



rialto
ACCELERATED IMPACT

Rialto White Paper:

An intelligent career model for the 21st Century

Rialto reports available online at:
www.rialtoconsultancy.com/resources



2016 Winner

*Consultancy of the Year in
Organisational Culture
Excellence*



2016 Winner

*Most Outstanding
Change Management
Firm - UK*



2016 Winner

*Change Management
Advisers of the Year*



2015 Winner

*Business & Leadership
Transformation
Specialists - UK*



2015 Winner

*Transition Coaching
Consultant of the Year
- England*



Winner 2015 & 2014

*UK Transition Coaching
Consultant of the Year*



*Rated as STRONG
amongst UK's 1000
largest management
consultants*



*Winners CMI
Outstanding
Organisation of the
Year (SME)*

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. A new intelligent model for managing careers	6
3. Conclusion	12

1. Introduction

Careers advice historically helps clients do things like create a barnstorming CV, practise to ace an interview, develop mind blowing propositions or build a 30" sales pitch - as if they were simply goals to knock over. At Rialto, we increasingly think goals alone are insufficient. A focus on goals doesn't seem to work that well in today's volatile world which is why much careers advice isn't worth getting. So instead of goals, adopt a systems approach.

If you're at the stage of your career where you're just wondering how you got here, how you'll get there or have no idea where there even is, just keep reading

Most of us started our careers much like balls in a pinball machine, fired with great speed and purpose from education only to find ourselves hit a bunch of unidentified obstacles, set off bells, pick up some knocks and land somewhere miles from where we thought we would. This realisation can be particularly revealing for senior people 20 years in to their careers, often when they reach out to find people like us.

Ways in which careers develop has changed hugely in the last thirty years. Rare now are traditional linear careers, where you climbed the corporate ladder, implicitly trusting that the system would reward you with a secure job to retirement, a pension and financial security.

"Expert" careers have better stood the test of time, where scientists, doctors, musicians, lawyers and other specialists followed journeys where they continued to hone their skills, seeing their increasing expertise and rarity rewarded commensurately.

More recently, other career patterns have emerged in response to changing working dynamics, technology and societal norms. The model illustrated overleaf, adopted from Driver & Larson's original career concept model, provides a neat scheme of the differences we observe in working patterns which, despite authorship in 1980, is still a useful diagnostic today.

As you look at it, consider which of these seems most relevant to you and whether it's in fact the trajectory you thought you'd be on when you entered the workplace. This might come as a surprise. What does it suggest about the way your career has developed and is it time to take back control?



The Linear Concept: aim for power and achievement

- ✓ Focussed on rapid movement up the "corporate ladder"
- ✓ Career success means gaining increased levels of responsibility and authority
- ✓ Early identification and nurturing crucial
- ✓ Flexibility a byword for success
- ✓ Rotation, different jobs or geographies essential to round out the individual



The Expert Concept: value expertise and security

- ✓ Most stable and historically dominant view of a successful career
- ✓ A lifelong commitment to a profession with which one identifies
- ✓ Continually mastering the knowledge and skills of the profession
- ✓ Has historically provided the biggest transition challenge for new partners



The Spiral Concept: cherish personal growth and creativity

- ✓ A less traditional view where one discovers one's career
- ✓ Periodic lateral changes of related fields (e.g. PP -> in-house -> corporate -> PP)
- ✓ Developing broader skills and new applications of previous experience
- ✓ Will be of increasing value as ambassadors of the firm elsewhere



The Transitory Concept: seek variety and independence

- ✓ The most change-oriented and least conventional view
- ✓ The job itself is of secondary importance, a means to an end for a life defined by discovery, interest and adapting to new challenges
- ✓ Not easily managed or developed, perhaps better utilised as part of a flexible offering, engaged as a contractor on a case by case basis
- ✓ The insight and thinking they can bring can be worth it

Driver, MJ 1980. Career Concepts and Organizational Change . In CB Derr (ed) "Work, family and the Career" (New York: Praeger)

With different career tracks such as these, we would argue a systems-based approach to career planning works better. Goals change and career models change but the system by which you navigate your journey can be established and modified as you go along.

