



**Thinking of changing job? Set your next Career Goal**

*'The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching **your goal**. The tragedy lies in having **no goal** to reach'. - Benjamin Mays*

Just back from holiday and thinking about a new career challenge? If it's time to find that perfect new job, you not only need to brush up your CV, but also give some thought to your next Career Goal. What does your ideal job look like? Is it realistic and achievable?

Formulating a clear Career Goal is essential to a successful job search. It defines what you're looking for and helps you to target your search effectively. It also gives you focus and purpose when writing your CV.

So how to get started?

1. **Scope out what's really important to you in terms of job content:** sit back and think about which elements of your job you really enjoy? What do you like to have responsibility for? What would you like to do more of? You don't have to think in terms of job titles here - in fact, it's much better to keep an open mind and really look at what a job really entails - don't be fooled by the packaging!

2. **Identify your strengths.** Your greatest strengths are an ability motivated by an interest. Playing to your strengths are the best way to achieve job satisfaction - and great performance reviews! Identify your 3 top strengths and make sure they are reflected in your Career Goal.
  
3. Make sure your basic requirements are met. **We all have some key comfort factors we need to address**; how much do you need to earn to pay the mortgage? Do you want to work full or part-time? Will you relocate? How far are you prepared to commute? A 2 hour journey round the M25 might be ok in the long daylight hours of summer, but much less appealing in the dark mornings and cold evenings of winter.
  
4. The job itself is important, but so too is the company. List **what's important to you in terms of industry sector, company culture, working environment**. Do you prefer a corporate environment or SME? A business with history and heritage, or a start-up? Do your ethics dictate the kind of businesses you'd want to work in? Once you've decided on what's important to you, these are things you can and should check out as part of your research into potential employers.
  
5. **Focus on what you do want, not what you don't want**. If you're frustrated or unhappy in your current job it's all too easy to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. What makes you decide to move on from your current job are the 'push' factors - attracting you to a new career opportunity should be some tangible and tested 'pull' factors.

6. **Is your goal realistic in the short-term or one for the longer-term?** Your next career goal is likely to be something you can realistically achieve in the next 3-6 months. That said, don't be afraid of setting longer terms career goals - qualifying as an Accountant for example - to aim for. If your career goal seems a long way off, break it down into realistic and achievable steps to keep your motivation strong and your progress on track.
  
7. **Share your career goal with those who know you best;** friends, family, trusted work colleagues and mentors. They'll be great sounding boards and will be able to offer insight into your strengths, as well as encouraging you in the achievement of your goal.
  
8. **Regularly review your goal** and, if necessary, be flexible. Sometimes we encounter unexpected barriers - or our circumstances and interests change. A career goal is always a work in progress until such time as it's achieved - so review it from time to time as you discover more about yourself, your strengths, and your requirements.

A clear career goal will help you to make an informed and successful decision on your next role. Going through the above check-list should help you to pick the right job for you and not be distracted by a flattering offer. Although the grass may sometimes seem greener, making a career move without thorough due diligence and thinking about how it matches your career goal could see you back on the job market again very soon - and employers are always wary of 'job hoppers.'

So:

- Define your Career Goal
- Use it as your barometer for all job opportunities
- **GOOD LUCK!**

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