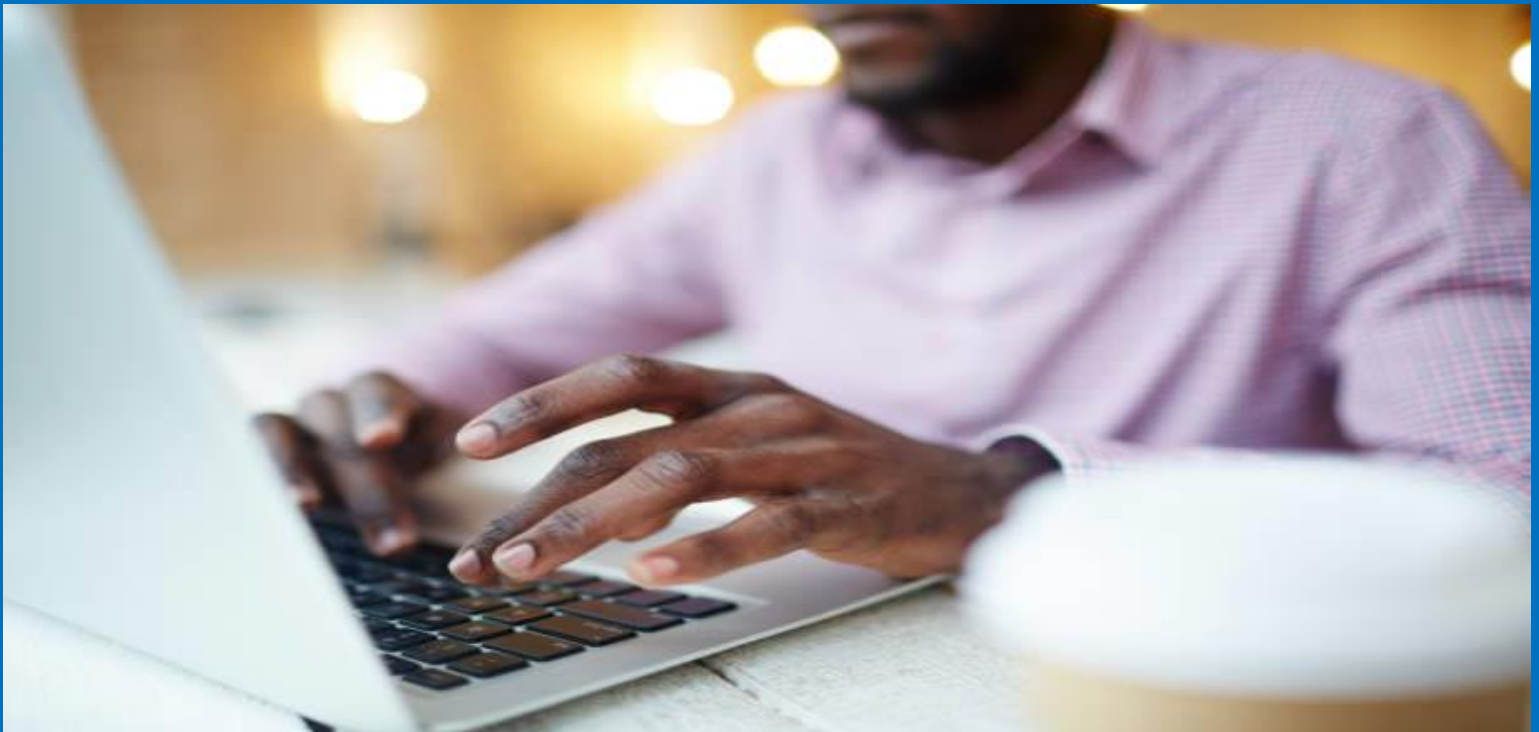


Case Study Handbook For Career Facilitation



Copyright 2018 - 2021 © Workforce Singapore All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, stored in any information storage or retrieval system of any nature, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of Workforce Singapore.

Table of Contents

.....	1
Purpose of the Handbook.....	4
How to Contribute Case Studies.....	5
Case Studies on Students	7
Chasing Your Passion	7
Career Crossroads	9
Bridging Education to Career	10
Too Many Choices	12
Cooking up a Storm	14
Through the Microscope	15
Rediscovery of Interests	17
Case Studies on Young Adults	19
From Rags to Rendang	19
Be Flexible! And You will be Employable!	21
Flying High in Second Career.....	22
Adjustment for Employment.....	23
Introversion is no Child's Play	25
Soaring to New Heights	28
Powering On with Renewed Hope.....	31
To Change or to Stay.....	34
Getting Closer to His Dream.....	37
To Batam or Bust	39
To Resign or Not to Resign.....	41
Stepping out of her Comfort Zone	43
Feeling Cooped Up at Home	45
Balancing Skills and Career Interest	47
A Successful Mid-career Switch	48
From Rejections to Success Story	49
Trying Something New	50
Building Up Personal Brand.....	51
Getting Back to Employment.....	52
Case Studies on Mature Workers Aged 50 & Above	53
Age is Just a Number!	53

Never Too Old to Learn!	55
False Sense of Security	57
Age Discrimination?	59
Case Studies on Back-to-Work Mums	60
Happy Mum, Happy Life!	60
From Distinctly Disadvantage to a Good Fit	62
Case Studies on Ex-Offenders	64
Baking Up a Rainbow	64
Case Studies on Persons with Disabilities	66
More Enabled than Ever	66

Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this *Case Study Handbook for Career Facilitation* is to document the profiles of individuals seeking education and career advisory, and how they have been assisted. Many of these are real-life profiles. These case studies are useful as a reference for all those who are involved in career facilitation in Singapore and are also used in the various courses under the [WSG Career Development Framework](#).

Career facilitation is the provision of education and career advisory to individuals who are deciding which course of study to pursue or which career they should take on. Those who provide such education and career advisory fall into two groups: career advisors and career practitioners. Career advisors are those who carry out career facilitation activities as a **secondary role** in their job while career practitioners perform them as a **primary role**.

Career advisors may include HR practitioners, educators, social service officers, industry mentors, SkillsFuture Career Advisors, SkillsFuture Advice officers, career consultants in organisations, education institutions, employment agencies, grassroots volunteers, and others who offer basic education and career advisory in addition to their primary role.

Career practitioners include career coaches in Workforce Singapore (WSG), NTUC Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), Institutions of Higher Learning such as the polytechnics and universities, and Education & Career Guidance (ECG) counsellors from the Ministry of Education (MOE). There are also career practitioners in the private sector such as those from Ingeus and MAXIMUMS, and other companies.

These case studies are contributed by career advisors and career practitioners. Personal information that could lead to the identification of the clients have been replaced but the profile and situational factors have been retained as much as possible to give a sense of realism in the case studies.

The **WSG Career Development Framework (WSG CDF)** is a practice-based national credentialing framework. Participants who have met the requirements may apply for any of the 4 credentials under the framework. Please note that the credential is **not** a licensing requirement. For more information on the WSG CDF, please email us at cpd@wsq.gov.sg.

Career Practitioners Division
Careers Connect Group
Workforce Singapore

How to Contribute Case Studies

If you are a career advisor or career practitioner and wish to contribute case studies to this Handbook, please use the following template to submit your case study to WSG. Your contribution will be acknowledged in the published case study.

When submitting the case study, *please do not reveal any personal information* that could lead to the identification of your client. As WSG is unable to verify the content of your case study, you will indemnify WSG against any claims for breach of confidentiality by your client when you choose to submit the case study to WSG for publication.

For the case study to be useful to other career advisors and career practitioners, please provide a clear and detailed write-up on the interventions you have made for the client. Please note that WSG may edit the content before publication.

You may submit your case studies via email to cpd@wsg.gov.sg using the template provided in the next page.

Title of Case Study

A brief synopsis of the case study

Background

Issues

Implementation

(Please include the following:

- Key reflections and considerations by the career practitioner, e.g. what was his /her first reaction, what were the actions taken, and what the rationale was.
- Advice given to the client and the obstacles faced when trying to get the client to execute.
- Action taken by the client, including the sequential timelines and his/her reservations.
- First signs of results and client's reactions.....
- What the client is doing today and his successes / difficulties....)

Contributed by (Your Name) (Designation, Organisation)

(Optional: contact information such as email, LinkedIn, etc.) dd-mmm-yyyy

Reflection Points

(Please include some questions as a way for the readers to reflect on their own practice if they were to encounter such a case)

Case Studies on Students

Chasing Your Passion

How Chloe made the decisive switch from Accounting to Marketing

Background

Chloe was enrolled in the accounting course under NUS Business School. She had joined the school's Community Service Club to get to know more friends and enlarge her social circle in the campus. As a club member, she was involved in a fund-raising project that required her to work with sponsors for sponsorship support, as well as liaise with various stakeholders to promote and market the project. Although the assigned tasks demanded a lot of her time and efforts, Chloe found she enjoyed doing the work very much. She began to research for more information on marketing as a career and talked to people in the marketing field to know more about the nature of work, as well as made inquiries on career prospects in this area of work.

Chloe seriously considered the possibility of switching from her accountancy course to a marketing course. However, was unsure of her decision whether she should make the switch.

Issues

Chloe pondered over her thoughts for two months till she could not contain herself anymore and felt that she badly needed advice on the matter. She approached her school's career coach for help. She also confided in her mother, who, to her surprise, was supportive of her decision to pursue her passion. But Chloe was less confident about her father's support for her to switch course. This is because he had always emphasized the importance of acquiring qualification that is in high demand e.g., Accountancy, which could guarantee employment opportunities in most companies.

Implementation

The career coach asked Chloe to complete a career interest assessment and analysed her profile. The analysis showed that Chloe besides being a pragmatic person, was also meticulous and cautious when carrying out her work. She liked to interact with people, influencing them with her ideas, and finding great satisfaction when the contributions to the project brought success. The analysis further indicated that a Marketing career would suit Chloe's personality and interests well. The career coach encouraged Chloe to speak to her father on the matter. Both father and daughter had a long chat, and with much persuasion from Chloe's mum and assurance from Chloe, her father finally agreed to her decision to switch from the accounting to the marketing course.

Today Chloe is in her second year of her Marketing course, enjoying every minute of her lessons, and learning as much as she can. She is looking forward to her internship posting and have great enthusiasm to start her career in the Marketing industry.

Contributed by Anonymous 29-06-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How would you counsel Chloe if you were her counsellor?*
- 2) *What do you need to take note of when you asked Chloe to do the career interest assessment?*
- 3) *Which career interest assessment tools is appropriate for client like Chloe?*

Career Crossroads

How Leon made his first career decision at a critical crossroad

Background

Leon is 19 years old, and a first-year student in a local polytechnic. He is currently pursuing a Diploma in Nutrition, Health and Wellness - a course which he was assigned to after he failed to gain admission to any of his 12 preferred choices. Leon was discouraged and disappointed when he received the results of his application, and the course assigned to him. Somehow, he had always associated jobs relating to food and nutrition as a “job for the women”.

Leon’s father is in prison, and his mother must work to support the family. She is kept very busy at work to earn as much money as she could to make ends meet, and at the same time takes care of Leon’s younger siblings. His mother works in the supermarket as a promoter for certain food brands. Leon also works as a part-time sales assistant selling handphone accessories to earn an income to support himself.

Issues

In his struggle to balance his part-time work and studies, Leon became despondent as he contemplated on his future ahead. He was concerned that the diploma course assigned to him offers very few job opportunities; he also felt overwhelmed by the amount of schoolwork weighing down his shoulders.

Implementation

During the ECG lessons, Leon’s ECG teacher noticed that his Holland’s assessment has a flat profile and shared this observation with his Care Mentor. Leon also wondered if he should switch his course of study at this stage. He shared his concerns about his future with his Care Mentor, who then decided to refer him to the ECG counsellor.

