My Brilliant Career
How do successful people actually drive their careers?

Sarah Setterfield

5th December 2013
Generic advice – but is it true?

• “You have to have a 5-year career plan”

• “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”

• “3 out of every 5 jobs are never advertised”

• “It’s all about networking”

• “Always keep your CV up to date”

• “I was just lucky – I was in the right place at the right time”

• “I need to change organisations every 2 -3 years”
The research

- Exploratory interviews with ‘high fliers’
- CEO and Director views on how they spot potential
- Structured interviews of over 1600 successful people, covering:
  - How they found key jobs
  - How long they stayed with organisations
  - Their career tactics
  - How did they plan?
Session Overview

• 1. Facts from the research

• 2. How do I stand out from the crowd?
  Tips and observations from successful people

• 3. Practical exercises
  Experiments

• 4. Creative Career Strategies & Career Questions
Experiment

- We’ll spend a minute getting to know who is here
- **Find someone new or you don’t know very well and ask them what they do**
How many people were sitting next to someone they already knew well?

Career tip – make opportunities to get to know people
Standing out from the crowd

Daily opportunities
• One simple career habit is to sit next to people you don’t know.
• “I am the [Job Title] for [Area] – doesn’t make you stand out.

Tip – answering “What do you do?”
• Start with “I am responsible for…”
• Show that you think about the value you add to the business - this makes you stand out as strategic.

Now ask again what they do and try out your new answer
How successful people first heard about jobs (3639 jobs)

5% Asked about jobs in other areas
7% Created or negotiated
10% Alerted by their network
11% Previous relationship with manager
35% Invited to apply based on reputation
9% Internal ads
23% external ads (especially first jobs)

68% Informal methods
32% Formal methods
Question

- Have you got a 5 year plan? (planning 2 career moves ahead)
Do successful people have 5 year career plans?

5 year career plan
  – at least 2 moves ahead

Targeted opportunism
  – next job focus

Opportunistic
  – daily habits create career opportunities
How long do successful people stay?

369 people with successful careers
Average time in longest organisation = 10.6 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Longest organisation</th>
<th>2nd longest organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>12.4 years</td>
<td>4.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>11.4 years</td>
<td>5.1 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>8.2 years</td>
<td>3.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>9.5 years</td>
<td>4.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering/Services</td>
<td>15.6 years</td>
<td>10.2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Invisible career assets you build
…and what you lose when you leave

Your network, sponsors and allies

You’ve ‘earned the right’

Your track record
Are you capitalising on your current career assets?
Standing out from the crowd
The 3 keys to career success from our research

1. Successful careers are based on leveraging **strengths**

2. Reducing **risk**

3. It’s all about **daily actions**, not formal selection
1. Based on Strengths

- Successful people **use their strengths**

- They **educate others** to understand their strengths – and this results in more of the right opportunities

- They **negotiate** to showcase their strengths

How clearly do you put across your strengths?
Experiment – Your Strengths

• Pair up and decide on Person A and Person B
• Talk for 60 seconds on this topic:
• “What I am good at, that I bring to a job or team”
Questions

• When put on the spot, how well did you convey your key strengths?
• Was it comfortable?
Convey your strengths clearly

• “I rambled”
  No more than 3 points
  Get clear on your message!

• “I felt I was bragging”
  Leads to qualifiers, talking about weaknesses, always saying ‘we’ not ‘I’

• Experiment:
  Instead of saying “I am excellent at”, say “What I really love doing is…”
Why does it matter?
Is your brand visible?
Your career brand

1. What are your best strengths and contribution?
2. What kind of work energises you – what do you love to do?
3. Which piece of work is a good example of that?

3 things you want your CEO to know about YOU
Tell a good story

- Your strengths

- Achievement story – paints a memorable picture

- Hard results

- Use opportunities in the workplace
  “How’s it going?”
  “Fine, we’re really busy...”
2. Reducing risk

• Appointing an unknown person to the team is a high risk decision

• Many managers try to reduce the risk:
  • “Who do I know who would do a good job?”
  • “Who comes recommended by someone whose judgement I trust?”

• How can you reduce the risk?
3. It’s about daily actions

- Most career advice centres on application & interview

- Our research suggests that it is small daily actions that accelerate careers and help to get the next job
  - Action to increase visibility
  - Action to establish reputation
  - Action to decrease risk
  - Action to build strategic alliances

- Drip-feeding & lobster-potting
Drip-feeding & lobster-potting

Formal

Reactive - Short conversations (1-minute)

Proactive - Longer (15 minutes)

Build your reputation in Informal & Exploratory situations!
Questions?
Weekly Career Tips

• Sign up at www.talentandpotential.com