

wlpg



# STAGESix

I'm on my way

ROUTE 1 – BRING WORK TO LIFE

ROUTE 2 – GETTING YOUR LPG INTO SHAPE

ROUTE 3 – FINDING NEW FORMS OF WORK



ANY GOOD HOLIDAY CAN BE SPOILT BY THE JOURNEY THERE AND BACK. IN LIFE, HAVING FUN ALONG THE WAY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS REACHING THE FINAL DESTINATION. BY EXPLORING ALL THE ROUTES AVAILABLE YOU'LL ENJOY THE WHOLE TRIP AND MAXIMISE YOUR CHANCES OF FUTURE SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS.

## OVERVIEW

You've now reached the crucial stage in the WLPG process – turning your ideas into action. You're on a journey towards that life you pictured for yourself back in Stage 2. You've already got your bearings (Stage 3) and understood how to use your working, learning, playing and giving to move forward.

You know how to get the right attitude, belief and commitment (Stage 4) and to build a support team to back you up (Stage 5). And you'll have been thinking hard about your skills, values and aspirations and working to develop them. Now you are going to move from thinking into action and look at three broad routes that most people are faced with. Each offers all kinds of interesting possibilities. You can clearly only take one of these routes – although you may have to try another at a different stage of your life... But which route is right for you?

## CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE

### ROUTE 1

#### BRING WORK TO LIFE

Making your current job work for you

Route 1 focuses on making your current job work for you. Bring playing, learning and giving to the workplace. Bring work to life and make it more than a means to an end. It's a big part of your life so make it exciting and interesting.

### ROUTE 2

#### MAKE LIFE WORK

Using your LPG creatively within your current situation

Route 2 takes the focus off your work. It involves looking creatively at how you can blend the other three vital strands of your life – your learning, playing and giving – to help make your vision a reality.

### ROUTE 3

#### FIND NEW FORMS OF WORK

Exploring new ways of working

Route 3 is likely to be the most risky strategy. It may mean going for a complete career change, thinking of self-employment or perhaps changing your working arrangements with your current employer.



'Tell me which way I ought to go from here said Alice. That depends a good deal on where you want to get to, said the Cheshire Cat' – Lewis Carroll



### So how do I choose?

For many of us work takes up the largest chunk of our time. Making positive changes here (ROUTE 1) may well have the greatest impact on your life. But there may be no scope to develop within your work. Or there could still be something missing. In this case you could switch your focus to your life outside work and shape your LPG (ROUTE 2) to meet your needs.

If you wish your work to remain the centre of your life but can't find what you need in your present situation, you may choose to find new forms of work (ROUTE 3).

Exploring all three routes in a targeted way provides you with a unique range of alternatives.

Remember that these are just the three main routes most people are faced with. You may be able to combine elements of two or three of the routes. For instance you might combine a new part-time role for your current employer (ROUTE 1) with a spare-time freelance job that moves you nearer to the life you really want (ROUTE 3).

Whichever route you decide is right for you, remind yourself that you're in control now – no-one else can do this for you.

You may find taking action on one simple prompt can often trigger a whole chain reaction. Suddenly you could find yourself moving dramatically closer to where you really want to be in life.

**So make it happen now!**

## 'Be prepared to paddle your own canoe'



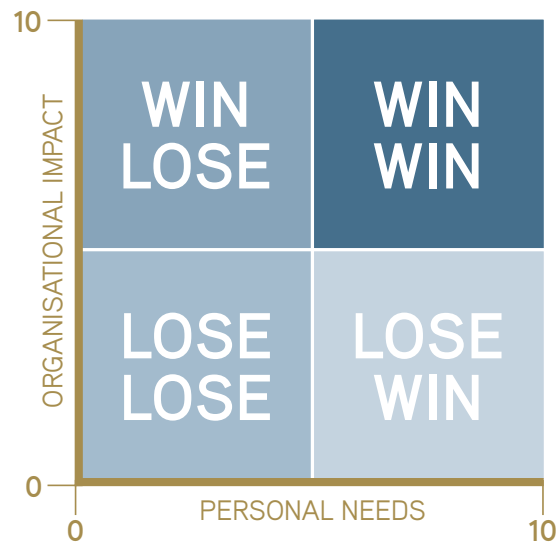
## ROUTE 1 – BRING WORK TO LIFE

The most straightforward route to your vision could well be right in front of you – your current job or work role. It's also the least risky. Remember Stage 4 proved that the biggest thing stopping you is likely to be your attitude towards work – not the opportunities work actually provides.

