

E-BOOK

## Sage Careers Toolkit

*A toolkit to help you with every aspect of searching  
for a career at Sage and beyond.*



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# Self assessment

## Hints and tips

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Whether you're looking for your first job, thinking about a change of direction or coming back to work after a break, it's a good idea to ask yourself some questions to help define what you're looking for in a career.

1. What are you hoping to achieve after making a decision on your future?
2. Structure often makes complicated questions a little easier to answer, so create a formula or careers decision-making template to help you think about yourself.
3. For example, in thinking about 'your ideal role, identify what you have already achieved, what motivates you and where you think you will fit in best.
4. Try some career planning exercises to uncover your skills and achievements.
5. Don't just list or count your results – quantify how much you've achieved, how good you are and what you've learnt. The detail is very important in the language of success.
6. Make sure you understand how to align to your company's competencies (if you have them).
7. Think about matching your values with your job – this will make you enjoy it more and you will therefore be more successful.
8. Think about how your communication style influences the way you work.
9. Consider what really motivates you. How do your personal values match up with this?
10. Use careers exercises which are available to you.

**What are you hoping to achieve after making a decision on your future?**

# Self assessment

Ask yourself...

- If you could create your perfect role, WHICH factors would be important?
- It's okay to feel uncomfortable saying positive statements about yourself. It's not a natural skill.
- **WHO** can help me spot my achievements objectively and who knows me well enough to want to help?
- To get the best out of this self-assessment exercise, you'll need to reflect very hard on it. **THINK** what you can do to help you look at yourself in a positive light.
- **WHAT** do I need to do to get the best out of myself in this exercise? Have I ever really thought about my future potential?
- **HOW** do I relate to such an idea?

# My elevator pitch

## Hints and tips

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You never get a second chance to make a great first impression. A 90 second introduction can help you focus your thoughts and make a good impression on people who can help with your career choices.

1. Thinking about what you have to offer will help you make positive steps on the route to your chosen career. Here are some tips to help you identify and capitalise on your strengths. Do you know what you want to achieve?
2. Pinpoint what really interests you at work. For example is there a specific project or job that you really enjoy?
3. Know your skills, strengths, attributes and achievements. What makes you special?
4. Always look out for opportunities to raise your visibility and profile – then take them.
5. Build two-way relationships with people who can help you achieve your career goals.
6. Don't wait for anyone to 'market' you – be proactive.
7. Take a structured approach: plan, prepare and follow-up.
8. Always, be yourself. Be authentic. Even more importantly, be your very best self.
9. Keep an open mind. Think creatively and believe in yourself. Know that you can do whatever you put your mind to. It will work wonders.
10. Identify what your USP (unique selling proposition) is, and be confident in communicating it.

Thinking about what you have to offer will help you make positive steps on the route to your chosen career.



# *My elevator pitch*

Ask yourself...

- Am I absolutely **CLEAR** about my skills, abilities and achievements?
- Is my introduction **FLEXIBLE** enough to be used in different situations?
- Does it **CLEARLY** convey the message I want to get across?

# Knowing my career strengths

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**Thinking about what you have to offer will help you make positive steps on the route to your chosen career.**



# *Knowing my career strengths*

Ask yourself...

- Am I **CLEAR** about what I want to achieve?
- HOW can I build relationships that are mutually beneficial and with whom?
- Do I really **KNOW** what make my USP special?
- Am I prepared to invest the **TIME** in 'marketing' myself?

# Assessing my career choices

## Hints and tips

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How do you decide if a potential career opportunity is right for you? Here are some questions to help structure your decision making.

1. How does the opportunity meet your requirements?
2. What will the benefits be to you personally?
3. Does the role meet your personal values and beliefs?
4. Does the role fit with your communication style?
5. What are your motivators' and de-motivators for this opportunity?
6. Does the role make use of your key skills and will it allow you to develop further?
7. How will the role benefit you in the short, medium and long term?
8. How well does the opportunity match and suit your existing skills, experience and resume/CV?
9. What happens if you do not accept this opportunity? What could your alternatives be? Just because one opportunity isn't right, it doesn't mean you should give up.
10. After thinking it all through, take account of your gut instinct. Trust how you feel.

**How does the opportunity meet your requirements?**



# Assessing my career choices

Ask yourself...

- Does this **OPPORTUNITY** really match my values, communication style, skill-set and my motivations? Will I be fulfilled?
- **HOW** do I feel about everything? What is my gut instinct telling me?
- Can I see myself fitting into the new department/company and being able to make a valuable **CONTRIBUTION**?
- **WHERE** can I see this leading in say two years' time?

