

# Take control of your career

By Gaynor Lowndes, Managing Director, The Recruitment Training Company, and The Recruitment and Training Factory

I recently read a newspaper article written by a certain well-known Career Education academic (and I emphasise academic). He quoted a recent US survey which found that seven out of ten adults wished that they had done more research into career options before they were “swept” into a job. The author of the article used these survey results to argue that personal choice in careers is a myth, and that steps need to be taken to provide career choice and freedoms to those in society who are “trapped” in jobs that do not fulfil them.

This article provides a disturbing example of the many individuals who refuse to take responsibility for their own careers. How strange, to suggest that because an individual is too careless to explore his or her career options, that it is somehow the society’s fault when he or she ends up in an unfulfilling job! These people certainly did make a personal career choice: The choice to not do their research, the choice to be “swept” and “trapped” into a job. In this age of litigation and finger-pointing, we no longer want to take responsibility for our choices in life and career.

The reason I write about this issue is to urge you, as a fellow recruiter, to understand that you alone have the power to determine your career path. Let’s not create a mentality within our industry that success and fulfilment are out of reach, because we are supposedly not in control of our careers. Success will not come to you, you must meet success. And the same can be said for fulfilment.

Here are three decisions you need to make, as a recruiter, in order to take control of your career for maximum success and fulfilment:

**Decision No 1: “If I am not satisfied with my current career, I choose to change it!”**

Simple. The first step to taking control, is to decide what you really want, and act on it. So if you’re a recruiter, and you don’t feel as though recruitment is what you want ... get out! This is not intended to sound harsh, recruitment is not the profession for everyone, and that’s ok. What isn’t ok is letting yourself down, letting your agency

down, and letting the industry standard down, by staying when you know it’s not right for you. This, in a general sense, is what those surveyed in the newspaper article have done. They refuse to accept a fundamental truth: that their situations can definitely improve for the better, but only if they take steps to make it happen!

As a trainer, I see this all the time. Recruitment, as with any sales profession, is about confidence and passion. If you are unhappy with your job, and feel “trapped,” it will show in your sales figures, as well as your attitude. I often train promoted receptionists who remain consultants simply because it pays better than their previous role. But the money issue quickly becomes a paradox; they are obviously unhappy and unfulfilled, and as a result, they generate little profit!

So I urge you to think carefully about whether recruitment is right for you, and to realise that you can handle your dissatisfaction far more effectively than those people surveyed in the newspaper article. Susan Jeffers, in her bestselling book “Feel The Fear and Do It Anyway,” urges us to “correct, not protect,” when it comes to dealing with unsatisfactory career situations. If it isn’t working for you, don’t “protect” it just because you have the security of this job, or because you are afraid people may view you as a failure. You only become a failure if you refuse to open your life up to success and fulfilment, so “correct” your situation by finding a career that is right for you, and the success and fulfilment won’t be far away.

**Decision No 2: “I choose to think in terms of success!”**

Stephen R Covey, in his book “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” states that all things are created twice, first mentally, and then physically. This is the basic concept of self-belief.

If you decide that recruitment is the right profession for you, that you have the passion and confidence to succeed in this highly competitive industry, then start thinking in terms of your own success.

The newspaper article I referred to

above laments that only a privileged few have access to the best jobs. Is there any reason why that might be? The author of the article seems to assume that these people somehow fluked their way to success. No, they started their road to success by creating success in their minds. And you, as a consultant, can do the same. It’s easy to be cynical about the old “self-belief” cliché, but it stands to reason that you will only succeed at something if you believe you can.

**Decision No 3: “I choose to act on my thoughts of success!”**

The other key element of success that the author of the article seemed to miss is action. Now that you’ve established thoughts of self-belief in your mind, take these thoughts: the star candidates, the clients becoming retained, and the profit rolling in... and make them a physical reality. Focus on the level of commitment and effort in the actions that you take, and this includes a commitment to continuously improve and develop your skills, through practice and training. Take action to live the dreams and thoughts within your head, and you will look back and realise that those who are “trapped” actually built the trap themselves.

I urge recruiters across the industry to take these decisions on board. If our consultants take ownership of their careers through these decisions, then they, and therefore the industry, can only reach new heights of success! Remember, the biggest billers are passionate about their work and their industry, so think success, and take action to ensure success! ■



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