

52

WAYS

TO STEER
YOUR

CAREER

Glenda May

Disclaimer:

All information, techniques, skills and concepts contained within this publication are of the nature of general comment only and are not in any way recommended as individual advice. The intent is to offer a variety of information to provide a wider range of choices now and in the future.

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Glenda May Consulting Pty Ltd
Albert Park, Victoria, Australia
www.glendamay.com.au
Ph: 0418 580 457

Edited by Rebecca May
becmayyogi@gmail.com

Designed by John Cirak - Spike Marketing
0410 568 133



52 WAYS TO STEER YOUR CAREER

Here is a simple three step career plan:

1. Find your passion.
2. Get really good at it, the best you can possibly be.
3. Get known for it. Ensure as many people as possible know about you and what you can do for them.

Now, let's unbundle this as an action plan of 52 tips.

Get in the driver's seat

**It's your career,
steer it!**

1.

**Be brave about your career
- look into the future and plan!**

Don't waste time waiting for someone else to look after your career and let others make decisions about your life.

Too many of us are waiting for our employers to make the first move.

You are responsible for your career.

Choose what you want to drive.
Get out of the passenger seat and into the driver's seat.



**Visualise
Your Dream
Job**



You cannot expect to land your dream job if you don't know what it is.

Your goal is to get clear about the job that you actually care about with a company that you are proud to be a part of.

Identify which of these you prefer:

- a large or small organisation
- interacting with others - virtually or personally
- having responsibility for other employees
- working with technology or with people
- running your own business
- working alone or in a group
- competitive, and fast-paced days
- work involving travel
- working from home

Imagine that you landed the dream job encompassing all your preferences. Now, picture yourself in this role, interacting with your co-workers.



**Plan
your
escape** 3.

The career you chose when you were 18 or 30 may no longer fulfil your potential. The average person will change their field of employment – not just their job – over six times in their lifetime.

Don't worry if your job history looks a little untidy – be prepared to assertively explain why you made each move.

You will be somewhere in a year's time; why not spend some time reflecting on where you'd like that to be.

**Stop
living on
“Someday
I’ll...”**

4.

Get rid of the mindset that begins with...

I'll wait till the right job appears

I'll finish my degree first

I'll wait till the kids start school

My boss will offer me a better job soon

I'll stay until this project finishes

Put your dreams into action... **NOW**

**Be true to
yourself 5.**

Research shows that when people leave their job voluntarily, it's mostly because of a conflict of values.

What do you want from your work or career besides money?

- Satisfaction of doing a job well
- Achievement
- Exciting work and challenge
- Meaningful work, making a difference
- Relationships and working with great people
- Being recognised, valued and respected
- Responsibility
- Autonomy, doing your own thing
- Great work environment and culture
- Fame and prestige

What are the 'non-negotiables' that you wouldn't want to give up?



6 SWOT up

Conduct a personal **SWOT** analysis
(**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses,
Opportunities and **T**hreats)

Strengths

- What do you do well?
- What is your greatest asset?

Weaknesses

- What could be improved?
- What should you avoid?
- What skill would be most useful to develop so you can transition into your ideal career?

Career Opportunities

- Where are the promising prospects?
- What is 'cutting edge' in your particular area of expertise?

Career Threats

- What obstacles do you face?
- Could your industry be fading in comparison with more emergent fields?



**Identify your
transferable
skills**



Transferable skills are those you've gathered through various jobs, volunteer work, hobbies, sports, or other life experiences.

Identify any experience you have under your belt.

Don't get constrained by the job titles you've held when searching for a new job. Formal job descriptions are often very different from reality. You need to dissect your past jobs to uncover the skills you actually used.

Pinpoint your top 8 skills that you really enjoy using and would like to take with you into a future career.

Play to your strengths.

8 • A perfect match

The successful candidate is the one who is the best match for the position.

A best match comes down to three factors:

CAN you do the job?

Do you have the knowledge, the skills, the qualifications, the ability, the experience?

Do you have the WILL you do the job? (your motivators)

What drives you to get out of bed in the morning?
What makes you tick, what makes you sick?

Do you FIT in the workplace?