Contributed by Anonymous 12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What may have contributed towards Leon’s perception of occupations?*
- 2) *How could the ECG Counsellor help him acquire a broader and more realistic view of occupations?*
- 3) *Which career development theory discussed how an individual may develop his perception of occupations? What are the key contributing factors?*

Bridging Education to Career

Helping Dominic gain clarity on his career aspirations

Background

Dominic is 16 years old and a secondary four student. He is helpful and well-liked by his peers. His friends like to share their problems with him when they are troubled. Dominic also likes to watch TV drama series about doctors and nurses. He learned about work they do and finds it meaningful. He shared during one of the ECG lessons that his aspiration is to be a psychiatrist, as he likes to help people who are seemingly depressed and lonely.

During another ECG lesson on Career Exploration, the teacher discussed about the Healthcare sector and exposed his class to many occupations within the sector. For the first time, Dominic learned about Allied Health professionals, e.g. radiologist, medical social work, occupational therapists, etc. The teacher also showed a career video on Allied Health professionals and the boys in Dominic's class laughed when they saw that of a male nurse. Dominic, who wanted to 'look cool' laughed along. When asked to list at least 3 career options, Dominic struggled a little, but listed two, just to meet the lesson requirements, namely, psychiatrist and medical social worker.

Dominic's mother works at the polyclinic and his father is a taxi-driver. From young, he has always hung out at his mum's workplace. His parents have always told him to study hard and not end up working in jobs like theirs. Mother often complained about the long hours of work and the challenging environment of constantly being exposed to the sick and people with health problems. Dominic has kept his parents' words in mind.

Issues

Six months ago, Dominic's parents ran into some financial problems, so Dominic started worked as part-time crew at the fast-food restaurant on weekends to earn an income. His grades suffered and his teacher was concerned as the GCE O-level examination was approaching.

Implementation

Thinking that Dominic may be having some motivational issue, his form teacher met up with Dominic to better support him and discuss with him about his future educational options. It was then that the teacher realised that Dominic had not thought much about his education choices except the broad idea that he would like to be a psychiatrist. Dominic's teacher also noticed that his Holland's assessment is of a flat profile and referred him to the ECG Counsellor.

Contributed by Anonymous 12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did Dominic's Form Teacher assist him?*
- 2) *With reference to Holland's Typology and Dominic's Assessment result, what does a "flat profile" mean/indicate?*
- 3) *How can the ECG Counsellor further assist Dominic?*

Too Many Choices

How Rita learned about her strengths, interests and work values

Background

Rita was a top performing student in her final year of Junior College. Besides being academically strong, she was well-rounded, serving as the President of her CCA, the Outdoor Activities Club.

Issues

Despite the fact that she was excelling in her academic and non-academic activities in school, Rita was worried as she had no idea about what course she should pursue in a university and as a career thereafter. She was concerned that she would make the wrong choice after her GCE A-Level examination and end up in a university course and career that she would dislike. She wanted to know more about how she could start planning ahead so that she could make informed education and career choices in future.

Implementation

Rita completed the Career Interests assessment in the MySkillsFuture portal, which indicated that her top three interests were Social, Realistic and Conventional. There was also a list of relevant careers generated for her to consider, which she read up on and shortlisted. Rita completed the Career Values card sorts which indicated that her top values were primarily people-focused, such as spending time with family, growing friendships, and helping others. As part of the narrative approach to career counselling, Rita drew out her Lifeline and identified the High points in her life so far. These included her time spent in her CCA and church activities, developing and conducting programmes for youth and mentoring them. This led her to identify that she was very much interested in working with people and planning informative experiences for others to participate in.

From her shortlisted career list, she explored careers that fit her career values and identified careers that would offer her people-centred tasks and activities. These included careers in industries such as Healthcare, Human Resource and Training Services and Education.

Rita was surprised to know that she had been doing so much in her life so far, which were rich experiences from which she could draw from to help her clarify her strengths, interests and work values, and also possible university and career choices. She also felt that the discussions were effective in teasing out her interests and clarifying her concerns, which she had not been able to sort out effectively.

Rita was much clearer about the industries she could focus on. With this information, she could research more in-depth about the careers within the respective industries and gain first-hand experience through work experiences after her GCE A-Level examination. This would enable her to prepare well for her university course selection and her scholarship application.

Contributed by Loretta Foo ECG Counsellor
Education & Career Guidance Unit Student Development Curriculum Division Ministry of Education
09-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What are Rita's education and career 'concerns'?*
- 2) *What are the relevant career theories that can be applied to Rita's case and how can they be used to help Rita address her concerns'?*
- 3) *How can the ECG Counsellor facilitate Rita in making informed education and career decision?*

Cooking up a Storm

How Kelly made the transition from NITEC to ELP upon graduation

Background

Since young, Kelly had been interested in Culinary and hoped to establish a career for herself in the Food and Beverage industry. After completing her ISC courses (Food Preparation and Hospitality Services), Kelly enrolled herself in Nitec in Asian Culinary to further hone her culinary skills.

Issues

She graduated from the Nitec course with a GPA of 2.1 but was unsure of the job opportunities available in the industry. During her course, she was introduced to the job opportunities available, but the many options also presented her with a selection challenge on the job she preferred. Furthermore, she had a desire to deepen her skills in the culinary field and wanted to explore the options in this pathway.

Implementation

After her graduation ceremony, Kelly approached an ECG Counsellor who helped her in the job search by looking through various job portals with her. He also helped her to improve her resume and prepare for interviews. Upon learning of Kelly's keen interest to learn more, the ECG Counsellor shared with her about the SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme in Food Services offered by Asian Culinary Institute (ACI).

Kelly was attracted to the programme as she could work and deepen her culinary skills at the same time. But she was also hesitant to take it up as she was not sure if she could cope. With the ECG Counsellor's encouragement, she attended the briefing conducted by ACI, went for the interview and was subsequently employed in the programme.

Currently, she is working as a Trainee Cook in a reputable restaurant group while pursuing a WSQ Diploma in Culinary Arts under the SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme. She was glad that she made the transition and looks forward to establishing herself in the fast growing Food and Beverage industry.

Contributed by David Heng and Ernest Lim ECG Counsellors
Education & Career Guidance Unit Student Development Curriculum Division Ministry of Education
10-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What are Kelly's strengths and her career 'issues'?*
- 2) *How can the ECG Counsellor facilitate Kelly's informed decision-making on whether she wants to pursue full-time work or Earn and Learn Programme or full-time education? What are some considerations Kelly need to be mindful of as she makes such decisions?*

Through the Microscope

How Kyrie decided on her post-secondary education pathway

Background

Kyrie was a Secondary 4 Express student who was confused about her post-secondary education options after her GCE O-Level examination. She could not decide between the Junior College route, which offered Pre-University education within 2 years through the GCE A-Level, or the Polytechnic route, which offered a work-ready diploma in a specific field of study over 3 years. Her Form Teacher suggested that she meet with the school's Education and Career Guidance (ECG) Counsellor for discussion.

Issues

When Kyrie met with the ECG Counsellor, she expressed her dilemma over the post-secondary options. Kyrie was a conscientious student, and her academic grades were above average. She was considering the Science stream in the Junior College as her parents felt that it would give her more options and she would probably stand a better chance of pursuing a university education. Kyrie, however, was concerned that the GCE A-Level would be rather challenging as she would need to do General Paper and currently, her grades in English Language tended to range between B4 to C5. Kyrie felt that Polytechnic courses may offer a more hands-on experience. However, she could not decide on possible courses to pursue as her interests were rather diverse.

Implementation

After listening to Kyrie's concerns, the ECG Counsellor shared with her the general differences between Junior College (GCE A-Level Education) and the Polytechnic (Diploma Education). The ECG Counsellor also introduced Kyrie to the Career Wheel, in particular on the external and internal factors that one could take into consideration when making decisions. By zooming into the section on "internal factors" to help Kyrie explore her interests, strengths, and skills, Kyrie was able to express her interests in science, and shared her strengths in Mathematics and Sciences, especially Chemistry and Biology. She also shared that she had participated in public speaking competitions.

As Kyrie was still unsure about her career interests, the ECG Counsellor guided her through the "Career Interests" segment of MySkillsFuture Portal for secondary students to help her discover her John Holland's RIASEC code through the career interests assessment tools. As she completed her assessment, she was guided to the section on the portal on shortlisting some of the careers that she might be interested in. Based on the careers that Kyrie selected, the ECG Counsellor discussed with her on the pathways that could be explored to reach her selected career interests, taking into consideration her initial concern of whether to go Junior College or Polytechnic.

Kyrie was also advised to visit the Open Houses at the respective institutions and to talk to alumni to find out more about the Polytechnic and Junior College pathways.

Thereafter, the ECG Counsellor walked Kyrie through her target setting for the top 5 choices that she would include for her Joint-Admissions Exercise. After the in-depth discussion with the ECG Counsellor, Kyrie was more certain that she would pursue the Junior College (Science) route, complete her GCE A-Level and further her studies in the local university.

Kyrie is currently a Year 1 Science student in a local Junior College and wishes to pursue Biomedical Sciences in the university.

Contributed by Joleen Lim ECG Counsellor

Education & Career Guidance Unit Student Development Curriculum Division Ministry of Education

11-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What are the relevant career theories that can be applied to Kyrie's case and how can they be used to facilitate an ECG discussion to help Kyrie make informed education choice?*
- 2) *What are the various forces of influences on Kyrie's education and career consideration?*
- 3) *What are the career assessment tools that the ECG Counsellor could use to help Kyrie have clarity of her interests, skills and strengths?*

Rediscovery of Interests

How Sarah got confident to navigate her pathways.

Background

Growing up, Sarah (not her real name) always found joy in helping others. Her interest led to her active involvement in her school's Values in Action (VIA) programme to improve the lives of the elderly. Sarah also had a keen interest in sports science. When she was the captain of her CCA sports team, she was eager to learn how sports science could increase people's performance in competitive and non-competitive sports.

Issues

When Sarah was in Secondary 4, she had to decide on her preferred subject combination for Junior College. In order to do so, she approached her ECG Counsellor (ECGC), Yui Yi, to explore her areas of interests and possible education and career pathways related to these interests. Her session with Yui Yi started with her reviewing her career interests using the profiling tool in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal. As Sarah and Yui Yi reviewed the careers related to Sarah's RIASEC code, Sarah realised that the careers she was interested in belonged to the helping profession.

Implementation

To better provide Sarah with the guidance that she needed, Yui Yi developed a positive therapeutic alliance with her by applying OARS, a set of core communication skills (Open Questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening, Summary and Reflection) in Motivational Interviewing. Through ECG counselling, Sarah was able to explore the similarities and differences between a career in social work and in sports science.

This eventually led to Sarah identifying the transferable skills between the two different industries, helping her resolve her ambivalence towards them. Armed with this realisation, Sarah saw this as a rediscovery of her interests from a different perspective and was more confident to explore the different education pathways available. As there were other key considerations for Sarah to be aware of when exploring her career choices, Yui Yi also used the Career Wheel to discuss with Sarah internal and external factors that would contribute to her career decision-making process.

With Yui Yi's guidance, Sarah felt reassured, knowing that there were different ways for her interests to be further developed and that her interests were also related to her personality and values. With this new knowledge, Sarah became more confident to navigate her pathways ahead. She eventually selected the subjects, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Economics to further her study at a Junior College.