Scott Adams, Dilbert creator and all round good guy, is an interesting and wise character and made some good points in a recent article for Inc. magazine about career planning. He says:

- ✓ beware of advice from successful people because no two situations are alike;
- ✓ inspirational biographies are no help – biographers never have access to the internal thoughts of successful people. If a biographer says Henry Ford invented the assembly line to impress women, that’s probably a guess;
- ✓ don’t “follow your passion.” *Wait a minute, come again? You’re supposed to be a career coach and you’re telling me not to follow my passion??* Yes, dear reader, we agree with Dilbert. Passion will undoubtedly give you high energy, high resistance to rejection and high determination. Passionate people are more persuasive, too. However, Adams’ point is that banks don’t lend to passionate people, on the basis that they are not objective and dispassionate enough in their decision-making and therefore represent a bad credit risk. He says banks want the grinder, not the guy who loves his job.

The point seems to be this: it’s easy to be passionate about situations that are working out and that distorts our impression of the importance of passion. Situations that don’t work out tend to slowly drain the passion as they fail. Things that work out become more exciting as they succeed.

The problem is that most work is not passion-inducing, is it? A number of our team remember working in corporates in the 90s and always noticing those who were more “passionate” than the others. You know the ones – first in last out, seem to have read all the industry rags, best briefed at sales meetings, always ready to smile ‘n’ dial. It looked and sounded great and the bosses loved it. Looking back, we suspect lots of them were more passionate about what the job could do for them, not the job itself - rise through the ranks quicker, get paid quicker, leave quicker. And that’s no bad thing. It’s just you need to be clear about what and who you’re doing it for and why.



If you are genuinely passionate about what you do on a daily basis, that's all well and good. Become the expert, the go-to person and be prepared to consider other ways of delivering your expertise should your employer decide to strategically, ahem, refocus.

So forget about passion. And while you're at it, forget about goals too.

The best advice we can give clients is to think about the job after the next one. Job seeking, like networking, is not something one does only when necessary but should be a continuing process. This makes perfect sense if you do the maths: chances are that the best job for you won't become available at precisely the time you declare yourself ready.

Therefore, getting a job is part of a system, not a goal.

Systems-based career planning means thinking about yourself, your market, your competitive edge, being clear about your performance factors and how you can improve your quality of output vs. the person next to you.

If you're in technology, healthcare or engineering, it might mean thinking more like an ambassador of your firm than an MD or employee, increasing your visibility at forums designed to develop next level thinking. If you're in a sales role, your career management system should include building awareness of your clients' preferences and thinking styles as a major component of increasing your numbers.

For everyone, it usually means learning more about yourself – your life purpose, values, environments that will suit you and where you will best FIT next. Again, guided self-analysis to figure out your motivated skills will help determine whether you want to stay a producer or become a manager (and potentially, a cost).

But do not expect your employer to do it for you. They are interested in keeping you doing what you are doing, thank you very much, especially if you are earning them money or freeing them from what stuff no-one else can or wants to do.



Throughout our coaching lives we've had our antennae up, looking for examples of people who use systems as opposed to goals. In most cases, as far as we can tell, the people who use systems do better.

The systems-driven people have found a way to look at the familiar in new and more useful ways. For example, as we moved into the second decade of the new millennium it was clear the writing was on the wall for many conventional business models – think big box retailing, think Blockbuster, think big chunks of wholesale finance, music or how we buy consumer technology. The clever ones made a choice and put systems into place to transfer themselves to safer ground. Some picked up a new sector, build new relationships and figure out their transferability quickly, some offered to cover a new market or geography and built a defensible franchise and others retrained.