Are you a match with the organisation, the team, the culture, the values?

9.

**Ask for
Feedback**

We all need to know how we are doing, but some people can feel awkward giving feedback.

Use these questions to encourage feedback in a non-threatening atmosphere.

What am I doing well?

How could I do even better?

What could I do more of, less of, keep doing?

Ask your manager, your colleagues, your team members, your clients.

You may not agree with everything, but look for the nuggets of truth.

**Surround
yourself with
inspirational
people**

**“You are the average of the five people
you spend the most time with.”**

Jim Rohn

10.

Surround yourself with successful people who can have a positive influence on your life and career.

Emulate the people you admire.

Find a role model in your field and read up on how s/he achieved success.

Limit your time with negative people who can diminish your dreams.


Positive attracts positive.

“Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher.”

Oprah Winfrey

11.

**Invest in
you**




Commit to life-long learning. Create a 'learning path' for yourself, even if no one in the company has created it for you.

Decide what courses, workshops, and conferences are important for your professional growth.

Ideally your company will pay for your training but if not, do it anyway. Invest in yourself. You are worth it and no education is ever wasted.

Do not let your skills go stale. Ongoing training keeps you relevant, marketable, and invaluable to your employer.

“The day you stop learning, you start dying”
Albert Einstein



Identify your personality and what career best fits you.

A personality inventory can provide a great deal of insight into your preferred style of working.

There are various assessments to help with this including: 360 degree evaluations, Emotional Intelligence assessments (EQ), psychometric testing and personality inventory tools such as the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) or DiSC.

**You've got
personality**

12.

You work in a job for money, but you have a career because you enjoy it and you feel that what you do is worth-while.

Don't make career decisions based on just money or title, these won't get you very far if you are miserable eight hours a day.

Don't be surprised if a career that will bring you a higher income isn't one you find particularly satisfying.

For most people money isn't at the top of the list when it comes to job satisfaction.

Your feelings of achievement, autonomy and personal growth are of more lasting value.

Don't **13.**
show me
the money

Make a life, not just a living.

We spend at least 8 hours a day at work so we need to enjoy this time.

What parts of your life are you passionate about?
What excites, inspires you, what would you do even if you were not paid?

We are at our best when doing what we enjoy most.

- What do you love to do?
- What moves you to tears?
- What ignites your curiosity?
- What are the problems that intrigue you?
- Notice when you're 'in the zone'

“If you love what you do, you will never work another day in your life”

Confucius



14.

Passion -
it's not just
a fruit

**How green
is your grass?**

15.

You may think the grass is greener on the other side. But if you take the time to water your own grass it could be just as green.

A complete career change may not be necessary.

Always search within your workplace before making a hasty exit.

Sometimes enriching your current position can be the best way to rejuvenate your career.

16.

What fires
you up?

Getting ahead - promotion, advancement
up the ladder

Getting secure - job security, respect and
loyalty from your organisation

Getting high - excitement, challenge, and
cutting-edge opportunities

Getting free - control over your own work
work and life

Which is your current need? Ensure that
your job target will meet that need.



אין.

**Up is not
the only
way**

View your career as more of a 'climbing wall' than the stereotypical career ladder.

You may need to move sideways to advance.
Or even down the wall to make progress later.

Be open to try different paths, take advantage of opportunities that excite and challenge you, and never fear changing course if that's what your heart is telling you to do.

Be flexible -
GET A
GIG

18.



The 'jobs for life' model of the labour market is so last century!

While this safety net has been removed, it has opened us up to far more choice and freedom in how we work and live.

Organisations of the future will be hiring far more on a contract basis.

Thirty per cent of Australians are now undertaking some form of flexible freelance work.

Contracts of 6,12, 24 months could be the new permanent and may actually suit you.

**More 19.
strings to
your bow**



‘Slashie’ careers, also known as portfolio careers, are growing.

You can be

an actor / model/ singer

a graphic designer/ tennis coach

a project manager / musician

a teacher / blogger / fitness instructor

an IT consultant / waiter



It has become acceptable to say
“This is my skill set” as opposed to
“This is my job”.

Keep your mind open to these possibilities.

You can offer a cross-fertilisation of skills that will
make you a valuable resource.

