

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. The top half of the image shows a steep, eroded cliff face made of vibrant red earth and rock. The bottom half shows the ocean with clear, turquoise water and white foam from waves crashing against the base of the cliff. The transition between the land and sea is sharp and dramatic.

EmpowerHub

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Identifying & Exploring Your Career Options

Make a list of your options

Whether you know exactly what you want to do or not, knowing how to get there can be difficult. To find your dream career, you need to write down your options as a starting point.

Make a list of all your options, whether those are tangible job opportunities, education, or career paths. Once you have everything written down, you can determine what isn't exactly right, and narrow your goals. Try to create as many options for yourself as you can, so you have plenty to choose from. Further, you can rank your options from best to worst, and even combine some that may be similar.

Research jobs related to your skills and interests

Take the time to work out where your strengths lie and then think outside the box – how can you use these skills in other industries. Don't limit your options. Many skills are transferrable so don't restrict yourself from moving into a different one.

Look for overlap

Write down your strengths, what organisations need and what you like to do – then find overlap between the three. This will help you find your optimal career path. Consider your interests, hobbies and skills and then work out how those translate.

You can also look back at your previous experiences and interests to inform your future.





CASE STUDY

A friend studied physiotherapy at university and worked as a physiotherapist in hospitals and private practice for many years. In her thirties she decided she wanted a complete career change as she couldn't picture herself treating patients in her fifties and sixties. Physio is a physically demanding profession. She thought back to what subjects she enjoyed at school. Typing was one of her favourite subjects but she had no interest in being a secretary or executive assistant. What she did realise is that she enjoyed politics and her strengths were listening, being methodical and time management. She ended up retraining as a Hansard editor and now officially records what is said in the Australian Parliament.

Network, network, network!

Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities. New jobs rarely fall into your lap. Build your network through colleagues, friends, events, LinkedIn, further study and interest groups. You never know when an opportunity may present itself and if someone can vouch for you or introduce you to an opportunity then all the better. Keep looking on job websites, listen to what people in the industries you are interested in have to say, and talk to lots of people every week to help build your network.





Utilise professional social media. If you're not on LinkedIn now is the time to develop a professional profile. LinkedIn has its own job board plus recruiters use it extensively to find candidates for roles that might not even be advertised. Reach out to people currently working in industries you are interested in working in and keep your profile up to date with your employment history, qualifications and interests.

Discover emerging career options

The workplace changes so quickly. Technology is driving unprecedented change so look out for opportunities in emerging industries, talk to employers and recruiters in these industries and do your research on the web.

See if you can work-shadow someone, volunteer, or do work experience

Sometimes you can only truly get a feel for whether a job is right for you by trying it out. Short-term work experience, shadowing someone else who is doing the job or volunteering in the role for a few hours a week will give you more insight into a job and a company.

Undertake a career assessment

There are numerous career assessment tools if you are unsure of where to start. You can look on-line for a valid and reliable test or to find companies and consultants that specialise in this area.





Engage a coach

Organisational/Executive coaches can be very helpful when you are at a career crossroads and don't know which way to turn. A coach will work with you one-on-one to help you find your path. When looking for a coach ensure that you find one who is accredited in organisational/executive coaching and a member of a reputable coaching organisation. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) accreditation is the gold standard in coaching.

Madeleine Long, Founder Apogee Global and Mel Mairata, Empower Workshop Facilitator are both accredited Executive Coaches.

Patience and persistence

Careers take time to grow and develop. Be patient and you will be best placed to identify opportunities when they arise. There will be knockbacks and disappointments along the way but how you bounce back and handle these situations might determine where your next promotion or job offer comes from.

Be ready!

Be ready to move when an opportunity comes along. Many people stay in jobs out of fear, loyalty or because they are held back by the idea of moving out of their comfort zone. If you think the opportunity is worth a shot then say 'yes' – take it and see where it leads you.