

How To Develop a Balanced Career Plan

“My Career is my Lifetime Journey through the world of work – sometimes its for love, sometimes for money, and sometimes its just work I have to do”

The problem with career plans is that they often encourage us to focus on the one paid job we have now. Life just isn't like that. Pretty much all the time we are doing work that is not connected to our current paid job. This could be work related to home, family, voluntary activities, leisure or even external net working or personal development activities that are not funded by our employers.

It is of course important to have a career development plan that you can discuss with managers, mentors or other people who support your development in work. It is however much smarter to have two versions, one that is a broader document that

covers your full career journey through life, and a subset you can share with your manager at work. The latter is much more a marketing tool, and a way of enabling you to move forwards in the right direction. The former is your honest personal journey and goals, which you may choose not to share with everyone.

Writing your Career Plan:

This template is designed to help you filter out what is important to you, and give you some ideas on how you might write your career plan, thus helping you write your next career development plan at work.

My Career Development Plan



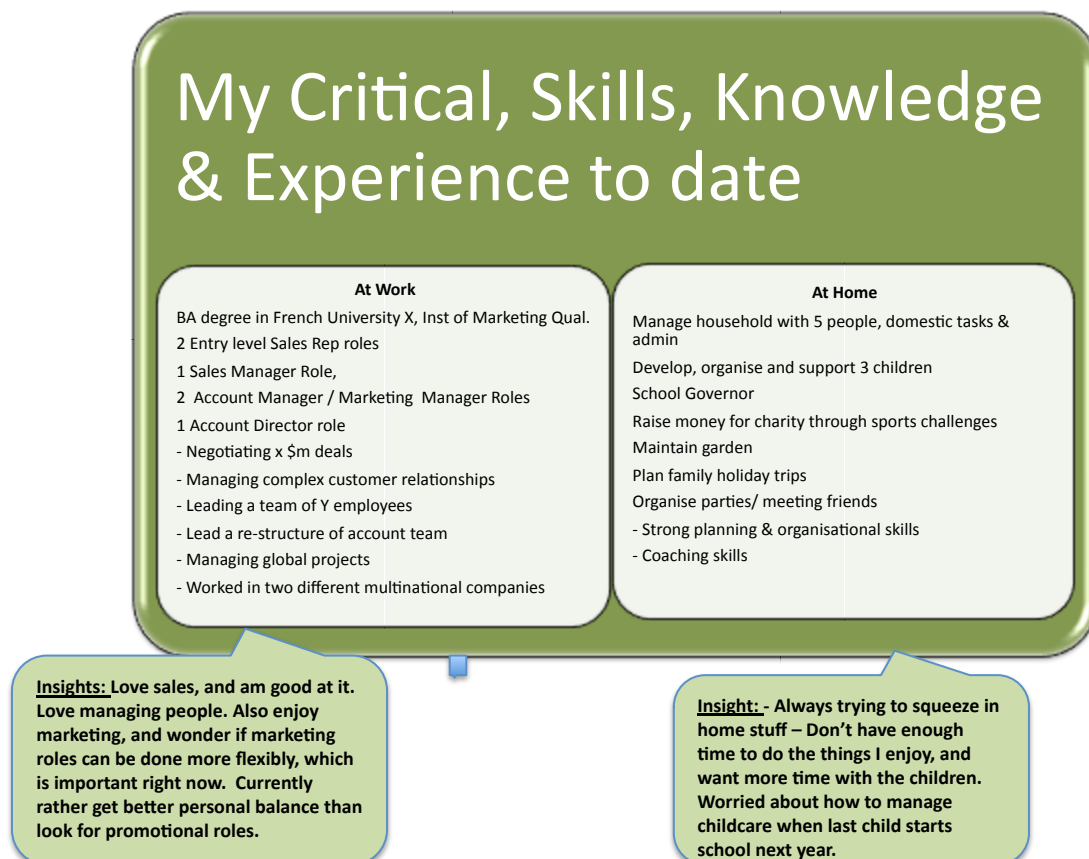
The First Step:

Summarising what you have done to date is a good starting point. Listing the key roles/ companies you have worked for, and the critical skills knowledge and experience you developed in them gives a great base for understanding where you could go next.

You don't need masses of detail, think of the elevator pitch – if you were going up in a lift with someone who had the power to give you exactly what you wanted in your next career step, what are the two or three most important things about your skills knowledge and experience they would have to know?

Talking this through with a friend or mentor could help clarify the key points.

My Critical Skills, Knowledge & Experience



The Second Step:

Having got clear on where you are now, the next step is to set some goals for the future. For some people this will be relatively straightforward as they may be clear on what they are looking for. If you are unclear, or want to make some big changes to your career, you might want to have a look at “My Life Balance Review” on the MLB site, which uses various tools and exercises to help you get a more in-depth

view on your life, loves, strengths and priorities, which can in turn help you get clearer about alternative career options.

Think about what you would like to achieve personally and financially from work and home activities. Brainstorm some goals, and then spend some time doing a reality check. If there were three things you could achieve in the next 18 months, what would they be?

