HR tips

raditionally, promotion and career structures within the law were very rigid, often with promotion based on years in a firm rather than abilities and quality of work. In recent years there has been a shift towards people advancing on their own merit and this has led to much higher levels of turnover and a reduction in tenure within positions and companies. These trends present an opportunity for people to manage their own career and make their own choices, rather than having someone else do it for them.

Because of this change in dynamics, career success is more about being proactive, careful planning and management. You can think of your career as a commodity that you are marketing to others. If you were selling a product or service you would plan and review how to market your product, seek out new markets and continually review how to make the product meet the changing market needs. Your career is no different.

Think of your career as a commodity that you are marketing to others.

Managing your own career is not necessarily about changing jobs, firms or companies, it is about planning and getting what you want out of your career. It is considering what motivates you, what you are good at and what type of environment enables you to excel and derive personal satisfaction. Think laterally about opportunities. Career advancement is not just about more pay and a promotion. What is often perceived as a sideways move may yield very positive experiences and build on a skill that you may not have.

How can you maximise and take advantage of opportunities?

Plan

What are your career goals for the short, medium or long term? It is also important to think about your personal goals over these time periods and how they fit with your career goals. A test of your planning is to think about what your CV will look like in the future and imagine what sort of questions you will be asked by prospective employers.



Identify strengths and weaknesses

Be honest with yourself about what you are good at and what you are not as good at. You need to critically assess if the areas you are not as good at are important to your future job opportunities.

Likes and dislikes

Just because you are naturally good at something does not mean that you necessarily enjoy it. Be honest with yourself about what you enjoy doing. If you are in a job you can do very well but don't enjoy you will find yourself low on motivation and personal satisfaction. We all spend too much of our life at work to not enjoy it.

Seek feedback from others

Talk to others about work. Find out how others have managed and achieved their career goals.

Go to a professional career management consultant

Career management consultants can be useful to provide a non-partial discussion about your career and give advice. Usually you will have to pay for this service; however think of this as an investment in your future career.

Continual education

Your initial degree provides you with a foundation to start your career. To keep pace with changes in the law and industry in general you need to continually update your knowledge so that it remains current. Ideas for this are short development courses or further study. Remember that you need to balance your professional development with updates about the law and other skills, for example management, marketing, human resources etc.

Take control

It is your career and you need to manage it. Don't expect your manager or company to plan your career. If you are unhappy in a job analyse why and do something about it. Think about whether it is the firm or company, or the actual work itself.

Career planning is not something that we need to do once at the beginning of our career, it is a lifelong process. Career planning not only involves what job you are in, it also takes into account other factors in your life such as family, work/life balance etc.

For more details email LIV HR member information, awood@liv.asn.au. •

LIV HR DEPARTMENT

18 YOUNG LAWYERS JOURNAL