You may have travelled in the back seat for ages, complaining about the driver or studying the map as a passenger. Now, to ensure your work gives you the life you want, you need to put yourself in the driving seat.

Your work is a career partnership between you and your employer. And the key is to get the right blend between what each of you can supply – and what each of you demands. This involves creating a win-win for both partners. The following section provides suggestions and ideas to help you do this. It will encourage you to take off your blinkers and look more openly at how you can bring your work to life.

Don't feel you have to do everything – just acting on one simple prompt may open up a load of new possibilities.



### BE HONEST

Paul Ainsworth both gives and receives an incredible amount in his community-based radio organisation. The key lies in his honesty about his weakness (lack of commercial radio experience) and a focus on his prime skills, his love of managing people and creating new opportunities. He's created a win-win by building a team with complementary skills around him and allowing colleagues to take greater responsibility for day-to-day operations. This has freed him up to generate new business.

*'You give and gain greatest value at work when you build on the skills you love using, and are good at, and avoid the ones you hate'*

### HOW ROUTE 1 WILL HELP YOU

Don't worry if you find some parts of this stage difficult. You'll still get real benefits and insights that help you to:

- Identify the wealth of opportunities and benefits your workplace can provide
- Inject more learning, playing and giving into your work
- Create a win-win for you and your employer

## STEP 1 – ARE YOU IN A WIN-WIN SITUATION?

So how close are you to a win-win situation in your current work? This exercise will help you find out.

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### Identifying my position



1. Score yourself on how far your role is currently meeting your personal development needs. (0 = not at all, 10 = completely). Are you maximising your skills, interests, values and purpose in a place and with people that motivate you - and are the payoffs right? What's your overall gut feeling?
2. Score yourself as above for your current impact on your organisation. Are you adding maximum value? If you were paying your own money for your services would you be happy with your performance?
3. Plot your position on the grid using both scores. Think about both what you give to your employer and what you receive back.
4. Ask yourself what this tells you. Are you happy with the score – if so, great! You'll be achieving your win-win and will appreciate what you've got.  
Is one score greater than the other?  
How close are you to the win-win (10-10)?  
How do you think others would score you?  
(Think about asking a few people, including your boss).
5. Decide what steps you are going to take to create more of a win-win.



## Take a wider view

Business, like so much of life, operates by supply and demand. Your present job supplies certain demands of your organisation. And you took it because the organisation supplies some of your demands.

It's clear though that at the moment it is not supplying what you need for that ideal life you've visualised for yourself. Yet every organisation has to meet a vast range of demands. It has to generate business, develop ideas, create products and services and so on. Your present job only fits into one tiny corner of that picture and, not surprisingly, you tend to focus on what the company can do for you. To bring your work to life, you need to put yourself in the employer's shoes and look at the wider picture. Ask yourself what else you might be able to do for the organisation.

The chances are you have skills or passions that could supply more – or different – demands. And the organisation may well have the potential to supply more of your demands for the life you want. The organisation has its agenda and you have your agenda. The way to achieve a win-win is to match the two as closely as you can. You will then be meeting your personal needs in a way that creates the impact on the organisation your employer requires. This will combine the energy and enthusiasm of both partners to produce mutual benefits.

The next step then is to understand your employer's agenda.

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### I can create a quick win

1. Take a piece of paper and make a quick list of all the things you could possibly do to create a win-win, eg: volunteer for a new project. Identify the small steps not simply the big ideas.
2. If you struggle, try looking at what makes a lose-lose. Turn each negative into a positive action.



PHOTOGRAPHY // STEVE ALAND

### THE GRAFFITI PRINCIPLE

Think of your life as a white wall. If you don't have a picture of where you want to go on it, somebody will come and spray graffiti all over it.

## STEP 2 – UNDERSTAND THE EMPLOYER’S AGENDA

There are six key components which help drive any kind of organisation – whether public or private, business or voluntary, large or small.