Contributed by
Looi Yui Yi
Senior ECG Counsellor

Case Studies on Young Adults

From Rags to Rendang

How Ali overturned his difficulties to become a Sous Chef

Background

Ali is 40 years old and came to the Career Centre for assistance to get a job. He had worked for 20 years as a delivery man at a company that sold household appliances. But the company had cash flow problems and was made bankrupt. Ali was owed five months' salary before the company closed down. The boss was apologetic, but he had no means to pay Ali his salary. He promised to pay Ali when he is able. That was about two months ago.

About the same time that the company went bankrupt, Ali's mother was hospitalised for heart failure. Subsequently, she stayed at a community hospital for recuperation and rehabilitation. Mother was the caretaker for Ali's father who suffered from stroke and is bed-ridden. So, during her hospitalisation, Ali took care of the father as he was out of work then. But even though mother has been discharged home, she will not be able to care for the father due to her heart condition. So, Ali has taken over the responsibilities of feeding and caring for the father, attending to his toilet needs and other duties.

Issues

Ali could not search for employment earlier because he was busy with the care of his parents. He was also grieving over his sudden job loss. However, he could not delay looking for a job any longer because the family is in financial needs. It had been more than seven months since he received any salary! Besides having to provide for the family's daily expenses, Ali has also not settled his mother's hospitalisation bills. His Medisave account is almost depleted after paying his father's hospitalisation bills when the latter was admitted into hospital several times due to his stroke condition. Ali's wife has also reminded him that school will re-open soon, and they will have to buy books, uniforms, etc., for the two school-going children.

Ali's wife is not working as she has to take care of the children and do the household chores. She is also not in good health. She is unhappy with Ali that he did not ask his sister to assist with care of the parents but accepted the full burden of care for the parents. Her resentment is causing a rift in the marital relationship, compounded by the financial difficulties. Ali also did not think that his wife could assist with the care of his father, especially his toilet needs.

Whilst relating his family situation, Ali broke down and sobbed uncontrollably. It was evident that he was in great distress and felt very hopeless and helpless. He pleaded with the career coach to assist him in every possible way, as he felt very confused and unable to think clearly. He was not sure what jobs he could do as he has only worked as a delivery man all his life, and does not have any formal qualifications. He had studied up to secondary two before quitting school.

Implementation

The career coach discussed with Ali about what he liked or disliked doing and reviewed his employment history. He also introduced Ali to Raj Kitchen who was looking for a kitchen helper and may be expanding his kitchen staff by recruiting a new chef in the near future.

Ali was encouraged to sign up for the culinary course at a local culinary institute where he completed his certificate while working as a kitchen helper at Raj Kitchen.

Today, he is the sous chef for Raj Kitchen. He continues to attend training to improve his culinary skills and increase his competence.

Contributed by Anonymous 29-06-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did the Career Practitioner assist Ali?*
- 2) *What role did he assume?*

Be Flexible! And You will be Employable!

See Sam exercised flexibility to bring him closer to his dream job

Background

Sam was 35 & a senior project manager for a local construction firm. However, due to the downturn in his industry, he wanted to change to a new & exciting industry. His dream has always been to become an analyst in a bank. He knows he lacks the skills & decided to enrol himself to a master's Program in Financial Engineering.

Issues

The program was a tough 1.5 years long. Sam managed to persevere and now is nearing the completion of his masters' program. He sent out many CVs to both local and foreign banks to seek to join as an analyst. So far, he has zero response, and he is feeling dejected.

Implementation

That was when I first met Sam. After much discussion, Sam realised that he has nothing to contribute to any bank as a financial analyst. He is new to the role, does not know the finance market nor anyone in the banking industry. He has a piece of certificate but so has so many of his fellow co-hort. I got him to take a slightly different track. We decided to break his goal into 2. The first step is get Sam into a bank and we concluded the best approach is to join as a project manager. Sam then joined local banking networking sessions & pitched to be a Project Manager. In one of these sessions, he met a board member of a local bank. He was suitably impressed with Sam's ambition & decided to pass his contacts to HR. After a series of interviews, Sam managed to secure a position as Project Manager for a local bank but based in Jakarta. Though Sam is still some way off to be an analyst in a bank, he told me that he feels he is on his way to become one.

Contributed by Kenneth Leow Founder & CEO
Blue and Gray Singapore Pte Ltd 06-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *For those like Sam who seeking a road out of your current industry, what career strategies would you propose to help them eventually move out of it?*

Flying High in Second Career

Sarah shows performance, be it in the air or on land

Background

Sarah was a flight attendant for one of the top local airlines. She has been flying for close to 15 years. She feels it's time to ground herself, settle down and perhaps start a family.

Issues

The main issue is that Sarah feels she lacks many skills. Her passion is always on things that move fast, particularly cars. Coupled with her pleasant and sunny disposition, she feels she can succeed as a luxury car salesperson. She knows she lacks formal selling experience and is unsure of how she should do to realise her dream.

Implementation

When we first met, I was impressed with her maturity, great communication skills and cheerful disposition. She has a natural way of putting people at ease as she is a superb listener. I got Sarah to research and narrow down the list of car brands she would like to sell for. Eventually, we nailed down 2 possibilities. Coincidentally, one of them advertised for new sales executives. Sarah decided to give it a go. During the interview, the company felt that her lack of auto as well as selling experience was against her. Sarah persisted and challenged the hiring manager to 'try' her out by putting her on probation. Thankfully the hiring manager agreed. After 2 years, Sarah topped the entire sales team in terms of new deals generated. About a year after that, they promoted her to be a Sales Manager.

Contributed by Kenneth Leow Founder & CEO
Blue and Gray Singapore Pte Ltd 06-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How would you assist those like Sarah who are seeking a change in their career to fulfil a real passion?*
- 2) *What assistance is available from the government to help these people transit?*
- 3) *What is that one step that these people can do for themselves immediately?*

Adjustment for Employment

John's receptivity and adaptability enabled him to land a job of his interest

Background

John (not his real name) is a 54-year-old male client, married with no financial issues. He has a doctoral degree (PhD) and had been working at a statutory board. On his last secondment, he was informed that his tenure with the Investment Firm, where he was then working, would not be renewed. His salary as a Chief Technology Officer was \$17,500.

John approached e2i for a coaching discussion. He had been sending his resume for many job openings, but so far, his job search had not yielded any positive outcomes. He also shared that till now, he had never needed to look for job in his careers. At the interview at e2i, John explained that he was open to downgrading to a lower-level job and was also prepared to lower his salary expectation.

Subsequently, John successfully transited himself to a new career in a growing and sustainable industry, the Education Industry.

Issues

John has a number of barriers to overcome in his job search.

Lack of interviewing skills

For a very long time, John had not experienced being interviewed as there was no need for it. He had always been in the same occupation, including the various secondments that were pre-arranged. He explained that he had interviewed other people and would therefore naturally know the requirements of a good interview. However, the current circumstances have been switched and he should make adjustment and preparation for the potential interviews that he would be put through.

Lack of self-awareness and career values

John only wanted to continue working in C-suite occupations; but moving forward he was unsure where to work to pursue this career goal. He felt that he was losing his competitive edge due to age discrimination. Employers did find him unable to catch up with technological changes.

Lack of job search skill and good information in his resume

John used an old format for his resume. He also lacked focus as he mass-sent his one resume for most job applications, and via only one channel for his job search – LinkedIn.

Lack of industry knowledge

John has mastery of his industry but was unaware of what were the evolving hiring trends and economic outlook for newer industries.

Implementation

John was advised to adjust his resume, as his old format may not market him well to potential hiring managers. He could be discriminated as being old and has inflexible mindset issues.

He was also encouraged to explore and research new and growing, as well as sustainable industries which he had not considered previously. Upon engaging John in a deeper discussion, he related that he has recently developed keen interest in the Education Industry. However, he was not aware of the sector's specific information.

John was given some insights into this industry, and the potential employers to whom he could write for possible job openings, which could suit his work preferences.

John was further assessed to have relevant and transferable skills for the selected industries, and was advised to tailor his resume according to industry-specific information. He was encouraged to change his career objective with career values that could relate to industry-specific corporate values.

John was initially rather adamant about not changing his approach to job search as he had always been on C-suite level. Jobs were always pre-planned. It became evident to him at this life stage that factors such as age and lack of technological skills would put him at a disadvantage to compete in the current tight labour market situation.

John eventually made better efforts to adjust his resume, and also took a more realistic approach regarding his interview skills. He is now working with one of the Institutes for Higher Learning as an Educational Program Director.

Contributed by Jacklyn Lim Senior Specialist
Employment and Employability Institute 08-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *Client thought highly of himself, and perceived himself to belong to those in the C-suite level. How would you manage his/her expectations?*
- 2) *Client may appear to think he/she is wiser than you due to his age. How would you overcome this?*

Introversion is no Child's Play

How Sharon overcame her introversion to pursue her career interest

Background

Sharon (not her real name) is a 44-year-old female client, married with no kids. She has two elderly parents to support but she has no financial issue, and her spouse is employed. Sharon has a degree from NUS and majored in Business Administration. She enjoyed studying.

Her last working experience was at a publishing company as an Editorial Assistant for 7 years. She explained that she resigned as she was unable to meet the job expectations of her department's team and boss. Her last drawn salary was \$2,000 per month.

The industries she had been involved in included Education for Tertiary and Adult Learning, Social Service Organisation, Food Services and Government. Her other working experiences are in different industries such as Education for Tertiary and Adult Learning, Social Services, Food Services, and Public Service. Her previous jobs include the following:

Secretary at a Voluntary Welfare Organisation

Secretary at a Small and Medium Enterprise that manufactures food.

HR executive at a government ministry

Logistic Officer at a government ministry

Her functional skills were accumulated through the years of working, and they include:

- Global perspective
- Good written communication
- Administration
- Documentation
- Compliance
- Customer care
- Project management
- Liaison between internal and external stakeholders

Sharon shared that she had not worked for the last one year. She appeared vexed over her unemployment status and seemed lost. In addition, she was emotionally unstable as she entered middle age. During the coaching session, Sharon was observed to be extremely introverted.

Issues

Sharon faced a number of barriers in her job search.

Lack of interviewing skills

She had gaps in understanding her profile as a middle-aged job seeker in this competitive climate. She persisted in aiming mainly for administrative function with no specific industry or sector in mind. Her introverted nature and poor body language did not put her in an advantageous position as a potentially attractive candidate to employers.

Lack of soft skills

Sharon broke down during the coaching session. She was unable to meet colleagues' expectations at work, and this trend was observed throughout her working life. She also shared that she lacked the capability to be a team worker.

Lack of job search skills and good information in her resume

Poor resume structure was observed and the information she included in the resume did not add value to her as being a good candidate to hire. It did not specify her functional skills to potential employers. She had only one resume and sent it on a mass basis to various job portals. Her resume did not illustrate clearly her good written communication. She wrote her job descriptions in a "to-do-list" format.

Lack of self-awareness

She was not sure of her career values and her weak interpersonal and verbal communication skills hindered her progress in several of her careers earlier on. Thus, she was caught in an underemployed situation and unable to develop her career to her potential.

Unaware of development in the job market

Sharon did not keep abreast with the latest developments. She is not aware of current hiring trends and the technology changes which are key principles during job search.

Implementation

Sharon was encouraged to review and reflect on her past careers and to redirect the knowledge into new career goals. She was advised on various schemes and initiatives that could connect her towards this new career direction.

She revealed that she might be interested in a career switch to the Early Childhood Industry as she has always loved young children. The switch would be a steep learning curve for her as she lacked the industry requirements to be a Childcare Teacher. She was then directed to a training provider where there would be government funding for course fee. She was also informed of the 'Place-and-Train' programme offered by e2i and its partners.

Sharon was also advised to relook her barriers for job search, especially resume writing and knowledge of industry-specific information. She was encouraged to research for courses and to utilize her SkillsFuture Credit for strengthening her soft skills.