And you don’t have to give up your day job to start
your portfolio career.

**Stop
sabotaging**

20.

yourself



Stop the negative, self-defeating talk in your head which undermines your confidence.

Remove the 'shoulds' and the 'musts' and replace the negative with positive thoughts.


Focus on the job-search activities you can control, such as interview preparation, a well-written resume, and professional clothing.

Don't stress about what is out of your control.

Stretch yourself

“Opportunities are rarely offered; they’re seized”
Sheryl Sandberg, COO Facebook.

21.



Be open-minded about taking risks and stepping beyond your comfort zone.

Don't wait to be asked before speaking up. Volunteer for extra assignments and projects that will stretch you and increase your visibility.

Senior management will recognise you are in tune with the goals, objectives and mission of the organisation.

Unless your bosses know that you want more, they may keep you in the same position, assuming you are content.



Less is More
– Be Strategic

Don't send your resumes to all and sundry in a haphazard way.

Target your ideal employers by using their social channels to get to know them. Follow them online and connect with professionals who work for your target companies.

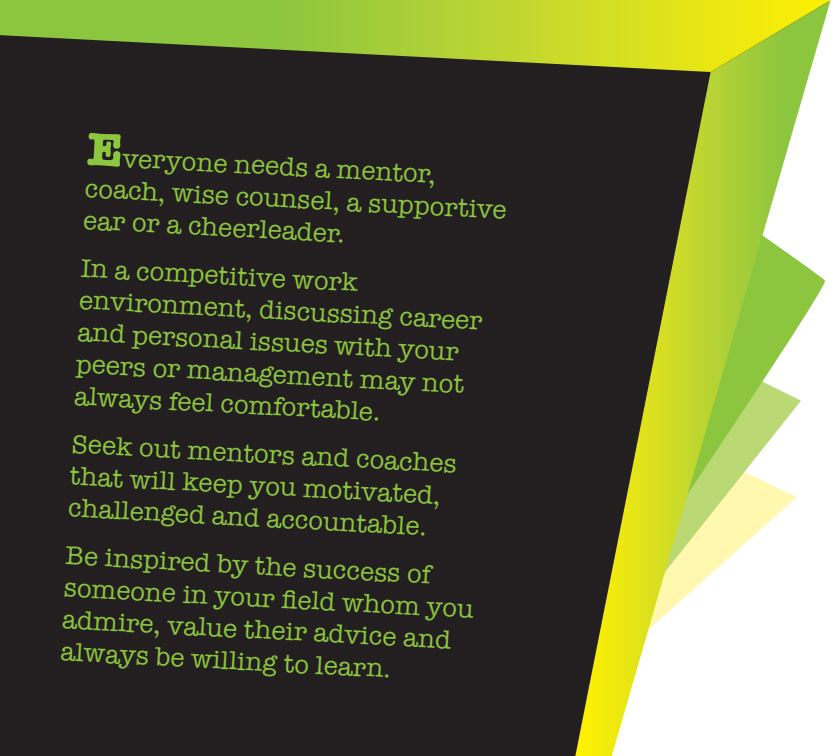
Focus on the jobs that you actually want, then tailor your application to each specific job.





23.

**Find a
Mentor**
...Don't go
it alone



Everyone needs a mentor, coach, wise counsel, a supportive ear or a cheerleader.

In a competitive work environment, discussing career and personal issues with your peers or management may not always feel comfortable.

Seek out mentors and coaches that will keep you motivated, challenged and accountable.

Be inspired by the success of someone in your field whom you admire, value their advice and always be willing to learn.

24.

**Brand
Yourself**

What makes you special and unique?

Who is the authentic you?

Your personal brand is how people see you – the impression that comes to mind when others hear your name. Be clear as to how you add value, the distinctive contribution that differentiates you from others.

What are you proud of?

Where do you excel?

When do you get the best feedback?

What might your customers say about you?

What would you like to be remembered for?

Ensure your brand is consistent on your resume, digital profiles and in person.

“Be yourself. Everyone else
is already taken”

Oscar Wilde



25.

Be

searchable

Detail your skills and experience on social media sites to attract search engines, paying special attention to LinkedIn.

