



Managing your Career

Phase 1: Focus on career goals



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PHASE ONE: FOCUS ON CAREER GOALS

Overview

Define where within the corporation you would like to engage your energy, projected forward three to five years. Consider where you can deliver the most value to the success of the company while utilizing your greatest strengths. Determine where there is synergy between your personal professional mission and the direction/requirements of the company. Which role would allow you to tap into your natural energy, and leverage your new learning to contribute to mutual success? Think in terms of an *Incremental* next step (logical progression, 10-20% salary increase) and/or a *Quantum* next step (stretch move, 100% salary increase, 2 rungs up). Consider that you may plan for an *Incremental* shift in the short term to enable a *Quantum* shift ultimately. On the other hand, you may choose to focus on an *Incremental* move as the right next step for you. Still another possibility is that you direct toward a full *Quantum* leap, sooner rather than later. Whatever course you map out will be informed by a solid understanding of your own strengths within the context of your company's requirements.

Step One: Consider Your Talent Engagement Levels

As you consider your next step within your current company, first determine to what extent your interests/strengths/skills are presently engaged. In order for an organization to thrive, it requires the enthusiastic commitment of its leaders to employ their full potential in solving problems and creating new visions. What portion (%) of your total potential for productivity are you contributing in the workplace in your current role? We will call this your Talent Engagement level (TE). Determine your TE level in the following categories:

- **Professional Mission**
Capturing your unique vision of how you can best contribute your talents, interests, skills in the professional world that brings you a sense of meaning and accomplishment
- **Technical Expertise**
Acquiring and maintaining in-depth knowledge in your functional area of specialty, drawing upon that knowledge to solve problems and draw conclusions
- **Financial Acumen**
Accessing your facility with the financial side of business, (reading balance sheet, understanding ROI, correctly interpreting the implications of financial data)
- **Leadership Capability**
Utilizing your ability to manage/supervise/coach teams and individuals toward success; creating shared vision (strategizing), developing buy-in from team (managing people, utilizing social/emotional intelligence); achieving results
- **Communications Skills**
Engaging your ability to influence others through writing, speaking, presenting toward shared goals; telling others what they need to know, articulating expectations, expressing views and ideas
- **Business Resume**
Maximizing the experience you bring to the table (past roles, relationships, depth of experience, accomplishments)

Step Two: Discuss Your Present Talent Engagement

Example:

Manager, Electrical Engineer seeking upward growth

Professional Mission:

I really enjoy developing and leading technical teams that get the job done. My professional mission has consistently involved bringing others along while engaging in work that utilizes my technical talent. I want to have fun along the way, while contributing to the success of the company by designing products that become winners in the marketplace. I am about creating environments in which technical people can work to their capacity. My job is to create that environment, know my team members well enough to give them what they need, get out of their way serving primarily as a resource and allowing the birth of creative result.

Percentage TE: 30%

While I have been able to practice my mission in other roles with other companies, the change in management has caused us to be in holding pattern and cannot get the autonomy to pass along to the team; direction keeps changing.

Technical Skills:

My base education is electrical engineering. Most of my career has been in the transfer of data through systems and the storage of data for super quick retrieval. I have added a Masters in Telecommunications with current work in the wireless sector. I have authored more than 12 scientific articles on “Analytics of Data Transfer Systems” and have contributed to 3 Engineering Textbooks. I usually give a presentation on some aspect of our unclassified work at the IEEE conference. I stay knowledgeable in this technical field by reading the top three Journals, subscribe to 2 newsletters on Data Transfer, am a member of the IEEE subcommittee on Transfer Standards and attend local IEEE meetings.

Percentage TE: 85%

I am using much of my technical knowledge with my current company. I am a major source of technical solutions and am considered a Technical Expert. The company does pay to help keep me at a high state of technical ability.