Sharon had her “aha” moment and was pleased at the end of the coaching session. She realised she had been using a wrong approach in her job search and “wasted” one year of her time.

She is currently working on her long-term goal and has enrolled for WSQ Specialist in Early Childhood Education. She has begun the practical lessons at a Childcare Centre and is enjoying the learning process.

Contributed by Jacklyn Lim Senior Specialist
Employment and Employability Institute 08-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How would you engage a job seeker who is an Introvert?*
- 2) *Think of the possibilities when she would disagree with you during the discussion, including action plans tasks to be carried out (“homework”).*

Soaring to New Heights

Taking charge of your career

Background

Ali is a PMET from the building and construction sector. He has more than 15 years of working experience including 7 years as a project manager with 3 different contractors. He was unexpectedly retrenched and was distressed over his situation. Ali is the sole bread winner for his family. His spouse is a full-time housewife, and they have 2 young school going children. Ali turned to Workforce Singapore (WSG) Careers Connect for career matching services and met up his Career Coach, Andrew. What followed was 3 months of in-depth assistance and intensive intervention by Andrew.

Issues

It was a challenging period for Ali as he was going through a crisis. Not only did he suddenly lose his job, but he was also having family issues. In addition, he needed to improve his networking, resume writing and interview skills for his job search. Ali also had difficulty making a career decision for his job offer.

Implementation

Provision of emotional support

Andrew created a safe environment for Ali to share his anxieties and provided a listening ear. Andrew also gave Ali the time and space to attend to his family issues for a month before working together on his job search. During the interim period, Andrew made the effort to keep the relationship warm and kept him updated with relevant career resources. Andrew's intervention worked very much to help Ali to better manage his emotional baggage and encourage him in his career transition. It also readied Ali to be coached for his job search.

Identification of career values

Ali identified work-life balance as one of his important career values. Ali surfaced that the long working hours that he had to endure previously negatively affected his family life. During further discussion, Ali highlighted that he planned to move from working as a project manager with various contractors to being an in-house project manager with a specific employer. This was because it provided work-life balance and enabled him to fulfil his family responsibility as a father and husband.

Targeted Job Search – Importance of Networking

Ali identified one of the aviation companies as a potential employer due to three main reasons. Firstly, Ali possessed transferrable project management experience, technical skills and knowledge. Secondly, he had completed relevant projects for the aviation industry in his previous projects. Thirdly, he had established a network of contacts working in the aviation industry.

Andrew emphasised how Ali could leverage on his network of contacts to find out more on the project manager position. Ali managed to reconnect with his contacts in the aviation industry and that helped him to gain deeper insights and understanding of this position. Ali assessed that the job was a good fit as the scope of work provided the work-life balance that he needed. Moreover, it was with an established company offering him a decent salary.

Coaching on Resume Writing

Given the sudden nature of retrenchments, it is typical of retrenched PMETs such as Ali not to be ready with a quality resume that can be utilised immediately. In fact, most of these retrenched PMETs would not know how to go about crafting a resume as they would have been with the same company for a good number of years. Andrew emphasised to Ali the importance of having a customised resume that clearly showcased his strengths and competencies and coached him on the techniques of crafting an effective resume. Ali diligently customised his resume for the project manager position at the aviation company with the guidance from Andrew.

Coaching to Ace the Interview

Ali benefitted from the customised resume, and he was shortlisted for an interview within 2 weeks of his job application. Andrew arranged to meet Ali to prepare him for a mock panel interview through role play. In addition, Andrew coached Ali on the preparation to answer the questions for the essay writing and Harrison personality test which is part of the interview assessment. Andrew also prepared Ali on providing the character references and how he could present his career portfolio for the relevant projects that he completed.

Career matrix

Ali eventually aced the interview and was given a verbal offer for the Project Manager position. However, Ali was hesitant to accept the offer. He was undecided whether another career opportunity as a project manager with a contractor would offer him a better work life balance.

Andrew assessed that Ali was struggling with career indecisiveness and took time to listen to the client and worked with him on his career matrix. The intent was to help Ali to decide whether to take up the job offer by the aviation company or as a project manager with the contractor. After going through the career matrix, the client had much better clarity and saw that the career opportunity with the aviation company was most aligned with his career values.

Intervention success

Appreciation note from Ali to Andrew “Thank you for all your valuable advice and much effort to help me in revamping my resume and polish-up my application letter, to secure an interview opportunity then followed by a job offer. I’m deeply grateful for your effort rendered for the last 3 months that lead to my success in securing a job.”

Contributed by Andrew Er
Senior Career Coach, Careers Connect Workforce Singapore
11-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did Andrew help Ali?*
- 2) *What else can Andrew do for Ali?*
- 3) *What are some tips for PMETs in career transition?*

Powering On with Renewed Hope

Making the Years Count

Background

Raja knows what it's like to struggle to get back up on his feet. He had been with the same lighting company for 23 years when his position as a Business Development Director was made redundant. Raja was shocked upon receiving the news that he would be retrenched. He was actively looking for a job but did not get any job offers for 6 months. Find out what kept him going through this tough period and how he powered through to a brand-new career with help from his Career Coach.

Issues

Raja was quite lost in his career direction and was feeling unsure whether he would be able to get a job that he was looking for. He also needed to improve his job search and resume writing skills for his career transition.

Implementation

Raja decided to approach Workforce Singapore (WSG)'s Careers Connect to enhance his job search effort and embark on a new career. "I realised I needed some pointers to give me a leg up when I wasn't getting any positive response from the job fairs and networking events that I attended," said the father of two.

Pro bono work to expand network for job search

"I was very lost when my position was made redundant and I was not sure what I wanted next," said Raja. While evaluating his future, Raja enriched himself with pro bono work to review his career and expand his network while searching for a job. Throughout this period, what kept him going was his deep passion for lighting and his strong desire to share his lighting knowledge as he had seen first-hand how lighting could improve lives and elevate experiences. "Lighting is a very elusive element in design, and it always awes and inspires designers to transform their concepts and transcend their designs into new realms," said Raja. "Having worked with designers, manufacturers and consumers, I am totally convinced light is life, and I see it as my personal mission to create awareness for a quality lighting environment."

Positive attitude to consider other career options

Raja came with a positive attitude as he believed that a Career Coach could provide him with a reality check on what was out there and the options that were available. Raja totally welcomed the career advisory and coaching from his Career Coach – Andrew.

After identifying his career aspiration to find a similar job as business development director, Andrew provided Raja with labour market insights that pointed to employment opportunities in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Andrew explained the benefits of working in a SME though he would need to make some adjustments to his

salary expectations. Raja weighed the career options and was willing to adjust his mind-set and expectations, which helped open up more career options for his job search.

Ownership in improving job search skills and personal branding

Andrew wanted Raja to stand out and focus on his strengths and competencies. He helped Raja to identify his transferrable skills and experiences based on the various roles and postings he had taken on with his previous employer. These included appointments in the areas of regional sales, lighting application design, business sales development, product management and market strategy. Andrew was impressed by Raja's positive attitude and willingness towards improving his job search and resume writing skills.

Raja took ownership to enhance his professional branding and became more confident about showcasing his achievements in his resume. Raja acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges was making sure his resume was up-to-date and stood out from all the others out there — not just a traditional resume. He made efforts to refine and customise his resume for each of his job application via various job portals and social media platforms.

Proactive in job search

Andrew shared with Raja about the Career Support Programme (CSP), an initiative under Adapt & Grow which aims to provide enhanced employment support to help Singaporeans, especially mature PMETs and those affected by redundancy. Raja was proactive in his job search and tapped on the many opportunities to network with fellow PMETs and prospective employers. He actively shared with employers about CSP during interviews and networking events. Raja met an SME employer during one of the networking sessions and both saw a meeting of minds.

Raja successfully found a job as a Business Development Director with the SME employer under the CSP. Raja accepted a salary adjustment to join the SME, but he was prepared to work his way up with the company. The culture in an SME might be different, but Raja was able to leverage on his experiences to help the company grow its business overseas. He currently leads a team to spearhead the company's expansion into Asia Pacific.

Ownership in skills upgrading and training

Andrew continued to provide support to Raja and discussed with him on-the-job training (OJT) and external training to cope with the challenges for his new job. Raja took ownership of his skills upgrading and signed up for the relevant training courses. Raja was also sent for overseas projects for his professional development.

Having made a smooth switch from a MNC to a SME, Raja recounted the positive work environment and inclusive culture for helping him adjust quickly. He was grateful for the enthusiasm his colleagues had shown in helping him blend into the company and in guiding him as he learnt the ropes.

The SME company shared that CSP helped HR to put in place an introductory process to help new staff understand the business through On-The-Job training and very importantly gave them the opportunity to see how Raja's experiences were able to complement their business model very quickly, for e.g. introducing measures to tighten working processes and building positive relationships within the team.

Raja was thankful for the firm support he received from Careers Connect, especially for mature job seekers like himself, who were unfamiliar with the hiring situation. "They give current information about the labour market and offer advice for your job search. I'm driven to integrate into the company quickly and be a significant contributor to their growth expansion into the region," says Raja.

Contributed by Andrew Er
Senior Career Coach, Careers Connect Workforce Singapore
11-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did Andrew help Raja?*
- 2) *What else can Andrew do for Raja?*
- 3) *What are some tips for PMETs in career transition?*

To Change or to Stay

Tony's many careers' options

Background

Tony is in his late 20s and has been retrenched from his digital marketing role in a bank since mid July 2016. He would like to find a job in a different industry and possibly in a different role, preferably a marketing role. Tony aimed to find a job by end Jan 2017.

Work Experiences:

Since graduating from university in 2009, Tony joined the banking sector and worked in a variety of roles. In his first job at a local bank, he stayed for six years, and rotated among different functions and departments. His last role at that bank was in segment marketing where he stayed for two years. He then joined a foreign bank in 2015 in digital marketing function where he stayed for 6 months before being retrenched.

Since his retrenchment, Tony has been active participating in hackathons, as well as doing adhoc projects for a local government agency to develop web-based and e commerce -related projects for a start-up.

Education/Training Qualifications:

2nd upper BSc in Bio Sciences major with minor in Business at a local university in 2009.

Issues

Undecided which industry and role would suit him best, Tony was also fearful of making the next step in case it is not suitable for him and he may get "stuck" again. He had listed six possible industries (FMCG, Pharma, Consumer Internet, Tech Transfer, Startup, Innovation-related).

Tony wanted to go into a marketing type of role, even though his last job was in digital marketing, doing specific activities in the retail banking sector. He wanted to move into a full marketing role outside retail banking. He felt that he did not like the "culture" of retail banking where it was too sales driven. He also wanted to do more than just digital marketing. Tony believed that he could go back to retail banking as a backup option as headhunters had been calling him about such roles.

Since his retrenchment in mid-July, Tony has:

submitted applications to a few advertised jobs for marketing roles but received limited or no response. spoken to a Venture capitalist two months ago about a possible internship role, but has not followed up on the matter.

attended a few conferences and seminars on tech- related topics out of interest and to form new networks.

But apart from getting name cards, he has not really followed up on any of these connections.

Implementation

Tony was put through some assessments and profiling.

In terms of core values, he has ranked career as most important. Separately he has also indicated that career progress is his least satisfied area. In terms of workstyle, the self-assessment shows he is a “facilitator” i.e.

- Enjoys creating to do lists
- Doesn't like to waste time
- Structural yet flexible
- Prefers working on tasks that adds to personal goals
- Works well under pressure, likes trouble shooting and making decisions

But he also has elements of being an “architect” in the following.