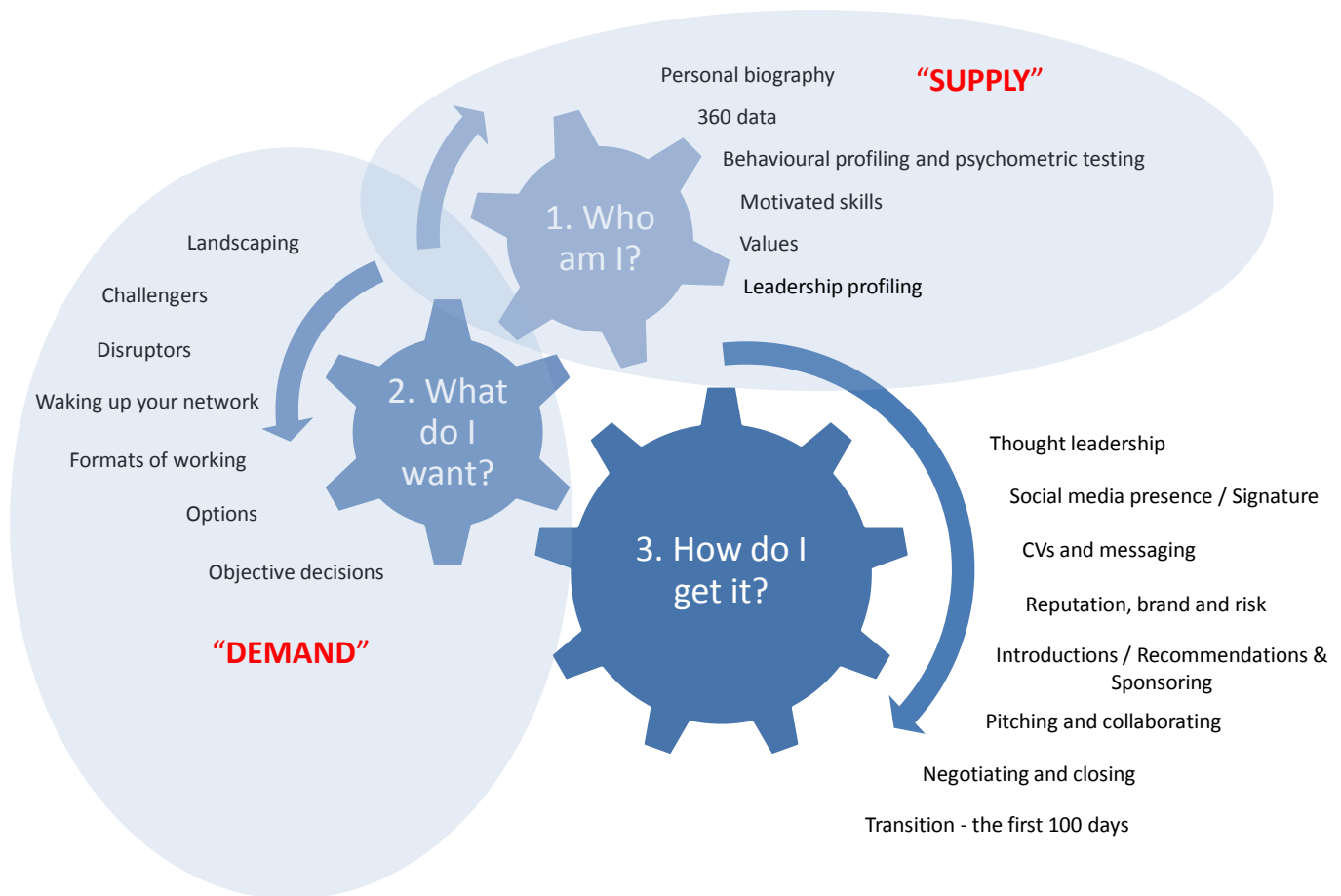
Within 15 years, so much has changed yet so much hasn't. Structural upheaval in business is almost the only certainty - most of us will run the risk of becoming functionally obsolescent at least once in our careers. Putting systems in place to manage your career by taking regular time out to appraise where the ship you're on is headed is increasingly critical.


If you're out there looking to make your first break into something new, then systems thinking is also essential. The whole deal – clarifying who you are and what you want, targeting employers, writing CVs, dealing with recruiters, networking for information and contacts, interviewing, negotiating and closing – all requires a system as none of these components of a successful job search strategy happens in isolation. If you think through this list with your own situation in mind, you will quickly see how the last item is linked in a dependent chain back to the first.

Finally, the old adage about learning through failure is as true as ever. It's a good place to be because failure is where success likes to hide from plain sight. Everything you want out of life is in that huge, bubbling vat of failure. The trick is to get the good stuff out.