- Developing strategically
- Generating business
- Contributing to the wider community
- Valuing people
- Maximising resources
- Creating products and services

Each area is not only an opportunity to add value and become more indispensable within your organisation but an ideal development possibility to move closer to the six Ps you identified as your life’s essentials in Stage 2.

So why don’t more people create a win-win? There are five reasons:

- Most people focus too narrowly on their own role rather than the organisation as a whole
- Many of the possibilities are hidden, simply waiting to be found
- Few people are proactive enough to explore and ask
- The easiest option is to moan about work and feel like a victim or prisoner
- Employers themselves find it difficult to blend personal and organisational needs

The exciting thing is that you can do something about this. By identifying what your organisation needs, you’ll uncover all sorts of development opportunities. The following exercise is designed to help with this.

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#### I understand my employer’s agenda

1. Use your imagination to take a creative look at the whole of your organisation. Assume anything is possible and avoid negative thoughts. (See Stage 4, pg 20), build on your relationships (Stage 5, pg 6) and the skills developed in information interviews (Stage 5, pg 16).
2. Take each area overleaf in turn and use the prompts to consider the following question: “What possibilities are there to bring my work to life and fully achieve the six Ps which are your life’s essentials?”
3. If you find a particular area difficult, you may need to explore it in more detail so action prompts are provided to stimulate ideas. You may also come up with your own. Write down your thoughts. You may find it easier doing this exercise with a colleague you trust. This is all about expanding possibilities using the right side of your brain (Stage 4, pg 16) – so be creative and explore each idea fully before moving on. Some ideas may not suit you – but the more you explore the greater your chances of creating a win-win.
4. Think about the risk (high or low) of each idea and create an action plan that stretches you within a safe environment. Don’t feel you have to do everything, focus on the small steps.

## DEVELOPING STRATEGICALLY

*What areas excite me about where the organisation is going? What new possibilities can I predict? Try writing down what you already know. Your initial response may be 'I haven't got a clue' or 'they haven't got a clue.' The real answer is like any good murder mystery. It can be found from a number of clues. You may wish to:*

- Put yourself in the shoes of the MD and look at the sector as a whole. What's growing? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organisation? How do you keep ahead of competitors? List all the things you would do
- Better still ask your MD or senior manager for an information interview. If they lack vision, ask someone with a better picture. Check the paperwork – business plans, mission statements, financial accounts, business forecasts. What are they telling you?
- Talk to people – what are they saying on the grapevine? Secretaries and financial managers are invaluable sources of information. Look in different areas – corporate PR, staff circulars, staff intranet

DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

## GENERATING BUSINESS

*What new business opportunities look interesting? What existing business could I add value to? How can I enhance my organisation's reputation? Companies need to attract new customers and keep existing ones – so there are always opportunities for you. Chatting to the right people or doing a bit of research may help you:*

- Predict emerging market needs and any gaps
- Pinpoint niche markets or new services required by existing clients
- Explore a sideways move (or some involvement) into sales, marketing or PR
- Develop your relationship with a potential new client
- Write proposals to generate new income, increase repeat business and improve PR

REMEMBER IT'S ABOUT WORKING TO SPOT AND SEIZE THINGS THAT EXCITE YOU – SUCH OPPORTUNITIES RARELY LAND ON YOUR LAP. DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

'Overall how is the culture of your own place of work affecting you and your ability to achieve your ambitions?'

– Springboard



## CREATING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

*How can you get involved in developing new products and services? Are there any existing products or services you'd love to get involved in? New ideas coming on line bring a period of change – an ideal opportunity to re-position yourself. You may wish to:*

- Volunteer for new development groups or ask for secondments to related departments
- Specialise in a particular product or service so you're seen as the internal expert
- Promote your pioneering new ideas
- Offer to help someone out in an existing product or service area that interests you in order to free them up to look at new things themselves
- Link with new work-streams resulting from new products and services, eg: quality control, distribution, new product development and business generation

DON'T UNDERSSELL THE SKILLS YOU HAVE AND BE READY TO TAKE A FEW RISKS. REMEMBER THE GREATEST RISK IS FAILING TO BE FLEXIBLE. DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

## MAXIMISING RESOURCES

*How can I maximise my organisation's resources and my own at the same time? Organisations are always looking at creative ways of saving money and improving efficiency. It's amazing how many possibilities there are but take a diplomatic approach and avoid being pushy.*