Financial Skills:

I understand what it takes to develop products that have market value that can be produced within budget and marketed for substantial profits I can give company financial results for last 5 years and the contribution made by our products; can link the financial flow of our capital cost over the next 5 years as the expected ROI for our projects. I can provide analysis of major cost factors for projects in both financial and human management terms; can identify top 5 metrics we monitor for each major cost factor. I can identify assumptions for metrics and the range of their validity. I can recommend improvement opportunities that could generate at least 25% savings in our project management cost.

Percentage TE: 35%

Our leadership team manages mostly by exception to budget and seldom will take on improvements for the sake of excellence. Our financial management practices are very administrative and not seeking innovation.

Leadership Skills:

I have functioned successfully a team lead for last 5 years meeting expected business requirements. Known for delivering solid results. Strong relationships with direct reports. 360s show that I am well liked and respected by my direct reports and managers. But feel stymied by changes in management that give me less autonomy in leadership and give my teams less leeway in developing innovative products....

Percentage TE: 50%

Communications Skills:

Have developed my communications skills over the course of my career significantly. Right now I develop ongoing management reports, deliver presentations to upper management once per quarter and accept opportunities to discuss our projects whenever possible. Would like to spend more time proposing projects to management but find that the landscape and priorities keep changing. Direction that company wants to take, strategically, is in flux.

Percentage TE: 50%

Business Resume:

Working for the CIA right out of college has proven to be a fortunate technical opportunity. Hands on problem solving to debug state of the art digital hardware and software set a technical pace I still keep today. My experience with Big Five Consulting then developed my “Process Knowledge” to complement my technical skills. In addition, the development of my communications and relationship skills as a new client manager, enable a confidence to seek out critical relationships. My wireless experience continued on the leading edge in terms of technical and relationship networks. My selection to IEEE and the resulting technical interfaces continues today. Working for the past four years in leadership positions with Mobile Wireless has developed my executive skill base and stretched my financial understanding of business management. Recent assignments have given me responsibility for integrating technical capacity of newly acquired business units into total system operations. This represents a challenge for a staff matrixes team with executives from different cultures and values.

Percentage TE: 45%

I know I could either lead a division or major projects.

Step Three: Project Your Capacity for Growth with Addition of Advanced Business Degree

Where, in each of these six categories does your B-School degree add value? To what extent does your capacity increase with the degree, causing your Talent Engagement to decline accordingly? Review the former categories taking your B-School learning/value into account and re-calibrate the percentages accordingly.

Action: Chart Your Talent Engagement Levels

Complete the “Talent Engagement Chart” in preparation for discussions with your Coach. Consider where you are functioning presently, where you will function with the addition of your B-Degree, and then ask yourself, ideally, what percentages of engagement would you choose in your next step? In which of these categories would you like to contribute more fully? By approximately what percentages?

**Example
Talent Engagement Chart (%)**

	Current TE %	w/B-Degree %	Desired %
Mission	30	30	50
Technical	85	85	65
Financial	35	25	65
Leadership	50	40	75
Communication	50	40	80
Business Resume	45	35	75

Example Conclusions:

Current Job

Great from a technical and leadership standpoint. Lacks satisfying engagement in all other factors. Not demonstrating my ability to influence the success of teams and in turn contribute to the bottom line.

With MBA

New knowledge and skills acquired with MBA have driven me more toward the role of a strategic executive, highly technically based. Can lead with my knowledge/experience in both technical and process skills. Miss building new relationships and analyzing financial metrics for everyday operations and long term ROI.

Desired Next Step:

Engage my mission more fully by growing my involvement with the financial aspects of my work, more fully utilizing my leadership and communications strengths to add value. Would like to engage my ability to influence company direction.

Step Four: Define Your Optimum Career Goal

As you assess your level of performance in your current position in relationship to your overall capability, ask yourself what more complete engagement of your talents would look like. Toward what areas of growth do you want to focus your energy? If you were to create a new vision, a new reality for yourself professionally within your company, what would you create?