2. A intelligent model for managing careers

As a result of extensive practice over more than 20 years, empirical research and consultation with close colleagues, we here suggest a model for managing careers that is built for the 21st century. Each of these three stages are inter-related, and we find that clients move between all three, especially the first two, many times before feeling they can commit properly to action.





Who am I?

Stage 1 : Who am I?

Personal biography

A guided look back at significant life events, points of transition. Rather than focusing on what was achieved or not, look at how connected, fulfilled and happy you felt at different times and why

360 stakeholder data

Our view of ourselves is often different to that of others. Getting qualitative feedback that is honest and useful requires experience, careful judgment and facilitative skill. Putting it together in a meaningful way that clients can understand, even more so.

Behavioural profiling or psychometric testing

These assessments are helpful in aiding self and other awareness, environments that would produce the best results and potential blind spots. They rarely provide the whole answer but provide a rich backdrop to coaching work.

Motivated skills

Clients sometimes find it hard to express what they feel good at, as most things they do automatically. The value in structured coaching interventions to establish core functional skills is essential, as is an assessment of motivation in using them in future.

Values

Guided coaching conversations with experienced professionals can help individuals unlock what matters to them more widely in life, the extend to which they have adopted others' values or felt they have understood their own. It can be very cathartic for someone to realise and give themselves permission to acknowledge the importance of certain things in their lives, and how they want to align their work to these.

Leadership profiling

Completion of a research based instrument which will identify your potential as a future leader as well as highlighting development requirements and priorities.

Stage 2 : What do I want?

Landscaping

Some organisations in your target space are pioneers, some are laggards. When it comes to questions of market positioning, dominance and competitive advantage it is hugely useful to be able to landscape and articulate this comprehensively and effectively. So what is your business plan for your future employer?

Challengers and disruptors

Building on landscaping work, there is valuable work to do in finding out who is starting to eat whose lunch. What have challengers or disruptors seen that the incumbents, entirely focused on running to stand still, might have missed? What problems that can you help address and for who?

Waking up your network (and creating a new one)

You can start a network with 2 people that will actually work for you and give you all the coverage you will need to transition. But it requires some basic understanding about messaging, selling, human behaviour, yourself and others' preferences in order to be successful.

Exploring formats of working

Technology has enabled many ways of delivering yourself to the market that would have been unimaginable to previous generations. Whilst liberating for some, the choices can be scary for others. A key part of the work at this stage involves testing different models against your wider life criteria, personal needs and tolerances.

Options and objective evidence based decision making

One of the bedrocks of all successful coaching is the ability to help counter cognitive bias and assumptions which can limit your field of view. Then test emerging options against set criteria in a structured way that can help reinforce the confidence of making certain decisions over others.



Stage 3 : How do I get it?

Thought leadership

Consideration of how to become best in class and how to monetise your value and profile built to date. This element needs to answer the question as to why the market will/needs to invest in you.

Social media presence and signature profile

The ability to present a unified, consistent message on social media is a modern-day prerequisite. Learn how to interrogate LinkedIn to make it work for you, as well as how to monitor and manage your brand's perception online for maximum success.

CVs and brand messaging

Neuroscience and modern behavioural sciences have started to shout truths about good and bad ways of doing this. Relevant documentation and interview approaches should be future-focused, emphasising potentiality over past experience, and entirely focused on your target's problems.

Reputation, brand and risk

360 data attained in step 1 can help obtain the "as is". We can build on this by assessing who you need to bring around you as references, mentors, introducers and amplifiers. By being mindful of past mistakes and thinking through how to present them, we can head off problems early and maintain momentum.

Introductions, recommendations and sponsorship

Good career coaching firms are also proactive and supportive of their clients, and not afraid to introduce them to their alumni or client database. This however requires clarity around messaging and reasoning behind who you want to approach and why.

Deciding, negotiating and closing

Acting with appropriate challenge, a good coach should be testing the validity of your decisions once you are in receipt of offers of work. Role play, tactics and advising through experience on how to "defend your number" and other areas to do with agreeing scope and other conditions of the job are crucially important as well.



How
do I get
it?

Transition -The first 100 days

A step-by-step process to ensure smooth, profitable transition into new working environments, how to avoid common pitfalls and ensure you start your new working life with purpose and positivity.

