



## **Is Portfolio Career Self-Management for You?**

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Changes in the work-world and new definitions of what is a career are challenging us to make sense of and re-assess meaning in our careers. Employers are distracted by restructuring, e-commerce, mergers, acquisitions, managing outsourced work, global marketing, and much more to the extent that the message to their staff is clear. We are now expected to manage our own careers, determine our next career action steps, be skilled at formulating career move proposals and making the transition. Often when an employee seeks career advice or clarity for their confusion from the Human Resource function they are re-directed to a career coaching provider external to the organisation.

Traditional definitions of occupations are vaporising. Multi task roles are in vogue. Work teams for specific projects with changing members are replacing organisational chart linear type work systems. It's an era of restructured employer-employee relationship where the concept of a serial contract between the parties implies the duration of the relationship is for only as long as there is a justifiable business-based evaluation of need for the work to be done. Employers no longer fund staff on their payroll for slack periods and do far less of investing in staff resources for the future.

Long-term expectations of employment with one employer have been replaced by an enterprise or entrepreneurial culture. A career is now mostly discontinuous where people are stringing together a series of work roles using different personal attributes, skills, knowledge, interests and wants. When one's portfolio has been examined, selected and re-arranged then you have to 'sell' it to either a Manager where you work or to prospective clients in the general marketplace.

People should view their career capabilities as a mosaic of considerable diversity and, as inclination, personal circumstances and labour market demand indicates, re-arrange their employability offerings many times in packages of differing portfolio content. It's a more fluid working world of making new decisions, frequently knowing many may be short term. It's a way of managing one's career as a portfolio careerist.

## **Need for regular self-assessment**

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This evolving situation can either be viewed with apprehension - even fear- or embraced as facilitating a much wider range of career action choice than experienced by our parents. Knowing how to carry out regular self-assessment so that your career portfolio can be appropriately re-arranged becomes essential. Career transition making is no longer a norm of seeking employment security but the security of enhancing one's employability with each action step taken as an employee.

There is no one type of person who is likely to be more successful than another with portfolio careerism. The issue is much more than defining a particular 'behavioural type' as being likely to succeed. Rather it is a compendium of personal circumstances, feelings, life journey timing, etc. within the individual. What we have learned is that those who index their career success as a linear trajectory with progressive hierarchical - oriented job moves and status of position find it difficult to enjoy and thrive as portfolio careerists.

## **Work-life fulfillment**

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A portfolio careerist is more likely to define their work-life fulfillment in terms of freedom to exercise their personal integrity and values. In other words, the facility to remove themselves from work engagement situations where conflict arises with these. To make such a transition based solely on escape from too much unfulfilling work as an employee would be an inadequate basis although this factor could constitute one of the reasons. A portfolio careerist



is likely to prize profession or craft allegiance over (but not replace) corporate allegiance, a commitment to and gain from the intrinsic motivation of a mission or task rather than to a company, define themselves by what they do, not for whom they do it.

### **Employability security**

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Those who elect to apply the principles of portfolio career self-management enhance their employability security by regularly evaluating and selecting a career action step option. They look less internally for a job vacancy but rather for work to be done where their preferred skills and desired new learning can be applied. Their next action is to prepare a proposal to those in the company who can approve and facilitate the transition to it.

Freeing yourself from an unhealthy and outdated dependence on your employer for your satisfiers and feeling, thinking, and acting as a portfolio careerist increases your employability value to your employer and in turn your options. There's no such thing as a career path any more - it's crazy paving and you lay it yourself

### **Portfolio skills**

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The portfolio careerist needs to acquire and apply skills of self-marketing; detective and networking skills to identify job role or new work assignment opportunities; interpersonal skills at conflict resolution so that relationships with fellow work colleagues or clients are not disruptive; self-discipline to review worklife objectives and their integration with lifestyle needs at least twice each year.

Portfolio careerism is not new. It was how people earned a living prior to the Industrial Revolution of the early 19th century.

Today we have more choice than a decade ago "Yesterday's history, Tomorrow's a mystery, Today is a gift. That's why we call it the PRESENT! The requirement is to educate ourselves in how to use this for our benefit and the people for whom we care and are affected by our level of worklife contentment. At the same time we need to preserve respect for employers who provide us with their changing portfolio of opportunities to earn income.