YouTube can enhance your searchability. It's great if an employer comes across a clip of you giving a speech or a training presentation!

On Facebook, "liking" a company can mean receiving early notice of job openings and other news.

Post work samples online in order to be found and recognised. If you are a 'creative' such as a web designer, graphic artist, architect, photographer or performer, it pays to have your own website and use it to show portfolios of your work.

**Appeal
to the
computer**

26.

Increasingly, the first eyes to see your application won't be human. Applicant tracking systems are used by many companies to screen and sort initial applications.

Make this process work in your favour by using keywords mentioned in the job posting, and present your application the same way they detail their requirements.

27.

**Trash your
digital dirt**

Although you might consider your party pictures are none of your future manager's concern, many employers now conduct web searches on potential employees and view their social media profiles to screen them for employment.

Search engines can easily report on your cultural fit and temperament for a job based on your posts and rants on social media.

Ensure that your social profiles promote a professional image and trash anything that could be perceived as negative.

Have a professional email address.

Your "cutiepie16" email, which you found cool when you were sixteen, will not enhance your professional image.

28.

**Write a
Knockout
LinkedIn
Profile**

If you are a professional in any industry, you can't afford to have a mediocre LinkedIn profile. Your clients and potential employers will all be scrutinising your profile, and you want to make a great impression.

Spend a few minutes on LinkedIn each day making new connections, and keeping your profile up to date.

When you reach out to connect to a new colleague on LinkedIn, write a brief paragraph about why you are wanting the connection and include an offer to help them.

By blogging, linking to articles and sharing your expertise, you can enhance your professional reputation.

**Make sure
your
elevator speech
is taking you
up not down**

29.

An elevator speech is a short introductory speech designed to be given in the time span of an elevator ride – approximately one minute.

Prepare a little script so that you can introduce yourself with confidence at business meetings, networking events, work functions and job interviews.

30.

**Ego is not a
dirty word!**

“I may not be perfect, but
parts of me are excellent”
Ashleigh Brilliant

Start a brag book: your personal success file to showcase your accomplishments:

- specific projects you worked on
- people you trained to be more effective
- ideas you have contributed to help the company
- emails from happy clients
- lists of projects brought in on time
- problems solved
- comments from colleagues and managers

Your brag book is a great resource for your next resume - and a boost to your self-esteem. You can use it in your performance appraisals to justify a promotion, to negotiate a salary increase or when applying for a new job.

Record your wins as they happen. Make it an ongoing living document and update it regularly when you achieve something you're proud of.

**Become
visible and
known by
name**

31.



You can't expect to get ahead if people don't notice you. Don't assume that decision-makers are aware of your accomplishments.

Increase your chances of being rewarded for your efforts by:

- Seeking face-to face time with senior managers
- Volunteering for high-profile projects and cross-unit opportunities
- Giving a presentation on your topic of expertise
- Joining your workplace gym
- Writing an article or story for publication
- Contributing at meetings
- After a conference, present a summary of the most relevant information and how you are going to apply it, email it to those with an interest.

**Know
Who's Who**

32.

It's not who you know, it's who knows you and what you can do.

65% of all new jobs are found through networking rather than recruiters.

Have a professional business card.


Make new contacts by attending industry functions, joining professional organisations relevant to your field.

At events, introduce yourself and strike up conversations with as many people as you can.

Foster relationships with existing contacts by periodically checking in: send a birthday email, forward a relevant article, meet for coffee, congratulate on a new position.

33.

**Be a
Mentor**



Generously extend yourself to others who would benefit from your skills.

Don't assume that others know your skills and talents. You need to tell them eg: "I'd like to help you on that project using my expertise in Excel"

Become known as someone who helps others and doors will open.

34.

**Stand out
with a
21st Century
Resume**

To stand out in a crowded job market, there's so much more you can do with your resume in the digital age.

Today's successful resumes are social and interactive and can be brought to life with hyperlinks, photos, video clips, slideshare PowerPoint presentations, infographics, or an online portfolio.

Use charts and images to highlight your career achievements.

A diagrammatic time-line can illustrate your career history.