# My brand awareness

1. When you're looking for a career, you have one thing to sell – yourself. Here are our top tips for recognising and developing 'brand you'. Recognition doesn't just come from doing a good job. You need other people to know about it – so make sure you communicate and network effectively with people in your company.
2. Be aware of how others perceive you – in terms of your contributions, where you add value and your image.
3. Take a moment to think clearly about where you are right now, where you want to be and how you can get there.
4. Take a long, hard look at your abilities, how you work and communicate with people, what motivates you, where your interests lie and what your competencies are.
5. Look at what you've achieved to date. Identify specifically what you've done – the results and benefits your contributions have brought. Then focus on what skills you've used and what you've learnt.
6. It might seem time consuming but this structured approach makes developing your CV/resume much easier. It also helps to build confidence for when you're answering competency interview questions.
7. Create a structured 90-second verbal summary profile that can be used to get your career goals across (see 90-second introduction).
8. How do you want to develop in the short, medium and long term. This will show you are committed to life-long learning.
9. Keep yourself employable. Increase your awareness of where the business is going; track industry trends; look at where your skills and experience can fit in.
10. LinkedIn is a great site to network and research. Spend time developing your profile.

**When you're looking for a career, you have one thing to sell – yourself.**



# *My brand awareness*

## Ask yourself...

- **HOW** good am I at making sure I'm visible within my company?
- **HAVE** I identified my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?
- **WHAT** do I need to do to track the business direction and industry trends?  
Where can I look?
- **WHO** can help me practice my 90-second summary profile and give me feedback?

# Ensure successful networking

## Hints and tips

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Effective business networking is about linking together people who can help each other through their careers. Check out our top tips for establishing your career networks.

1. Talk to people! It sounds obvious, but networking in the context of career development is nearly always about getting information. Chat about the kind of jobs you would like to do and talk to those people who can tell you what's involved. Get them to give you advice about how you can achieve your goal?
2. One of the best ways to network is through meetings.
3. Ask questions such as:  
What skills do you need to do the job?  
What do you enjoy about your job?  
What training routes would you recommend to get into this job?  
Is there a particular qualification you think helps in this job?  
Could you give me the names of three people it might be helpful for me to speak with?
4. Start by thinking of 'contacts'. Do you know friends or family who could help? People and sports or social clubs? Former colleagues? Former class, college or university friends? Members of your professional body? Your mentors? Even Facebook friends?
5. Think about the best approach for each of your contacts. With some it may be a quick chat over coffee, others a formal business meeting, professional event or dinner.
6. Always remain objective and focused – think about your end goal. What's the purpose of the meeting and what would you like to achieve. Equally, always be conscious of the other person's time and commitments.
7. Your attitude is all-important when networking: be interested in the subject matter and the person you are talking with.
8. Enthusiasm is contagious. If you are upbeat, people will buy into your ideas and are far more likely to help.
9. Networking really is nothing new and in fact most people will land their next job through 'word-of mouth'. Between 60-80% of jobs are landed by recommendations.
10. Off-line or face-to-face meetings aren't the only way of networking - investigate online networking channels such as LinkedIn.

**Talk to people! It sounds obvious, but networking in the context of career development is nearly always about getting information.**



# Ensure successful networking

Ask yourself...

- If you think networking is scary – ask yourself **WHY**?
- What do you want to **GAIN**?
- Think about what your **PURPOSE** is – remember:
- When you're networking, you're not asking for a job. So always consider what exactly you're looking for. Networking will help you achieve your goals
- **THINK** do you want your ambitions to come true?
- **WHAT** really motivates you?
- **WHAT** are your interests and passions?
- **WHO** might share them?
- **WHERE** do they work?
- **HOW** can you get to speak with them?

# Setting successful career goals

## Hints and tips

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Whether your objective is to increase your earning, move up the career ladder or change jobs, setting some career goals is the first step to success.

1. Be specific about what you want to achieve from your career. Vague thoughts won't help you focus.
2. Your ideal role model isn't just about your 'dream' job – it should incorporate your skills, interests, beliefs, values and career aspirations.
3. Give yourself steps that you can measure. It's far easier to make progress when you have a short-term aim as well as a long term one.
4. Think ahead – imagine what it would feel like to be doing the role you've set your sights on. Let this be your motivation.
5. Create an action plan of what you need to achieve your career objectives.
6. Make sure your objectives are actually achievable . . .
7. . . . and realistic. There's a fine line between being ambitious and over-ambitious: don't cross it.
8. Identify your short, medium and long-term career goals.
9. Your overall objective should be relevant and appropriate to your career goals.
10. Be clear about what you want to achieve and by when. Setting a time scale keeps your motivation high.