This model is designed to be organic, free-flowing and multi-directional. It does not focus overly on goals, nor does it imply you move in linear fashion from one stage to another.

Clients may feel they have a good self-concept, but we doubt whether it is sufficient enough to predict environments where you will thrive rather than just survive. Much career coaching seems to miss this point; that people leave bosses not jobs. The reason? The brain is an organ of relationship first and foremost and it tunes itself to others' brains. Our emotional systems act pre-consciously before our rational thinking gets a chance to interpret. This means that at its best, good coaching will help clients become more aware of their emotional make-up and what triggers will activate certain emotions in them, in turn switching on the whole cognitive/behavioural circuit.

We increasingly anchor our transition programmes with clients by using intelligent career models like this so that someone gets an opportunity for full, whole life assessment. As the world becomes more volatile and uncertain, this is becoming more essential. Agility and evidence based decision making becomes the prize. The job market our parents and grandparents faced was more certain, deliberate and patriarchal. This model presents an integrated system to self-manage careers in a world where change happens quicker, more fundamentally and people can become obsolete on the turn of a coin. The notion of a job for life has gone and with it, the expectations of a parent-child relationship between employer and employee.

No longer can employees expect employers to take the moral burden of directing and safeguarding their workers' lives, making choices for them and implicitly knowing what decisions they should take at key transition points.

An adult-adult dynamic allows individuals to contract for specific periods of time as "suppliers" with employers ("demanders", allowing delivery of their labour for certain reward. The extent to which that includes development, self-actualisation or personal satisfaction is laid firmly at the door of the individual to decide. That's why they need a system and the support of a professional coach, such that they can discern themselves and future choices better.

The intelligent career model we have proposed seeks to help individuals attain a wider view of themselves and create a system that allows them to succeed, whatever the weather.

An acceptance of self is key, and with it support to celebrate and find conviction in your own working identity. Rather more common is the instinct of many coaches to focus their clients attention on perceived competency gaps. All that does is drive people to spend too much time focusing on what they are not good at or don't like, mainly because their past organisation demanded it temporarily. Surely that is folly in a world demanding excellence. It is much better to build confidence and clarity around what you like and are good at. The world will be so much more excited.

3. Conclusion

The call to arms is clear - careers will look different in the future and tomorrow's winners will self-drive their careers from the beginning. If the desired end points are as described in this model, individuals will need to better understand far earlier in their careers what will suit them so they can establish a career system and run with it. This requires a pragmatic and holistic view of the self whilst still at junior levels, perhaps with some career coaching intervention to help them reconcile their values, career aspirations, preferred behaviours and environments

This paper has touched on three important and interrelated issues:

1. The importance of systems-based thinking to embed self-learning and sustained career management once coaching has ended;
2. The importance of mapping supply onto demand to get essential clarity and conviction before approaching the market;
3. The importance of environmental as much as functional fit in predicting career longevity and success. People tend to leave bosses, not jobs.

But one critical factor underpins everything: relationships. An organisation is simply a sum of human relationships and it is the leaders' job to ensure those relationships can flow and flourish as much as possible. "People make the world go round", as the old saying goes, yet many of us have tried through sheer force of logic and data to create the career acceleration we want. Neuroscience has provided a much needed clinical evidence base of why bad relationships and cultures can impede performance, both at individual and organisational levels, and its findings must be taken seriously.

So in conclusion, take better care of people emotionally you encounter through your working life, learn to adapt your behaviours to accommodate differences and remember that a coffee works a lot better than an email.

Good luck in securing your future success! It's out there!

Rialto specialises in unique change management and business transformation solutions which deliver exceptional results.

Our services include:

Transforming the Performance Culture
Board Effectiveness and Governance
Strategies for innovation growth and innovation
Customer Insights and segmentation
Customer experience and capability alignment
Leadership Benchmarking – *Powered by RALI*
Leadership and Team Development
C-Suite Profiling & Assessment
Executive Search and Strategic Talent Mapping
Executive Coaching and Mentoring
Executive Career Transition

The Rialto Consultancy Ltd
25 Southampton Buildings
Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1AL
T: +44 (0)20 3043 8640
E: info@rialtoconsultancy.com
www.rialtoconsultancy.com