Incorporating multimedia into your profile will showcase your skills in a more engaging manner that will entice an employer to click and see more.

35.

**Mind
the gap**

Don't let missing work history damage your resume and interview.

Showing the last ten years' experience on your resume is sufficient, but you should account for more recent gaps.

Don't try to conceal a gap. Instead, show how you used the time constructively: eg: voluntary work, researching something, family responsibilities, learning new skills or a language, training courses, or creating your own project.

**Pass the
screen
test**

36.



Generally recruiters spend thirty seconds screening each resume to decide whether to spend further time reading it in detail. Make sure yours passes the screen test and makes it into the 'read me again' pile.

Align 'who you are' with 'what they need'. Help the employer to see you fitting in.

Analyse the position description, research the company online, read the business press, and their adverts, talk to current and past employees, call the contact person.

Match up point-for-point your specific skills and experiences for each job requirement.

Identify :

What you accomplished in your past roles that directly relates to the job you are applying for ... and back up your story with evidence!



Do your
homework...
RESEARCH!

3?


Get to know the company
you're targeting inside out

Focus on:

- **Company website.** Learn about the company history, the mission, vision, values, products, key executives.
- **Google.** Know the competitors, position in the marketplace, newsworthy items.
- **Company social media.** Their reputation, target market, hiring practices.
- **Your network.** to gauge the real corporate culture.

38.

**Use the
STAR
technique
to shine**



At a behavioural interview you will be asked for specific examples of how your knowledge, skills and abilities match the competencies required in the job.

Use the STAR formula to prepare a structured response. This helps you accurately describe your experiences and highlight the results.

Situation – Detail the challenge or problem

Task – What needed to be done

Action – Specifically what you did

Result – Explain the outcome: impact, savings, benefits.

If you keep your brag book up to date, you'll be ready with specific situations to draw upon.

**PRACTISE,
PRACTISE,
PRACTISE!**

Prepare great answers to tough
interview questions.

39.

- Tell me about yourself.**
- What do you think is your greatest weakness?**
- What do you like least about your past job?**
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?**
- Tell me about a time you failed.**
- What attracted you to this position?**
- Why did you leave your last job?**
- Why should we employ you?**

Read the job description carefully to anticipate the questions and role-play your responses with someone.

Harness your
nervous
energy

40.

It's normal to be nervous at an interview. Remind yourself that this 'nervous energy' reflects your interest and enthusiasm.

Re-frame the interview as a 'business meeting', instead of an 'interrogation'.


Remember, they have asked to meet you. They have a vacant position and they want to know whether you are the best person to fill that role.

Your goal is to help them see that you are the best match for the job. After all, they have a problem... convince them that you are the best person to help solve that problem.

Visualise a relaxed, confident, successful interview. Try some relaxation techniques, deep breathing, rolling shoulders.

41.

**Ace the
Interview**



Make the first 2 minutes count.

Dress to look the part.

Walk in with a confident posture and when offering a handshake, look in their eyes and smile.

Close with “I really want to thank you for this opportunity. I am very enthusiastic about the prospect of... and I really look forward to hearing from you”

42.

**Boast
with
evidence**

Some people are uncomfortable boasting or even displaying successes.

It's OK to boast. Tracking your successes is not boasting.

Use your brag book evidence to 'blow your own trumpet' and explain why you'd be right for the role.

Be prepared for your interview with examples of how you've been successful in the past, and how you can do it again for your new employer - the problems you helped solve, your impact on the bottom-line, what you fixed, streamlined or vastly improved.

Hiring managers love to see examples. It helps them see what you've done so that they can better imagine you working on their team.

43.

Interview the interviewer

“Do you have any questions for us?”

This is your opportunity to stand out as intelligent and enthusiastic.

It will also help you decide if the job is right for you.

