

Advancement through Security of Employability

David Cavell 31 January 2022

The age of disruption: The age of disruption is upon us! It is changing businesses, business models and paradigms in a way that has already caused major churn in the labour market. This churn will continue. Aspiring professionals must now develop a portfolio of attributes and skills that ensure they advance their careers, even if they have to change employers. This is true security of employability. Today's sophisticated company staff appraisal systems still vary significantly in effectiveness. This note proposes three areas in which the executive of the future should develop their capabilities, either through or beyond the regular company appraisal scheme.

1. Technical or 'on the job' proficiency: This usually has the greatest attention in the appraisal process. Being good at your job has four key benefits. It justifies the faith that the organisation placed in you when you were appointed. Your demonstrable expertise establishes your credibility with your staff and peers. Thirdly, it better positions you for promotion. Finally, do not discount the future value of the working knowledge you gain, for when you are the executive leading change.

2. Managing people – staff or clients: It's not enough to be 'good with people'. A company's greatest asset (as its staff are often called) must be managed professionally to maximise their commitment and effectiveness. You must also have at least an appreciation of the skills needed to acquire and develop new client relationships. You should work hard to understand best practice in these areas; communicating with and coaching your own staff in what is required of them.

3. Understanding the business, markets and strategic developments: Developing an awareness of these issues and the ways in which they are best approached and managed is a critical requirement. And it may be existential for the business. The sources of knowledge are many, and include professional bodies, journals, conferences, investor presentations (by banks in the global market) and suppliers.

Security of Employability: There are many disciplines where it is possible to achieve great professional satisfaction and seniority without reaching beyond the 'silo'. However, natural business growth and market consolidation is reducing the opportunities to contribute at a senior level from a 'specialist' position. Hence the emphasis on the three aspects discussed above.

Identifying and realising opportunities for advantageous change, and managing threats, is mission critical for organisations. Whatever the strategic context, effective change-management requires that you understand the business, and can manage the related work programmes to ensure that the benefits are maximised. If you aspire to be a business leader, disruption will make change a constant for you. Act now – be prepared to learn. **Critically, develop the skills to communicate your knowledge and sell your ideas to others.** In summary, build the professional capabilities that will ensure both career advancement and security of employability.

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