- Likes brainstorming and planning
- Big picture
- Likes developing new ideas and items
- Thinks outside the box

In terms of skills, apart from reducing the list to eight skills, Tony admitted that he does not like focusing on details and sees this as a burnout skill. He also does not like a “sales culture”. In fact, in analyzing the “meaningful experiences” results, the following surfaced.

- He is data driven
- Likes variety
- Likes to see quick results
- Does not like sales culture or chasing numbers
- Does not like details

While his has broad interest in a variety of industries, he listed six industries he was keen to consider (FMCG, Pharma, Consumer Internet e.g. AirB&B, Tech Transfer e.g. ASTAR, Venture capital, Innovation related). The common factor among them was its close relationship with technology. Tony felt that this could be reduced to perhaps 3 industries as a focus.

He brought up the notion of FMCG several times and seems to be very keen in this. He does not feel he has unique gifts or specialty that he can bring to the job. However, in his self-assessment he was very specific about his roles and accomplishments. He was encouraged to review this again.

He feels he has “backup” options in place, i.e. going back to retail banking if needed. But this would be last resort.

While he attempts to make connections with industry contacts, he has not explored much in this area, only preliminary attempts. The concept of “fear” has cropped up a few times in discussions about moving into a new area.

He has also mentioned strong interest in start-ups and is keen to see how he can participate in these.

Contributed by Anonymous 12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What were the presenting and real issue?*
- 2) *What career development theories can be used to better understand the client and situation?*

Getting Closer to His Dream

Paul's quest of starting his own retail business.

Background

Paul is 27 years old is a foreign worker, married for about one year and planning to have children in the near future. His wife Joan is 25 working as a teacher in his home country. After completing his undergraduate studies in Physics, he could not find a job related to his studies. He started to work in a couple of hotels as a front desk officer, and also a restaurant as a waiter.

He decided to come to Singapore in search of better prospect but landed a job as a retail assistant at a retail store selling household items. He was promoted to a shift leader after a year. His ability to speak English well and provide good customer service was noticed by the store owner and was promoted a year ago to be assistant supervisor of the store. In the absence of the store owner, Paul has to ensure the proper scheduling of six employees under him. Some of his responsibilities include liaising with suppliers to replenish stock when it is low, proper pricing of the products, proper display of the products and closing the day's account.

Having worked in hospitality and F&B industry, he has a way with serving customers in the store too. With new skills acquired through managing the retail store, he noticed how lucrative this retail business can be. He wants to provide his family with a good life when he returns to his home country and prefer that his wife stay at home when they have children. With his wife working, the extra income will help partially pay the monthly mortgage for their apartment back home.

Issues

Without a good understanding of the retail industry and without relevant skills, Paul wondered how he could achieve his goal of one day owning his own retail business. He knows that if he does not start to plan now, he will not be able to achieve his dream.

He has seen how prices are marked up to determine the retail price. However, he wants to know the mechanism behind the buying and selling of products in the retail business. He wonders how some items are purchased at rather low prices and sold for a good profit. He is curious to know how the store owner obtains the goods at low prices from overseas suppliers like China, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. If he wants to start a retail business, he needs to learn more than just managing a store. He thinks there are lots of behind-the-scene work happening just for a retail store.

He has talked to his brother and sister, but they told him not to have such a big dream. His wife supports his dream, and suggested he talks to a career coach to seek professional help.

Implementation

During the three sessions he had with the career coach, he was able to confirm his interest and values and set his goals for the next one year before his work permit expires.

An action plan was developed. He had to look up courses related to retail and supply chain management. He was hoping that he could work with another company to gain experience on sourcing, purchasing and negotiating for products and prices. A month before his work permit expired, he decided that he will return home and take up a diploma course in logistic and supply chain, and at the same time find employment in company that has opportunity to practice what is learning.

Paul has now completed his diploma studies, and currently working for a large retail company that gives him the opportunity to gain practical experience with the knowledge he gained in his diploma course. He is already 9 months into his job back home and learning much. This is one step nearer his dream of owning his own retail business.

Contributed by Jolly Tan Associate Trainer
Career Practitioners Division Workforce Singapore
12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What are the assessment tools would you likely suggest to be used for this case?*
- 2) *How do you justify the use of the tools you suggested above?*
- 3) *In the light of which career theory or theories will help you understand Paul's aspiration and directions which he has to take?*

To Batam or Bust

How Peter makes the decisive move to venture into business

Background

Peter, 34 years old and single, works as a manager in a multi-national company. He felt very stressed working as a mid-level manager. He was expected to take on many responsibilities, and an assortment of duties; but the staff who report to him are not supportive of his efforts, and often delayed in delivering what they had promised to do. His bosses would blame Peter whenever his team could not live up to the bosses' expectations.

His overseas boss also called him at odd hours at night (different time zones) to discuss projects with him, disturbing his rest.

Peter wondered how much longer he could take this work stress. But did not know what other career he could pursue.

At lunch one day, Peter met his former classmate, Kim, who invited him to play golf with him at Batam Island over the weekend. Felt that he should take a short break to overcome his stressed and chaotic state of mind, Peter agreed. But he also felt guilty about not taking advantage of the weekend to catch up on his work. So mentally, Peter promised himself that he would bring his laptop along and do some work whenever he could find time.

Whilst playing golf, Kim met an acquaintance, Howard, who has a business venture at Batam. He invited Kim and Peter to visit him, and a tour of his factory. Initially Peter wanted to decline the invitation so that he could use the time to do his work which he had brought with him to do. However, Kim persuaded him to take a break, so Peter agreed to go reluctantly.

Issues

A few weeks after the trip to Batam Island, Peter received a call from Howard, asking him if he would like to join him in his new business venture at Batam.

Peter was interested in Howard's explanation about his new business venture, and the potential it promised. But not having any previous business experience working in another country, Peter was hesitant about Howard's proposal to join him in this business venture.

Implementation

Peter decided to consult a neighbour who works as a Human Resource Officer and has training in career guidance.

Over coffee, Peter weighed the pros and cons of taking on a new career; the chaos at work; and the detrimental effect this work stress has on his mental health. The neighbour listened attentively as Peter spoke, and only made a few comments when appropriate.

At the end of their coffee session, Peter thanked the neighbour for helping him sort out his thoughts and various considerations regarding a change of career. Peter felt more confident to take up this opportunity to do something different. The challenge seems interesting to Peter. Peter decided to join Howard in his new business venture.

After three years in this job, Peter acknowledged that he was much happier at his new job where he felt more at ease and found the work enjoyable. Howard was also pleased with his performance and made him a partner in the company.

Contributed by Wong Sing Chee Trainer/Consultant
Career Success Consulting 12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did Peter's neighbour counsel Peter when he was described to have "only made a few comments when appropriate"?*
- 2) *Would you advise your clients with this statement: "Individuals need to get out of their comfort zone and take risks by venturing into new opportunities"?*
- 3) *If your answer is "yes" for question 2, what may be your reasons for this advice; if no, why not?*

To Resign or Not to Resign...

Sue's dilemma with her teaching professional

Background

Sue, a teacher, was not happy at work, and wondered if she should change her occupation.

Since her graduation from NIE five years ago, Sue has taught in a secondary school. She enjoyed imparting knowledge to her students and seeing them succeed in their studies. She was also in charge of the school band, and regularly accompanied her students for their band performances outside of school hours, which meant giving up her evenings and weekends which she treasured. Nevertheless, the applause that the band received after each performance was rewarding to her, as much as it did to the band members.

Sue, 32 years old, is married. Her husband is also a teacher but works at another school. They have a 2-year-old son whom they send to childcare centre when they are at work.

Sue's parents are retired. Mother, 61 years old is healthy; but Father, 62 years old, has multiple illnesses like hypertension, diabetes, etc. As both are not working, Sue supports them financially, together with her younger brother.

Sue's parents-in-law have also retired, and Sue's husband helps to pay for their monthly expenditure.

Issues

Recently, Sue was promoted as "Subject Head" for Geography. Although she was pleased with the recognition of her efforts, yet she felt that with the promotion, a lot of her time had to be spent on administrative duties that she did not enjoy doing. In addition, she had to attend numerous meetings which bored her. Sue knew that her passion is in teaching, interacting with students, and seeing them develop. But not doing administration duties like planning; and forecasting budget and manpower requirements; attending meetings which had no direct relevance to her duties. Moreover, several colleagues who were her friends seemed jealous about her promotion, and are not as friendly and cooperative with her as before. Sue was hurt by their change in attitude.

As Sue also could not envisage herself doing those administrative tasks indefinitely, and was aware that these administrative tasks are likely to increase rather than decrease, Sue wondered if she should leave the teaching profession.

Implementation

Sue discussed her concerns with her husband. He was also unable to resolve her problem. But assured her that he would stand by her whatever was her decision. Further, they agreed that they were too enmeshed in their situation to think through the issues clearly and objectively, and suggested that Sue consults a Career Coach to assist her.

Contributed by Wong Sing Chee Trainer/Consultant
Career Success Consulting 12-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *Identify Sue's characteristics and her probable Holland code.*
- 2) *How would you assist her in her uncertainty whether she should change her occupation?*

Stepping out of her Comfort Zone

Job is outsourced, no interest in another field

Background

Stacey works as a Finance Manager in charge of Budget and Admin matters with an agency. Stacey holds a bachelor's degree in accountancy from NUS Business School and enjoys her work as her colleagues are friendly and her boss is understanding. In her role, Stacey ensures that there is efficient allocation and usage of the budget for the agency. This requires a certain level of skills in budget managements and analysis. Given Stacey's keen eye for detail and ability to work independently, she has been promoted twice from an Executive to a Manager since she started work with the agency.

Recently Stacey was informed by her manager that a part of her job will be outsourced to an external partner and was asked to consider taking on a new role. This may mean Stacey has to move away from doing analysis work to one that requires her to step out of her comfort zone and manage teams and external stakeholders. It may also mean moving away from budget to other financial policies.

Issues

Stacey is unsure what to do as she feels like her knowledge in budgeting will go to waste if she explores another area of work. Not to mention, she does not want to move away from being an individual contributor to a people manager's position. She feels that this is not her forte and is uncertain if she would have any choice left once her role is outsourced. She's also considering moving to work in a private sector company but fears that she may end up being in an unstable environment.

Implementation

The Human Resource Officer spent time getting to know Stacey and understanding her strengths, concerns and needs. She learned that Stacey is 34 years old, single, and lives with her parents. The family is financially comfortable, and there was no pressure for Stacey to contribute towards the family income.

After a lengthy discussion with Stacey, the HRO realised that Stacey has minimal self- knowledge and information on the employment market. She does not have much time for leisure activities as she is often tired after work and catches up on her sleep during weekends. She does not have many friends both at work and in her social network.

As Stacey believed she was quite secure in her job, she did not bother to check out on the employment market, as well as training activities and schemes for skills upgrading purposes.

The HRO went through the RIASEC assessment in the SkillsFuture portal to identify her profile, and her interests. The HRO went through the list of jobs identified by the RIASEC profiling on the SkillsFuture portal. They discussed the working conditions of

these jobs, the career pathways, and the salary range, and shortlisted some for further consideration.

Following this, Stacey was coached in preparing a one-page resume and went through a mock interview with the HRO to brush up her interviewing skills. The HRO covered some of the common key questions that employers ask during job interviews.

Knowing her interest and skills, Stacey is now in a better position to evaluate the other job roles that her agency will offer her when her current job is outsourced. She is also better prepared to look for a new job outside the agency.