- Explore where cost savings can be made. Can you create your own project, eg: cutting wastage, changing suppliers, environmental improvement?
- Use your technical skills to modernise business processes e.g. computerise accounts procedures, improve management information, develop company database, create smarter ways of working
- Improve your financial awareness. Ask to work-shadow a member of the financial team – you may have an untapped ability with numbers. Start with the simple stuff then move on to how business decisions are made
- Look at how quality can be improved and standards raised. Are there areas with quality concerns? How can your organisation be more responsive to client needs?
- Suggest ways of improving communication internally. Are teams working effectively? Are there challenging interfaces between groups? What specific things can you offer?

ALWAYS TRY TO SEE THINGS FROM YOUR EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE. THINK HOW THEY WOULD RESPOND TO A REQUEST IF IN PARALLEL YOU COULD SAVE £5,000. DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

## VALUING PEOPLE

***What development opportunities are there for you? The greatest asset of any organisation is its people. You may find it useful to:***

- Review all development opportunities including leadership programmes, career breaks, secondments and development centres
- Look creatively at courses and learning programmes including professional qualifications, conferences, distance learning and on-the-job training. Ensure you stay employable even if you are happy where you are
- Find people you can learn from – mentors, coaches, critical colleagues. Who would you benefit from working more closely with? Remember opportunities may be lying in other related roles
- Move into a development role yourself – perhaps by delivering internal training, getting involved in mentoring schemes or gaining project or line management experience
- Think strategically about where your employer is heading in terms of people issues. What are their values? Can you get hold of the training plan? Where is money spent on staff development?

MANY SMALL ORGANISATIONS DON'T HAVE A HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION SO YOU MAY NEED TO CREATE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES. YOU MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO GET INTO PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT YOURSELF BY VOLUNTEERING, EG: TO CREATE AN APPRAISAL PROCESS. DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

Remember it may only take one or two small steps to make a big difference. Choose the option that could create the biggest return for the smallest risk. But be prepared to stretch yourself.

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

***Are there opportunities to get involved in the wider community? No organisation can survive in isolation. They need effective relationships with external suppliers, distributors and partners as well as relying on their local community for good quality staff and support. These evolving links and relationships present their own possibilities. You may wish to:***

- Ask whether there are opportunities to get involved in community-based projects. (Or better still initiate one yourself)
- Build stronger links with existing or new clients, suppliers, distributors and delivery agents. Develop joint projects or look for secondments. See where you can impact on your employer's environmental policies
- Explore what other arms of your organisation have to offer, eg: international placements, consultancy support for new sites and staff exchanges
- Reflect on what skills and talents you have to offer your local community, eg: imparting specific knowledge, organising social events, managing finances and advising on professional matters

THINK CREATIVELY – WHAT WOULD YOU LOVE TO DO TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN YOUR WIDER COMMUNITY THAT ALSO HAS A BENEFIT TO YOUR EMPLOYER? DOES ANY OF THESE IDEAS GET YOU EXCITED? WRITE IT DOWN. HOW COULD IT BRING YOUR WORK TO LIFE AND HELP YOU FULLY ACHIEVE YOUR LIFE'S ESSENTIALS?