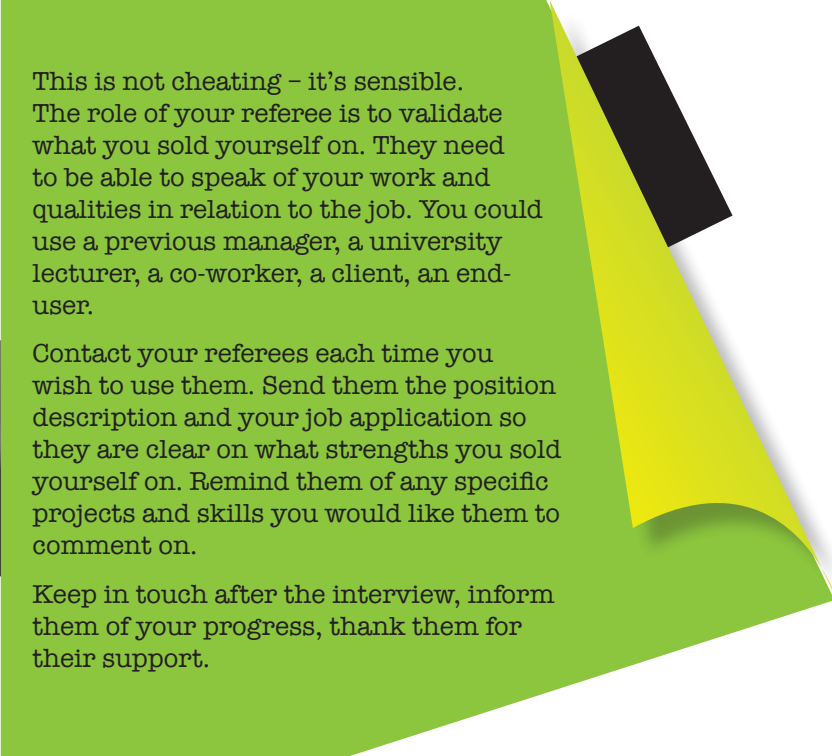
Always prepare some rigorous questions to ask at the end of the interview to reflect that you have researched the organisation.

Good questions include:

- What are the biggest challenges facing this area?
- Are there any significant changes in direction that this organisation is trying to bring about?
- What effect will this have on this position?
- What would be my most important priorities?
- Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with.

AA.

Brief
your referees



This is not cheating – it’s sensible. The role of your referee is to validate what you sold yourself on. They need to be able to speak of your work and qualities in relation to the job. You could use a previous manager, a university lecturer, a co-worker, a client, an end-user.

Contact your referees each time you wish to use them. Send them the position description and your job application so they are clear on what strengths you sold yourself on. Remind them of any specific projects and skills you would like them to comment on.

Keep in touch after the interview, inform them of your progress, thank them for their support.

**Decisions,
decisions...**

45.

When it comes to big life decisions, we can over-think and over-analyse.

Three resources are available to us:

intuition (gut)

feelings (heart) and

intellect (head)

Gathering information from all three is essential to making a good decision.

First go with your gut – listen to your instincts, your intuition.

Next tune in to with what your heart is feeling.

Finally use your head to think it through rationally, weighing the pros and cons.

Your job should align with who you are – your goals, strengths, passions, values, and traits.

“I am good at this, I want to do this,
and I love doing it”

**Thanks,
but
no thanks**

46.

Why would you turn down a decent job offer?

Lack of chemistry with the boss, shaky organisational structure, incompatible corporate culture, indications of likely industry downsizing, knowing you'd hate doing what the job requires.

If you don't love it before you start, the chances that you ever will are almost non-existent.



“Setbacks are merely opportunities to show the universe what you’re made of”

Margie Warrell



**Bounce
back**


Getting rejected for a job you really wanted can be disheartening.

Don't take it personally. The selectors believe they found a better fit for the position, not that they didn't like you.

Try to remind yourself of your skills, strengths and past successes.

Ask for feedback on how you could be a stronger candidate.

Stay in touch with the hiring manager. Connect on LinkedIn, check in occasionally, send a relevant article. They may come back to you because the selected person didn't work out.



These contacts may be able to advise you about another opening some day.

**Don't
despair if
you've lost
your job**

48.

If you've become unemployed, don't be disheartened. People are increasingly let go because of structural changes.

Stay positive - review your past achievements and rebuild your self-esteem.

Turn to family and friends for support.

Get involved with a trade or professional association to keep you connected and up to date with developments.

Volunteer with a Not-for-Profit organisation; they need people, it gives you credibility, and can lead to a job.