Contributed by

Workforce Development, Public Service Division and Career Practitioners Division, Workforce Singapore
18-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What are Stacey's transferable skills that she could use effectively in other occupations, both in civil service or private sector?*
- 2) *What career assessment tools could be used to facilitate the coaching discussion, and help Stacey acquire better self-knowledge?*
- 3) *What are the various schemes available for mid-career changers, e.g. "Professional Conversion Programme", "Adapt and Grow" programme which Stacey could use to prepare her for a career transition?*

Feeling Cooped Up at Home

How Hui Qi returned to a new job after going on no-pay leave

Background

Hui Qi is a Corporate Communications Executive with a Statutory Board. She has been working for about 3 years when got pregnant and delivered a baby boy, Jonas in Sep 2017. She took 4 months maternity leave and stayed at home to look after Jonas. When it came time for her to return to work, Hui Qi felt that she wanted to spend more time with Jonas and contacted her agency to extend her leave. Her Reporting Officer told her that she will need to be on No Pay Leave (NPL). Her RO also told her that there is no guarantee that there will be a job within the agency when she returns from NPL.

In April 2018, after being on NPL for about 3 months, Hui Qi decided to put Jonas in infant care in her neighbourhood so that she can return to work. Her RO told her that her position has been filled and encouraged her to seek other opportunities via Careers@Gov.

Months went by and her son is now almost 1 year old. Her husband works as a uniformed officer with SAF and is able to support the family with his single income but it is putting quite a strain on their finances. With a newborn baby in tow, and unable to find a job, Hui Qi finds herself slowly sinking into depression.

Issues

Hui Qi's excitement as a first time mother quickly dissolved into disappointment when she realised that she has no job to return to and she's forced to look out. Hui Qi was looking after her son alone and feeling cooped up at home with no one to talk to and was sinking into post-natal blues. She missed her colleagues as well as the adult interaction at work. She has been applying to several roles advertised on Careers@Gov but did not hear back from any of them. Hui Qi's confidence hit a low and she's unsure what to do.

Implementation

The HR Officer was sympathetic as Hui Qi discussed her situation.

Since Hui Qi felt "cooped up at home", the HRO suggested she could consider joining a mothers' group to network and meet other mothers. Through these activities, Hui Qi could satisfy her social needs, exchange information on infant care, learn about occupations she may not be aware of, skills expansion/upgrading opportunities, and possible job openings from these new friends.

To help Hui Qi in her job search, the HRO introduced MyCareersFuture portal to Hui Qi, where she is able to match her skills to jobs advertised on the portal. The HRO highlighted to Hui Qi to target her job search rather than casting the net too wide.

For a start, the HRO encouraged Hui Qi to take the RIASEC assessment on MySkillsFuture portal. With the profile, she was able to narrow her job search to those that match her RIASEC profile. The HRO also helped her to edit her resume to highlight the skills and experience that she has. The HRO advised Hui Qi to customise her resume according to the job requirements rather than using a single resume for all job applications. In addition, the HRO also practiced mock interviews with her.

Contributed by

Workforce Development, Public Service Division and Career Practitioners Division, Workforce Singapore
18-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What may be Hui Qi's skills, work values, interests and personal attributes, transferable skills that she could identify to help her make a better career choice? (The information would also help Hui Qi in crafting a CV that could market her well)*
- 2) *What career assessment tools would be useful for Hui Qi to improve her self-awareness?*
- 3) *Would Hui Qi consider working flexi-hours or on contract basis whilst searching for a full-time position? This would help her ease into working life again, as well as determine what and where she would like to work.*

Balancing Skills and Career Interest

How Zhi Wei's skills and career interest led him to find a job he is passionate about.

Background

Having spent 20 years in the manufacturing sector, Zhi Wei (not his real name), felt a strong calling to leave the industry he had grown so familiar with, to pursue a career in the social service sector. This decision came after having dedicated the past 10 years since 2007 doing charity work whilst meeting the demands of his full-time Product Engineer job. In those 10 years, Zhi Wei contributed to society by actively volunteering at VWO where he paid regular visits to homes of the elderly who needed care. The deep desire to do good, coupled with a passion to care for the elderly led Zhi Wei to resign from his job, in search for work in the social service sector.

Issues

With no prior working experience in the social service sector, Zhi Wei's three-month job search led him nowhere, until he met Andrew Er, Senior Career Coach with Workforce Singapore's Careers Connect.

Implementation

Zhi Wei was introduced to the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) to help him expand and explore possible job options based on his career interest. Motivated Skills (MS) card sort was also applied to help him identify transferable skills that he could articulate as competencies in his resume to meet the hiring needs of the employers. Andrew also recommended Zhi Wei to attend Careers Connect's Career 360 programme where he had the opportunity to network with others, who were looking to embark on their journey into the social service sector, as a form peer support.

By using these assessment tools, Andrew was able to assess Zhi Wei's career interest vis-à-vis his skills so that he could explore career opportunities in the social service sector that he was not only interested in but that best utilised the skills sets Zhi Wei possessed.

Today, Zhi Wei is a Care Co-ordinator at an established community organisation where he manages a team of volunteers that conducts activities for the elderly. Zhi Wei is happy to land himself into a job that met his interest, made best use of his skills and for which he is truly passionate about.

Contributed by
Andrew Er
Senior Career Coach
WSG's Careers Connect

A Successful Mid-career Switch

How Zoe transit from lack of job satisfaction to a fulfilling career.

Background

From a system analyst to a 3D animation specialist, and eventually to a data analyst role; Zoe (not her real name) has taken on various roles in the Info-Communication Technology (ICT) industry over a span of 15 years

Issues

Despite multiple career switches across sectors within the ICT industry, Zoe still felt that her sense of job satisfaction was sorely missing. She eventually decided to seek career guidance from Workforce Singapore (WSG)'s Careers Connect and was assisted by Senior Career Coach, Shawn.

Implementation

Applying the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and the Career Values Card Sort assessment tool, Shawn discovered that while Zoe's career interests of Social, Investigative & Artistic (SIA) personality types matched her previous job roles; her career values such as Teamwork, Frontier of knowledge, Change & variety, among others, were missing.

To help Zoe explore occupations that matched her Career Values (V), Career Interests (I), Personality (P) and Skills (S), and Shawn used the WSG Careers Connect's in house curated Career CARE 360 program, specifically, Career Catalyst, to guide Zoe in evaluating her possible career options based on the understanding of the level of job fit to her VIPS dimensions.

Zoe eventually identified the role of a Software Developer which she ranked the highest among her options including non-ICT sectors. To facilitate a successful transition to this preferred career pathway, Shawn introduced the Professional Conversion Programme in Salesforce Platform Developer, a career conversion program that helps professionals and mid-career switchers undergo skills conversion and move into new occupations or sectors. In this role, Zoe will need to be highly engaged with her clients and develop customised and sustainable solutions as a team, something that she likes but were missing in her previous employment.

Today, Zoe is a Salesforce Platform Developer with an IT solutions provider. A job that not only fulfills her career values, interests, personality, and motivated skills but also offers a progression pathway that is highly rewarding.

Contributed by
Shawn Moi
Senior Career Coach
WSG's Careers Connect

From Rejections to Success Story

Finding a purpose, new opportunities, demonstration of strengths.

Background

Isabel was a project manager, bringing with her work experiences from a diverse background including office administration as well as customer service. She had a pleasant disposition and a cheerful personality, making her someone who was easy to get along. From her sharing, Joel, her career consultant could tell that she was a dedicated, hard worker who would go the extra mile for others.

Issues

In the course of the coaching, Isabel shared that she was keen to return to the area of Administration and Human Resource and was looking to upgrade herself in these areas.

Implementation

To do this, Joel used a set of guiding questions which he had put together, drawing from literature and resources he read in the course of his work e.g., *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* by Wayne Cordeiro, *Knowdell Card Sorts and Ikigai — A Japanese concept*. From her responses, Joel assessed that Isabel's interest and values were indeed a good fit for the social service sector. For a start, Joel enrolled Isabel for the Resume & Cover Letter Writing Workshop and advised her to do up a tailored resume / cover letter. In the ensuing months, having established a strong coach-coachee relationship, Isabel was encouraged and more ready to apply for administrative and social service job opportunities. Despite countless rejection, Joel continued to inspire hope and encouraged Isabel to persevere.

One month into the career consultation, one of MAXIMUS ASIA's partners, Salvation Army, advertised a role for a Program Executive. The role-required skills that was closely aligned to what Isabel had to offer e.g. events management, administration and customer service. More importantly, they were looking for someone with a passion for the community and a heart to serve in a non-profit organisation. Joel wasted no time in sharing the role with Isabel and within the next day, she had drafted a cover letter for the role. After making a few improvements, Joel proceeded to send her resume to Salvation Army.

The rest they say is history, but it is also Isabel's success story. Today, 11 months into her job, Isabel is still enjoying her job and finding a purpose in what she is pursuing. In view of her outstanding performance, she has been given an expanded job scope, with new opportunities to demonstrate her strengths. Through it all, she remains thankful for the support rendered to her during her job search journey and she is looking forward to continuing to grow with the organisation.

Contributed by
Joel Wee
Career Consultant
MAXIMUS

Trying Something New

How Jason overcome his low self-esteem and ace the interviews.

Background

An engineer by training, Jason Tan (not his real name), decided early in his career that he wanted to try something other than engineering. He eventually decided to enter the digital marketing industry and managed to secure a digital marketing job.

Issues

Unfortunately, his manager back then was belittling and overbearing, which caused Jason to develop a very low self-esteem. This also resulted in his struggle to hold a proper conversation. The first career coaching session with Jason was met with monosyllabic answers and hardly any eye contact.

Jason was very clear that digital marketing was his passion, albeit not the people aspect of the job. The upside is that the experience in digital marketing was in a job function that was in high demand. He was able to secure interviews but not job offers, as he did not perform too well in the interviews.

Implementation

Linus, his career coach, knew clearly there was some work to be done in growing Jason's confidence and helping him ace his interviews. Hence, interview preparations became the focus of the follow-up sessions.

Linus discovered that Jason was dabbling with ecommerce in his free time and got excited whenever that topic was brought up. Linus saw the opportunity to use this topic as a good way to start building up Jason's ability to have a free-flowing conversation. They did several mock interviews and rehearsed typical interview questions that Jason found challenging, e.g., how can you do this job when you are so nervous. Their hard work eventually paid off as Jason received a couple of job offers and accepted one after weighing the merits together. Not the same challenge but the sentiment has resonance to this case, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it" — Nelson Mandela

Contributed by
Linus Leen
Manager for the Coaching and Development team
Ingeus Singapore

Building Up Personal Brand

How Carol got out of her comfort zone in job search.

Background

With over 20 years of experience in the finance sector, Carol (not her real name) left her role as the Head of Marketing and sought help from Workforce Singapore (WSG) to explore her career options, including those which could leverage on her skillsets to contribute to clients in a less commercial environment. During the course of the coaching, it was evident that she was confident and expressed herself well.

Issues

She had not started her job search and appeared to lack information about the environment outside of the finance industry, in terms of the job requirements and pay scale.

Given the lack of clarity about her future career plans, Carol's WSG career coach, Jenny applied the five stages of Donald Super's Career Development Theory through the Career Catalyst programme to help Carol better understand her interests and options

Implementation

Carol started off with the VIP24 online assessment and applied Holland's Theory of Career Choice (RIASEC) to analyse the results. She also completed the Myers & Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test. Both results indicated that Carol's strength lay in helping others, and that she was most suitable for interpersonal roles.

The results were taken further when Carol was introduced to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which allowed her to better interpret how her beliefs could impact her actions and bring her success. In addition, she was also advised to research on other finance-related roles, allowing her to leverage on her pre-existing network of clients.

With greater clarity on her VIPS (Career Values, Interests, Personality and Skills), Carol decided that she would do best staying in the financial industry. Armed with valuable tips obtained from attending various Career Energiser workshops, she became empowered and took charge of her job search by building up her own personal brand and networking with her industry contacts, something that was out of her comfort zone as she had always been head-hunted or referred by her ex-bosses.