Consider to what extent your contributions are aligned to the critical requirements for the mission of the company. Adjust personal goals to align with those of the Executive Team.

- What would realizing your professional mission look like in a next step?
- What role inside your company would allow you to engage your energy, passion, imagination more fully? What work would engage you completely while contributing significantly to furthering the company's objectives? (You may refer to assessments in making these considerations.)
- Who within your company (or outside, for that matter) is doing the job you imagine would give you the biggest 'Wow factor'? Who is doing the job you know you could do if you were playing at the top of your game? How would you describe his/her role? Is that role transferable to your organization?
- In which of the categories do you have the most underutilized potential? What would your job look like if you were able to maximize that category alone? How would you "position" this new role to upper management as a win for them?
- Which issues/problems/trends inside your company do you want to impact? From what position are you best able to utilize your full capacity to address them? How might you sell this idea?
- Would moving into the role you conceive require an *Incremental* next step or a *Quantum* leap to give you the professional satisfaction you seek?
- How much energy will it take to accomplish an *Incremental* move versus a *Quantum* move? Which feels right? Now? Three-five years from now?

Action: Review Your Resume of Accomplishments

Construct at least 10 Accomplishment Statements with results attached, that represent some of your major contributions to the company, focusing on demonstrating competency in areas you want to emphasize moving forward.

Examples:

- Built Reston implementation team from the ground up; consistently exceeded objectives.
- Led cross-organizational team to create enhanced customer-support process adapted company-wide.
- Reduced customer support expense by lowering customer-per-server rate by 42% in three months.

Action: Write Your Unique Value Statement

Determine Your Unique Value to your Company. As you look toward moving your career to the next level, your unshakeable conviction that you offer something unique and valuable to the company is essential. In a few sentences, write down for yourself and your Coach just what that value is.

Action: Create Working Positioning Script(s) for Incremental and/or Quantum Next Steps

Develop a working “Positioning Script(s)” that reflects the parameters of your desired next step. Consider both an *Incremental* move and/or a *Quantum* move. Incorporate the value you bring to this next role so as to create a compelling marketing statement.

These are evolving positioning scripts that you will adjust as you gather more information, test market them with various audiences, and work closely with your Coach. The idea is to state clearly what next step you are positioning for, what you offer that qualifies you for the leap and then invite your listener’s input. This is a living, ever-morphing statement that represents the heart of what you want to accomplish. It is a declaration of your intent AND an invitation for feedback.

For more discussion about writing positioning scripts please refer to Launch Module 2, Position Your Sights.

Examples, Working Positioning Scripts

Incremental Career Move Positioning Script Sample

I am seeking to leverage my success in the wireless industry to take on a division level leadership assignment in the global market with the opportunity to operate a business unit. This experience would complete a leadership requirement for me to feel ready for a Quantum career step of operating a major business unit in a developing market country.

Accomplishments to support your case: My success in leading entrepreneurial teams to accomplish business objectives has been recognized throughout our division, particularly as it has impacted migrating to next-generation technology. I have demonstrated my ability to lead international teams in my most recent cross-cultural assignment accomplishing prototype trials across the globe.

Question that gives listener an entrée: What do you see as the most critical challenge we face in bringing our new technology to the global marketplace?

Quantum Career Move Positioning Script Sample

I am seeking to leverage my influence and technical networks in my current enterprise toward the SVP level assignment of the technical group to drive our firm more aggressively as the world's best-in-class technical innovator of wireless services.

Accomplishments to support your case: I recently received the Global Circle award as top performer due to my innovations in bringing our latest technology to market, ahead of the competition. As you know, this contributed significantly to our jump in value as a corporation this year. I have already made significant headway in bringing the next generation model to market this fall. Under my leadership I know our technical group can exceed our objectives going forward.

Question that gives listener an entrée: What's your impression about our position in the marketplace against Firebrand?