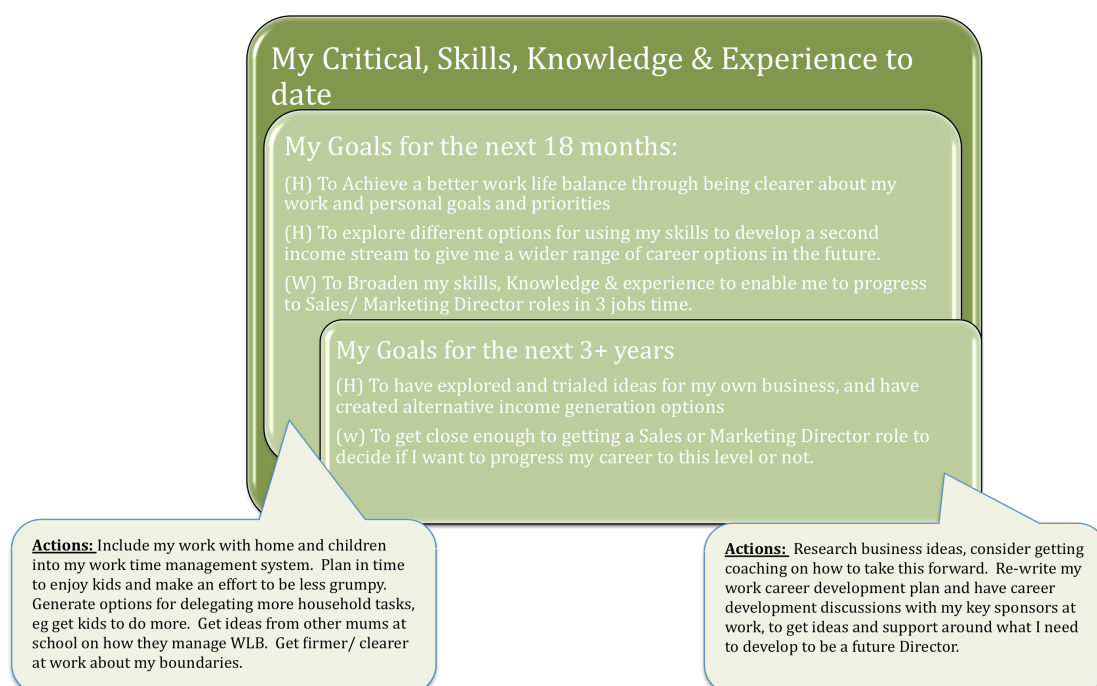
Some people find it easier to do goal setting on a longer timeframe, and then work back. For example, you could do some visioning of what ideally your life would be like when you retire, and when that would be. You could then track back how many years you need to work, and how much realistically you would like to earn and save to meet your retirement goal.

You could look at key milestones in your family life, for example when your children move to different schools/ colleges, and think about how your role in relation to them might change.

Thinking over a larger timeline can help people make short term decisions around for example whether to go for a big job now, and bank the cash, or whether it could be time to take the foot of the gas, and spend some more time at home for a few years.

This might take some time, and some help from friends/ family / mentors etc, but once you have got some goals in mind, put them on your career plan to see how they look.

My Goals




The Final Step:

After you have done your plan, you need to write yourself some SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timebound) objectives to help you achieve your goals. From these you need to add the actions to your to do list, and book some dates in the diary when you are going to review!

Your final PERSONAL plan might look something like this:

My Career Plan



My Skills, Knowledge & Experience At Work

- BA degree in French University X, Inst of Marketing Qual.
- 2 Entry level Sales Rep roles
- 1 Sales Manager Role,
- 2 Account Manager / Marketing Manager Roles
- 1 Account Director role
- Negotiating x \$m deals
- Managing complex customer relationships
- Leading a team of Y employees
- Lead a re-structure of account team
- Managing global projects
- Worked in two different multinational companies

My Skills, Knowledge & Experience At Home

- Manage household with 5 people, domestic tasks & admin
- Develop, organise and support 3 children
- School Governor
- Raise money for charity through sports challenges
- Maintain garden
- Plan family holiday trips
- Organise parties/ meeting friends
- Strong planning & organisational skills
- Coaching skills

My Goals for the next 18 months:

(H) To Achieve a better work life balance through being clearer about my work and personal goals and priorities

(H) To explore different options for using my skills to develop a second income stream to give me a wider range of career options in the future.

(W) To Broaden my skills, Knowledge & experience to enable me to progress to Sales/ Marketing Director roles in 3 jobs time.

My Goals for the next 3+ years

(H) To have explored and trialed ideas for my own business, and have created alternative income generation options

(w) To get close enough to getting a Sales or Marketing Director role to decide if I want to progress my career to this level

Future Goals:

I would like to retire at c x years old, having balanced finance with time with family. I would therefore like to plan a sabbatical break by Y to spend time with my kids, and develop ideas for my own business.

Of course, the final plan that you use in work may be very different, as you will need to think about how you position your aspirations carefully. You will need to think carefully about the impression you want to leave. In this example pushing to hard on the career, might end up in her being offered a big job earlier than she wanted it. Not pushing at all might leave management complacent about her development needs and aspirations, so balance is key. Discussing how to position your development plan with others is always a good idea to help you clarify what messages you want to give out.