Throughout her journey, she was supported by Jenny who also worked with her WSG colleagues to help increase Carol's exposure and job referrals. Within 4 months, Carol was offered, and has accepted a role as Director in the finance industry.

Contributed by
Jenny J Chiang
Career Coach
WSG's Careers Connect

Getting Back to Employment

How Karen gain clarity of her career choices.

Background

Karen (not her real name) sought help from Workforce Singapore (WSG) in hope to get back into employment anytime soon.

Issues

Being out of job for 4 months with only 5 secured interviews out of the 200 job applications sent, where none translated to a job offer

Implementation

To better understand her predicament, Karen's WSG career coach, Maurice applied the Schlossberg's Transition Theory to help Karen gain better clarity of her current situation and resources available so that effective coping strategies could be developed to help her.

Karen started off by building up a resilient and positive mindset through WSG's Career Recharger programme that helped improve her coping skills. She was then guided to identify her Values, Interests, Personality and Skills (VIPS) to gain better clarity of her career choices.

With the newly gained clarity, mindset and strategies in place, Karen was ready to regain control of her job search. Maurice shared with Karen the labour market information like industry insights, growth trends and job opportunities. Together, they revisited her past applications and interviews for areas of improvement.

Maurice then proceeded to work with Karen on identifying her Knowledge, Skills, Attributes and Other Characteristics (KASO) so that her interests and experience could be better matched to job descriptions. Maurice also helped Karen refine her resume writing skills and polished her interview techniques. With these enhanced job search skills, Karen received two job offers within 3 weeks and eventually accepted the one that suited her career aspirations best.

Contributed by
Maurice Ng
Career Coach
WSG's Careers Connect

Case Studies on Mature Workers Aged 50 & Above

Age is Just a Number!

How Helen found new interests after retiring from work

Background

Helen will be 62 in September. She has worked in the Public Sector for close to 38 years, taking a year sabbatical only when her only daughter was born and resumed working once she was able to settle her daughter in a childcare facility. Now that Helen's daughter is a grownup, and working overseas, she is feeling the empty nest syndrome with her husband who has retired a few years ago. Helen has worked as a Personal Assistant and well-loved by colleagues who have seen her exhibit strong work ethics. Don't be fooled by her wrinkles, she's actually very fit and works out at least 3 times a week with her friends in the neighbourhood. Helen believes that she is still very healthy and wants to continue to work as long as she can. She admits that over the last 2 decades or so, her job has morphed itself and she's having to learn new skills like emailing, and outlook calendar management. But Helen takes it all in her stride and feels proud that she can still contribute to the workforce. She is confident that she will be reemployed even after she reaches the Stipulated Retirement Age.

However, in her staff appraisal review 6 months ago with Florence, her Senior Director, Helen was told that there won't any opportunity for any re-employment within her agency. Out of goodwill, Florence said she will help to circulate her CV among her friends and network. If there are no job opportunities within the Public Sector by the time Helen turns 62 in September, she will have to leave.

Issues

Helen is disappointed that she's being told that she cannot be re-employed when she knows she meets all the re-employment criteria. She is conflicted by the message that the government is supporting active aging while encouraging the pioneers to work beyond 62. She is not sure if she can handle being at home and is still in a lost. She has been feeling rather depressed and is considering going to her MP's Meet the People's session for a complaint.

Implementation

The HR Officer listened sympathetically as Helen related her disappointment on the possibility of not being re-employed after she has reached her retirement age; as well as her concern on how she would spend her time if not working.

The HRO also learned that Helen and her husband are financially comfortable as both of them had worked hard and saved enough to see them through their retirement years. Both Helen and husband get along fairly well. Each has their own interests which they could pursue without interference from the other person. Nevertheless, Helen was concerned about how she would spend her time if she was not working.

Helen seemed people-oriented and appreciated good relationships with others. She may feel fear of redundancy if not gainfully employed or occupied.

Helen did the RIASEC assessment on the SkillsFuture portal and was led to a list of jobs that matches her RIASEC profile. The HRO discussed with Helen the kinds of jobs that she would like to continue doing after her retirement. They were able to shortlist a few jobs. The HRO then went through the working conditions and salary ranges of these jobs with Helen. Helen seemed to be open to exploring some of these jobs. The HRO then worked with Helen on her resume and interview skills. The HRO also explained some of the support schemes available from the government relevant to her situation, such as the Career Support Programme.

Contributed by

Workforce Development, Public Service Division and Career Practitioners Division, Workforce Singapore
18-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What is Helen's motivation for working? To spend meaningful time at a place where she has devoted 37 years of her life, and well-loved by her colleagues? Is she open to working elsewhere?*
- 2) *Since she is an experienced Personal Assistant, would she consider working in a smaller company, or volunteer her services at a Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO) where her experiences and skills would be very much appreciated, but may not be able to afford to pay her a high salary?*
- 3) *How motivated was Helen to learn new skills, work-related or otherwise? If so, what skills would she want to learn? Where can she find out more information about these skills and training providers, as well as training subsidies?*
- 4) *What may be Helen's other interests and leisure activities that could occupy her if she was no longer gainfully employed?*

Never Too Old to Learn!

How Desmond is helped with transition to more complex work

Background

Desmond, aged 54, works as a HR Recruitment Officer and supports filing and paperwork involved in a new hire process. He also has to set up interview rooms and arrange for various parties to be at the interviews. His job is getting increasingly hectic because it is hard to arrange the timing and schedules of so many parties involved especially since many of them are Directors and Senior Directors who have busy schedules. Yet Desmond plods on relentlessly. Desmond is a trusted colleague and does his work well, rarely ever making any mistakes. He is also friendly and helps settle new recruits' nerves when they come for interviews.

2 years ago, his organization embarked on a new software application to replace all the manual work involved in recruitment. This meant a large part of Desmond's work will be handled by Robotic Process Automation and Desmond is forced to learn new software and pick up new skills. His job will be redesigned, and he is expected to handle more complex matters, something Desmond is not looking forward to.

Issues

When the new system is rolled out, Desmond will no longer need to do about 60% of what he does today. For the transition to go smoothly, Desmond's manager Mary, Senior Assistant Director of HR, has suggested for Desmond to commit to a training and reskilling schedule. Unfortunately, Desmond is not coping well with these changes and has tried to ask his colleagues for help. However, a lot of his work has to be completed by himself and there's only this much his colleagues can help with.

Implementation

The HR Officer identified Desmond, 54 years old, as a trustworthy, careful and detailed-oriented person. He is also friendly and helpful. However, he was not inclined to "learn new software and pick up new skills".

Desmond did not seem motivated to go through a training programme. He may have misgivings and fears about attending training courses as he felt uncomfortable at their pace of teaching, and Desmond was unable to gain much progress in his training in spite of help from his colleagues. The HRO encouraged Desmond to discuss with Mary on alternative ways of learning which he may be able to cope better with.

The HRO also explored other job options with Desmond. She sensed that Desmond enjoyed work that required coordination and attention to detail. She took Desmond through the RIASEC profiling and identified a list of possible jobs that will interest him. She encouraged Desmond to explore these job options within the organisation, and to seek help from Mary. She also did some mock interviews with Desmond which helped him articulate his skills and experience if he were to be called up for possible postings to other divisions within the organisation.

In addition, the HRO also drew Desmond's attention to other self-paced online courses which would help him understand technology better and to be able to use technology in his work.

Contributed by
Workforce Development, Public Service Division and Career Practitioners Division, Workforce Singapore
18-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *The Senior Assistant Director “suggested for Desmond to commit to a training and re-skilling schedule”. It may be helpful if Desmond’s view on the matter was sought and given encouragement, and his fears allayed in the planning of the training schedule. Desmond may be more cooperative and motivated if he felt that he “owned” the decision to go for training.*
- 2) *Would it be possible for Desmond to attend similar, but more elementary courses conducted at a slower pace, so that he could learn with less fear and misgivings, and have a better grasp of the knowledge and skills expected of him? After gaining confidence from these fewer challenging courses, he may be more ready to attend other courses that are more demanding.*
- 3) *Would it be possible for Desmond to be transferred to another position/department where his soft skills could be used at an advantage, rather than making him learn skills that he was unable to acquire, and probably would not use well?*

False Sense of Security

Skilled worker, low desire for reskilling

Background

Hock Chye is a sole bread winner at home and has been working in the same agency for more than 2 decades. He works tirelessly as a Senior Technician, ensuring that repairs and maintenance works are done according to Standard Operating Procedures. He has also received recognition awards for his efforts. Though he only has NITEC qualifications (ITE) Hock Chye is grateful that his agency has given him a lot of opportunities and even recently promoted him to a senior, in spite of his lack of education/qualifications. He loves the stable environment and is happy that he does not have to interact with too many people at work, being introverted by nature. Hock Chye's family relies heavily on his stable income as his wife does not work and he is looking after his aged mother and raising 2 adult kids. Due to his long working hours, Hock Chye does not have any energy for pursue anything outside work and hopes to retire when he reaches 62.

Issues

Though Hock Chye works long hours, he is happy because his job is stable, and allows him to do what he does best – work with his hands. Hock Chye's kids are pursuing tertiary education and he is proud of their academic achievements. As their father, he does not like sitting in a classroom as he only has basic literacy skills and therefore prefers working with his hands in technical roles where he does not need to interact with others. Besides, work takes up most of his time and energy and Hock Chye usually falls asleep on the sofa watching 9pm news. Lately Hock Chye has heard his line manager discuss transformation journey and digital learning with the team but does not have time to attend any of those talks nor is he keen to attend.

Implementation

The HR Officer tried to understand Hock Chye better, so as to help him more effectively. She identified that Hock Chye likes to work with his hands, and dislikes attending classes or talks on transformation journey.

The HRO realised that Hock Chye was under the belief that even though he did not have high qualifications, his diligence and hard work were recognised by his employer, as evidenced by the promotions for him to take on higher responsibilities. Hence he had felt assured of job security.

The HRO explained to Hock Chye the changes in the employment landscape and the need to stay relevant in order to stay employable. The HRO also shared the disruptions brought about by technology and how these disruptions could lead to loss of some jobs and creation of new ones. She also explained that even where job is not lost to technology, they may be augmented by technology which workers would need to learn to use in order to continue working.

The HRO tried to understand Hock Chye's reluctance to pursue other activities outside of work, including his lack of interest to upgrade/expand his skills. If possible, the HRO would like Hock Chye to envision what his new job may look like, or how he would like to spend his retirement? This knowledge may motivate Hock Chye to get out of his inertia and engage in some self-improvement and similar activities.

The HRO also showed Hock Chye the list of courses under the SkillsFuture Credit scheme. She also pointed out those courses that could be taken either online or through an app on his mobile phone. Hock Chye seems piqued with the possibility of e-learning or mobile learning. The HRO then encouraged Hock Chye to try out one of the free online courses at Coursera.

Contributed by

Workforce Development, Public Service Division and Career Practitioners Division, Workforce Singapore
18-07-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *Hock Chye has financial responsibilities and is likely to be motivated to look for alternative employment. Does he know how he could look for other suitable employment opportunities?*
- 2) *What are some schemes that Hock Chye could use to learn new skills or upgrade those he has? Where may he obtain information on courses, training subsidies, etc., especially those designed for older people so that these classes would be less threatening for him?*
- 3) *Has Hock Chye planned what he would like to do, or spend his time, including his leisure time, if and when he retires?*

Age Discrimination?

How does career interventions eventually landed Matthew a job.

Background

With over 30 years of experience in sales and account management, 60-year-old Matthew (not his real name) resigned due to conflicts with his reporting manager and started his job search. Despite his efforts, he continued to face challenges in securing a full-time job and decided to reach out to WSG for employment assistance.

