, and reserve a column for notes that might indicate where you met, or what project you worked on together, or even personal notes about the contact. The database should include contacts from all environments: professional, social, educational, etc.
- A list that identifies how you can acquire the skills necessary for the position you seek. This might include professional organizations such as the Institute for Supply Management, conferences, internal formal training, universities, community colleges, and on-line classes. The internet is a powerful tool for identifying such alternatives.
- An organizational structure for follow up activities. This could be a database of the people you contact, when you contacted them, the resulting follow up activity, notes, and an assigned date for completion of the follow up activity. This tool is vital to your continuity of purpose and your effectiveness of implementing your plan.

REFERENCE

Book reference:

Kreitner, Robert, and Kinicki, Angelo. *Organizational Behavior*, Irwin McGraw-Hill, Boston, MA, 1998.