**Be specific about what you want to achieve from your career. Vague thoughts won't help you focus.**



# Setting successful career goals

Ask yourself...

- Am I **CLEAR** about my career objectives and are they attainable?
- Have I got enough commitment to my **CAREER OBJECTIVES** to stick with them and make them happen?
- Is my **IDEAL ROLE** compatible with the rest of my life?

# *My career changes*

1. If you're thinking about a career change here are some hints, tips and questions to help you focus your attention and decide on a new direction. Think through your career history - has it a bearing on where you want to go?
2. Where do you want to be in 2-5 years' time?
3. Check your progress - this will be helpful in forming a plan for your career.
4. You'll need to put a lot of thought and energy into your strategy. Think about what your incentive is for changing and don't forget it.
5. The more information that you can generate about yourself, your career and your plans, the greater the reward. How will you find this all out?
6. Prioritise when and what decisions and actions you should take about your career and justify these priorities. The more that's set in stone in terms of your planning, the easier it is to stay motivated.
7. Are you prepared to 'upskill' to get to where you want.
8. Find out information on training and development resources.
9. Think about what will inspire and motivate you along the way.
10. Networking is a powerful career development skill. Have you thought about how you can get the most out of this?

**If you're thinking about a career change here are some hints, tips and questions to help you focus your attention and decide on a new direction.**



# *My career changes*

## Ask yourself...

- Am I my own best manager?
- Do I **KNOW** how to get the best out of myself?
- Am I familiar with the **TOOLS** available to me to help my career development?
- **WHICH** ones might be best for me?
- Do I know **WHERE** to look?
- Am I prepared to **COMMIT** time and energy needed to develop my career?
- **WHAT** am I going to do to make it happen?

# *My communication character*

1. Knowing your communication style means you can understand yourself – and others – a lot better.
2. We all have different communication styles. Knowing your own style is invaluable as you'll understand your communication strengths and weaknesses. Go online and research it to discover your preferred communication style.
3. Think about the strength of your style and how it impacts on others and on the way you work.
4. Consider the styles of your colleagues and identify where there are similarities and where there are differences.
5. If you're talking to others, listen out for words and phrases they often use and take a close look at their manner of delivery.
6. Match or mirror how they talk and the language they use (where appropriate). People feel more comfortable and open because they feel they are on common ground.
7. Don't just concentrate on one thing when talking to someone. Value the communicator, imagine being in their shoes when you deliver the message.
8. Understand what the situation is and what the audience might be expecting.
9. What you say is important – but so is HOW you say it. Try to consider your pace, tone, pitch and volume – as well as your body language and how you use your personal space.
10. Always choose the appropriate channel for your message. Some things are better said face-to-face; others can be communicated by email or phone.

**Knowing your communication style means you can understand yourself – and others – a lot better.**



# My communication character

Ask yourself...

- **WHAT** are the strengths of my style?
- **WHAT** might others find challenging?
- **WHERE** do I need to improve in building rapport with someone, or ensuring that my message gets heard?
- **DO** I need to look at my tone of voice, body language, use of personal space etc?
- **WHO** could I get useful, objective feedback from on my image and presentation style?
- **PRACTICE** matching or mirroring others in a 'safe' environment, say, with a friend?

# *Fantastic communication approaches*

1. Knowing exactly how you communicate doesn't just give you better personal awareness – it also helps you assess and become more aware of others.
2. Broadly, there are four different types of communicator - passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive. Do some research to find out what you are and how you can be a more effective communicator - especially when you come across someone who is opposite to your preferred style.
3. Think about the strengths of your style and how it impacts on your work.
4. Consider how your colleagues communicate and note where there are similarities and differences.
5. The key to good communication is flexibility. It is very important to know how to adapt your style to make sure your message is understood.
6. By the same token, it's just as important to know what you need to do to understand your colleagues' communication style.
7. Awareness of what your style is can prevent over-using your strengths. Not everyone has the same style, so it's important that you're not overpowering.
8. It can also help you to see whether you're really suited to your role. Some jobs are better suited to some styles of communication – e.g. a data analyst should talk in facts and figures, but if your preference is descriptive, flowery language, it may not be a marriage made in heaven!
9. Communication covers virtually every situation. For example, if you're preparing for an interview, see if you can find out about the style of the interviewer. That will help you adapt accordingly.
10. Even departments and entire organisations have a predominant communication style. Look around you and assess the communication style.