Plan your week to keep busy while keeping in touch with your industry.

Keep in the loop. Arrange to have coffee or other social contact with as many people as possible.

Congratulations!

49.

You've been successful with a new job offer!

While it's exciting, a job transition can also seem daunting.

By taking the time to prepare for closure, you can reduce the impact on both you and your team.

Handover all your projects, letting your clients and stakeholders know about the shift. Be considerate, and leave a good impression.

Don't brag or complain on your way out.

Appreciate the opportunity your employer gave you; thank your colleagues and manager.



**Find space
for YOU**



50.

Most of us spend at least a third of our lives at work – it's an important part of who we are.

Your career will be greatly enhanced if your life as a whole is in balance.

What feeds your energy level? Think about what nourishes and nurtures you.

- Get adequate sleep
- Exercise daily
- Eat healthy food, minimise caffeine and alcohol.
- Prioritise family and friends
- Do the best work you can but don't let work follow you home
- Switch off technology so you are not available 24/7
- Take time out to revitalise
- Schedule 'me-time'
- Negotiate your space with others in your life

Impress from the beginning

Your first 90 days in a new job are critical.



Show that you have what it takes and convey your enthusiasm for the new role.

Agree with your manager on priorities for your first 90 days.

Spend time with your predecessor or find a peer mentor who can help you get up to speed.

Listen and soak up everything you can about your new company, your role, your work objectives, and your peers.

Navigate the new culture by learning the office politics - the unwritten rules of the organisational culture.

Exceed expectations for the probation period. Be clear on the performance indicators and strive to exceed them.

But do not turn off the tap after the probation period - keep your passion alive.

Do an annual
career
check-up



Career planning is no longer an activity that you do once before leaving school.

Always keep your resume updated, even if you're happy in your current job - you never know when a great opportunity will present itself.

Steven Covey advises to "begin with the end in mind". continually review how your current job is a pathway to gathering the skills and relationships needed to take you to your next job.

You are responsible for your own career and destiny. Get in the driver's seat and get going!

52.



About the Author

GLEND A MAY

Glenda May is a career coach and corporate psychologist.

As principal of “CareerMatch” she provides best practice Career Coaching to individuals to help them reach their full career potential.

Glenda has a strong understanding of the challenges involved in changing jobs and career and the need for strategic planning to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

She provides coaching in job search strategies, resume writing, addressing selection criteria, effective interview techniques and networking skills.

Using the concepts of Positive Psychology, Glenda works with you as your 'Clarity Coach' to help you find your passion and move forward in your career.

You can participate in Glenda's group workshops "Steer your own Career" "Win The Job" "Career Bootcamp" or choose individual sessions where you will receive personalised coaching to help clarify and plan your career future.

Glenda May Consulting client list includes Australia Post, Brotherhood of St Laurence, VicRoads, KornFerry, CPA, GE, ASIC, Victorian Building Authority, Moreland City Council.

She is a regular lecturer on "Leading with Emotional Intelligence" at the University of Aix-Marseille and presented at the 2014 International Congress of Applied Psychology in Paris France.

Glenda's previous book "52 Ways to Break Through the Glass Ceiling" (co-authored with Jennifer Morris, award-winning advocate of diversity and inclusion) targets women aspiring to leadership positions.

“The only way to do great work

is to love what you do.

If you haven't found it yet, keep looking.

Don't settle.

As with all matters of the heart, you'll know
when you find it.”

Steve Jobs, Stanford speech, 2005

Passenger or Driver?

If your career is at a standstill, you no longer get any satisfaction from your work, or the job outlook in your field has taken a nosedive, it may be time to re-assess your career choices.

55% of Australians are unhappy in the workplace, yet most people spend more time planning their annual holidays than they do planning their careers!

This book provides you with 52 ways to take control of your destiny, allowing you to get out of the passenger seat and into the driver's seat and steer your career.



Glenda May, principal of "CareerMatch" is a career coach and corporate psychologist providing Best Practice Career Coaching to individuals, so they can reach their full career potential.

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9 780646 932088 >

www.glendamay.com.au

Tel: +61 418 580 457