Issues

Matthew expressed his desire to move into service fulfilment, business development or account management roles in a technology-based organization but was unsure how to achieve this. His approach thus far had been to cast his net wide by sending the same resume to multiple roles. He believed that his years of experience and notable achievements would made him an ideal candidate and was convinced that the lack of response from employers was due to age discrimination.

Implementation

Evelyn, his WSG Career Coach, worked out interventions targeted at his knowledge, job search skills, and mindset. Matthew was first educated on market trends like Industry 4.0 and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Evelyn also adopted **Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset** to positively influence Matthew, leading to his openness to attending workshops and courses to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. Matthew then learnt the importance and strategies of targeted job search, including customizing his resume. Lastly, **Krumboltz's Happenstance Learning Theory** was applied to guide Matthew on reframing obstacles into opportunities. Progress was slow at first, but Matthew eventually shifted his strategies to conscientiously customize his resume to fit job descriptions and to expand his online presence by building up a comprehensive LinkedIn profile. Matthew eventually secured the position of Strategic Business Partner at a technology firm.

Contributed by Evelyn Tay
Senior Career Coach WSG's Careers Connect

Reflection Points

- 1) Would it be a different scenario if Matthew has sought ways to address the conflicts with his reporting manager?
- 2) Age discrimination may be real, but what are the alternative ways older workers like Matthew are able to change this mindset?

Case Studies on Back-to-Work Mums

Happy Mum, Happy Life!

How Priscilla prepared herself for the workforce

Background

Priscilla has been a homemaker for 15 years since the birth of her twin daughters. Before becoming a full-time housewife, she was a brilliant Public Relations Officer at a renowned hotel in Singapore. She received praises and recognition from her boss, colleagues and hotel guests for her good performance. Priscilla loved her job and enjoyed the challenges of meeting the needs and demands of people from all walks of life. It was therefore a difficult decision for her to leave her job and take care of her daughters.

Recently, Priscilla started entertaining thoughts of returning to work since her daughters have grown up. For the years after she left the workforce, Priscilla had kept abreast with news on public relations and its development across different industries. However, she was concerned that her 15 years absence from the workforce would be a challenge should she decide to join the workforce again.

Issues

Apart from her worry of her ability to adjust if she should rejoin the workforce after a 15- year break, Priscilla was also apprehensive about not being able to be with her daughters during their puberty years. Although her daughters are well-behaved and seem matured in their thinking, Priscilla was concerned about the need to be with them at this stage of their lives to give them the necessary guidance. On other hand, Priscilla did not wish to give up her dream to return to the workforce. Undecided what she should do, Priscilla decided to visit the career centre near her home to seek for professional advice.

Implementation

Rebecca is the career practitioner who received Priscilla when she visited the career centre. She listened attentively to Priscilla as she related her dilemma and tried to understand her situation. Sympathising that Priscilla felt constraint by her maternal responsibilities and did not want to leave her daughters on their own, Rebecca advised her that there was no need to rush into finding a job, since she was not financially challenged. She suggested to Priscilla to take up a part-time course to upgrade her knowledge and skills on public relations. This will allow Priscilla to have the flexibility and time to take care of her daughters while refreshing her skills.

The duration of the course is two years. Priscilla could make use of this period to continue guiding her daughters and encouraging them to be independent. The knowledge and skills she would have picked up through the course would also prepare and provide her with the confidence to transit back to the workforce which she has left for 15 years.

Currently, Priscilla is still pursuing her course and will graduate in five months' time. She has guided her daughters well for the past one year and was glad that they have become more independent to take care of themselves. She is also more confident about her ability to re-join the workforce as a Public Relations officer.

Contributed by Anonymous 29-06-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *What skills did the Career Practitioner use while attending to her client?*
- 2) *What do you think of the Career Practitioner's advice to her client?*

From Distinctly Disadvantage to a Good Fit

Being absent from the market to securing a job.

Background

Having taken four years off to guide her son during his O-levels and help her daughter adjust to Primary 1, Janice was set to return to the workforce. However, she was not prepared for the unprecedented changes in the socioeconomic landscape wrought by COVID-19.

Janice, formerly a Program Manager at an institute of higher learning (IHL), had an attractive offer rescinded with the sudden advent of the pandemic. Overnight, Janice was one of many jobseekers left bereft of opportunities as the world came to a standstill.

As Singapore was adjusting to COVID-19 during phase 2, Janice reached out to Workforce Singapore (WSG) for help and was assigned to MAXIMUS, one of four Career Centres under the Career Matching Program. Raphael, her personal Career Consultant, was on hand to help her identify the challenges and navigate the new normal.

Issues

Firstly, being absent from the “market” for some time, Janice needed guidance and direction. She did not plan out her job goals and was unsure of latest hiring trends.

Secondly, her resume was overly broad and failed to give a concise snapshot of her knowledge, experience, and skillset to the employer. Her resume gave a detailed account of what she had done, not what she could do, if given an opportunity.

Thirdly, her penchant for taking on new challenges and wear multiple hats had unfortunately left Janice with a big problem. She had held appointments ranging across Business Development, Project Management, Relationship and Event Management with each constituting a short period of time. This afforded her breadth but robbed her body of work of depth. Janice had a distinct disadvantage and was often overlooked vis-à-vis other candidates with a more focused body of work.

Implementation

Together, Raphael and Janice started by discussing and defining her job goals. They had to meet her needs while remaining attainable and realistic. The onset of COVID19 did lead to a tumble in the number of jobs and forced everyone to reconsider their priorities. Next, Raphael coached Janice on the latest hiring trends. Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), Zoom interviews and SG United Skills Programmes were the new buzzwords.

To give her resume a makeover, Janice took part in a bite-sized MAXIMUS workshop where the resident trainer, Azizah Ishak, taught participants how to craft a more compelling narrative to convince employers and ATS alike of what they can offer.

Less than two weeks into the program, Raphael brought something to Janice’s attention. A world-

renowned Institute of Higher Learning, an ongoing MAXIMUS partner, was looking for a Fundraising Manager. MAXIMUS often partnered with a comprehensive network of appreciative employers to match them with their job-ready talents.

Given her lack of experience, Janice was skeptical if she was suitable for the role. Raphael explained how her diverse skillset was surprisingly a good fit. The role called for a keen eye to recognize opportunities, organizational skills in managing budgets and schedules, abilities in building strong partnerships and experience in organizing large-scale events.

For three months, Raphael guided Janice through the interviewing process and was always on hand with words of encouragement and targeted advice. Three interviews and a written assessment later, Janice had secured the job through a successful demonstration of her abilities!

Contributed by
Raphael See
Career Consultant
MAXIMUS

Case Studies on Ex-Offenders

Baking Up a Rainbow

How Machi changed his destiny

Background

Machi is a talented and successful baker who owns a bakery at Tanjong Katong. Eight years ago it was a totally different situation for Machi, and no one would thought that he would be able to achieve this success.

Machi had dropped out from school when he was 16 years old, without completing his G.C.E. 'N' level. He worked as an odd job worker into his late twenties and had not thought much of his future. At that time, he had a girlfriend whom he had dated for two years. She was keen to settle down, and persuaded Machi to apply for a flat together. However, Machi did not have much savings and was unable to pay for the down payment of a flat. Because of this reason, his girlfriend left him. Machi was depressed. And to get over his sorrow, he resorted to taking drugs, and was in and out of the prison for the next six years.

Whilst Machi was in prison, he developed his talent for baking through the prison's work and vocational training programme. Machi also drew confidence from affirmations of his expert baking skills and looked forward to getting a job as a baker after his release from prison. He had matured over the years and after the many years going in and out of the prison, he wished for a chance to turn over a new leaf.

Issues

When Machi was still in prison, he noted that several of his friends had difficulties getting a job when they were released. Because of this, they could not integrate back into the society, and went back to taking drugs again. Before long they were caught and sent back to the prison. This knowledge impacted Machi greatly and he was worried what would happen to him after his release from prison. Machi spoke to the Prison Officer, who encouraged Machi to persevere, and never go back to his old habits. The Prison Officer showed great faith in Machi's baking skills and explored work options with him, eg. starting a home-based business on baking.

Implementation

When Machi was released, he tried his best to find a job, while at the same time read up books on starting a home-based baking business. He found a job as a mover with a moving company and started saving up for his business plan. He also attended home-based business workshop recommended by the Prison Officer whom he got to know well while serving his term.

Finally, after saving for two years, Machi decided he could start his home-based business. It prospered and when business was too good to operate from home, he decided it was the time to start his first bakery. He went through great efforts to secure

a loan to acquire his shop. Business flourished, and now Machi employs two helpers who are also ex-offenders. He hopes he would be able to assist these fellow ex-offenders by helping them to rehabilitate, and that they would also have the opportunity to strike out on their own in their careers, just like him.

Contributed by Anonymous 29-06-2018

Reflection Points

- 1) *How did the Prison Officer help Machi?*
- 2) *What else can he do for Machi?*
- 3) *What do you think Machi can do to further help ex-offenders like himself, besides offering jobs to them?*

Case Studies on Persons with Disabilities

More Enabled than Ever

Being able and skillful to run a business, more than what he thought he could do.

Background

George (not his real name) – 53 years old, was a healthy man when young, and very active in several sports. He has a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from a local Polytechnic. At the age of 36, he was involved in a car accident that rendered him partially paraplegic. For the next two years, he suffered from depression due to his loss of mobility, job and income. His wife also left him, and George was left to fend for himself.

George's parents had to return to work to help pay his medical bills during his two years of depression and incapacity.

Issues

George had been working for an electrical engineering company and had the potential for a very bright future. He was earmarked for promotion to become a business manager when the accident happened. George's area of expertise was in conducting electrical audits and helping to trouble shoot electrical systems. His job required him to be at various construction sites to address challenging issues.

Since the accident, he was very conscious of his loss of movement and his dependency on his parents. He resigned from his job six months after the accident. Visiting the local help group for disabilities, George found that while he lacked the skills that could help him pivot to another industry, he had a flair for sales.

Michelle, a career coach at the local career centre met up with George and planned with him to attend a series of developmental courses at local institutions offering SSG courses. Reluctantly, George agreed to attend the training programmes identified for him or risked being fined for not attending the courses.

Implementation

In the first three months of attending the courses, George was one of the disruptive learners who regularly refused to participate in class discussions, and frequently argued with the trainers. The situation was brought to the attention of his career coach who encouraged him to persevere and even sat in class with him on one occasion.

It was when he was attending the 2nd module of the "Personal Effectiveness" course that he realised he had been over-reliant on others; and that he had dwelt on his own difficulties and not willing to step out of his comfort zone. After a visit to SG Enable, he made friends with James, who was paralysed waist downwards due to a medical condition. James was also Michelle's client who had worked as a customer service executive for a retail company. Both became good friends and attended new courses together.

They met regularly to discuss and confide in each other. They also shared their difficulties and discussed ways on overcoming them. They encouraged each other to seek new job opportunities.

Over the next few months, through attending classes, George found several new friends who linked him up with various job opportunities and provided him with emotional support.

With his newly found skills, friends and confidence, George managed to find a new job at an interior design firm.

Today, he is the lead for internal automation design in the company, and won several innovation awards in Singapore, as well as in the region. He also designed several offices and homes which were featured in local magazines.

His favourite tag line: “You are only disabled by your own thoughts”

Contributed by
Anonymous

Reflection Points

- 1) *What did the Career Practitioner do for George?*
- 2) *What role did she assume in helping George?*
- 3) *Should Michelle have attended the class with George?*
- 4) *Should Michelle contact James to support George?*
- 5) *Was she in compliance with the PCDA Code of Ethics?*