**Knowing exactly how you communicate doesn't just give you better personal awareness – it also helps you assess and become more aware of others.**



# *Fantastic communication approaches*

Ask yourself...

- **WHAT** do I like about my style?
- **WHAT** might others find challenging?
- **WHAT** style should I choose to give me balance?
- **DOES** my current role suit my style? If not, what do I need to do?
- **HOW** well do I think I communicate overall to my peer groups, managers and those who work for/with me?

# Your best possible resume/CV

## Hints and tips

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Your CV or resume is your chance to market yourself to potential employers. You're selling your skills, abilities, qualifications and experience.

1. Remember your CV/resume is not a job description or an autobiography – it's a business document. Always write it with the reader in mind.
2. Consider carefully how you present the information. Arrange it in reverse chronological order, with your current/most recent role or achievements first and make sure the layout is clear and un-cluttered. Align dates with company names and job titles. Above all – make it readable.
3. Keep it concise and make sure it captures the reader's attention within 20 seconds.
4. Don't just think about what you have done, but what you have done well. Highlight your achievements and the benefits you bring rather than simply listing your responsibilities and tasks.
5. Make the results of your contributions to the business clear. Quantify and qualify your achievements so they have as much impact as possible.
6. It's essential to recognise what you're really good at. Know your core competencies.
7. Your personal profile/impact statement at the beginning of your resume/CV helps potential hiring managers visualise how you fit into a role. It should encapsulate who you are, your unique blend of skills and characteristics and what you can contribute. This should be a simple statement of about 30-40 words.
8. Avoid jargon, slang, abbreviations etc. unless you know the reader will definitely understand. E.g. if you're applying for a role as a SAP operator, it's okay to use "SAP".
9. Don't forget to include your interests. Highlighting them can immediately build rapport even before you meet the potential recruiter. It can also win you recognition and even get you short-listed.
10. Proof read it carefully. Check accuracy of data, spelling and grammar (remember to ensure it doesn't contradict your LinkedIn profile!) Then ask someone you trust to critically proof read it.

**Remember your CV/resume is not a job description or an autobiography – it's a business document. Always write it with the reader in mind.**



# Assessing my career choices

## Ask yourself...

- Do I know what my core competencies (knowledge, skills and behaviour) are and how I'd like to **DEVELOP** them further?
- Have I got a list of my **TOP ACHIEVEMENTS**?
- Have I broken my achievements down into the problem, challenge or circumstance I faced, the action or approach I took and the **RESULT** obtained?
- What **BENEFITS** could I bring to my next role?
- Have I made sure that my **COMPETENCIES** and experience match the criteria of the role I'm applying for.

# Perform brilliantly at an interview

1. Interviews can be nerve-wracking, but they are a chance to show employers that you have the right skills for a role. Here are our top tips to help you shine. As obvious as it sounds, preparation is key. Research as much as you can about what the role involves and what the department is like. Also research yourself; know your skills, abilities and achievements. Identify how you can add value to the role and contribute to the department /company.
2. Find out what type of selection process you are going to attend and prepare for it.
3. Think through likely questions based on the core competencies and person specification for the role. Think about what questions to ask.
4. Rehearse your responses to these questions (but, don't just recite answers word for word – be natural). Think how your skills, abilities, achievements and behaviours match the requirements of the role.
5. An interview is a two-way process. You should see it as an opportunity for you to see whether it's the right role and organisation for you too.
6. Always give examples of how much your achievements have contributed to the business.
7. Develop a rapport with your interviewer(s). Actively listen to them. When they ask questions, don't be afraid to take a bit of time to answer. Provide relevant and well thought-through answers rather than just quick ones.
8. Be aware of your body language and how you're presenting yourself. Although of course there's no need to be so self-conscious that you become reserved and cold. Above all else, be yourself.
9. Ask relevant and timely questions. This shows you're interested and have done research – and that will add to your credibility. If you have questions prepared, ask yourself 'is it still relevant?'. If the interviewer has already answered a question you have prepared you could say "just to clarify something you said earlier . . ."
10. Establish the next steps and timescales for any additional interviews. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback.

**Interviews can be nerve-wracking, but they are a chance to show employers that you have the right skills for a role.**



# *Perform brilliantly at an interview*

## Ask yourself...

- Do I **KNOW** enough about the role?
- Am I **CLEAR** about why I want this new position and how it meets my personal and career needs?
- Have I **DEVELOPED** an interview 'script' that enables me to talk confidently about my achievements and how they relate to the role?
- Have I given enough thought to the key questions that I may be asked – am I **PREPARED** enough?
- Am I **FAMILIAR** with the organisation's competencies? If not, try and find out what they are.



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