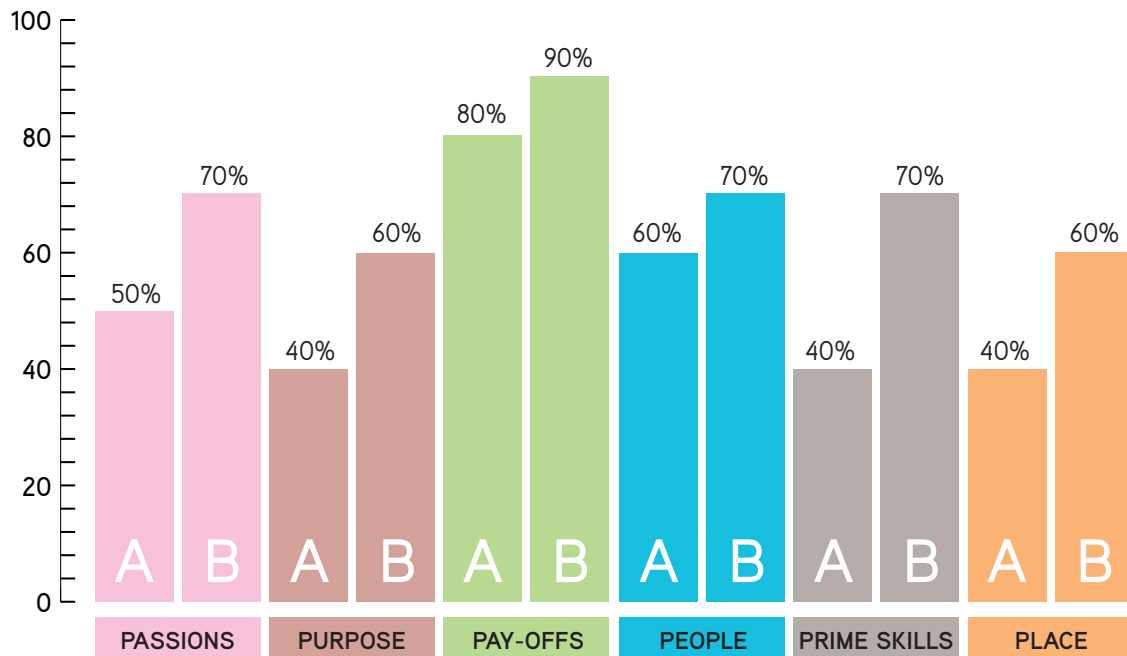
### STEP 3 – DEVELOP YOUR PROPOSAL

You should now have a better understanding of how your employer thinks and the kind of opportunities you could use to improve your work situation. This next step helps you decide which of those opportunities to focus on to achieve that life you want.

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#### I can find the win-wins

1. Start by reviewing your current role against the six Ps which are your life's essentials (remember you've done a similar exercise in Stage 3, pg 6 when you looked at your life as a whole) Record to what percentage your current role meets your six Ps in column A.
2. Now look at your employer's agenda and assess how far future possibilities within the organisation could match your six Ps. Record in column B. The following example may help:



**A – CURRENT ROLE** (Assess percentage to which it meets your six Ps)

**B – SCOPE FOR CHANGE** (Now you've mapped employer's agenda)

#### PASSIONS

- A) To what extent are you engaged in something you are really interested in? 50%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 70%

#### PURPOSE

- A) To what extent are you working for a purpose you truly value? 40%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 60%

#### PAYOFFS

- A) Are you receiving the right pay-offs? 80%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 90%

#### PEOPLE

- A) How inspired and energised are you by your colleagues? 60%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 70%

#### PRIME SKILLS

- A) Are you maximising your six prime skills? 40%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 70%

#### PLACE

- A) How much energy and motivation do you get from your work environment? 40%  
 B) What can this be increased to? 60%

- 3 Review your findings. Mark potential win-win areas with a highlighter pen. If you've found little scope for these, you should be thinking hard about whether to stay with your employer. If there's lots of scope, it is far more encouraging. Make sure your research is thorough – you may have missed an ideal possibility.
- 4 Next consider what's negotiable and non-negotiable. Be prepared to make compromises.
- 5 Take a blank piece of paper and jot down in priority order all the things you would like to propose. Alongside each item provide clear evidence of an organisational benefit. Remember small steps are often better than big ideas.



#### LOOK AT OPPORTUNITIES ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Catherine Monaghan has seized every opportunity to balance learning and family life with lecturing in community nursing. Working from home she has negotiated funding for a Masters programme and managed to expand her role by clearly stating the benefits and added value for her employer in terms of research and teaching ability. Catherine is now considering enrolling on a PhD.



'Don't wait for things to knock on your door, open it yourself'

#### Take a reality check

Before taking your proposal to your line manager, consider a reality check with a critical friend or a sympathetic colleague.

Weigh up the risk beforehand and create a set of alternative options. You may even find you don't need permission to do some of the things on the list.

# 'Say it, mean it, do it!'



## STEP 4 – MAKE IT HAPPEN

Once you know what you could do, it's time to turn your ideas into action. And the key to getting what you want lies in knowing your boss and understanding how your organisation operates.

There are three key ways you can help ensure the success of your proposal.

1. Taking the right approach.
2. Knowing your boss.
3. Getting the organisation's backing.

This step looks at each of these in turn.

### Taking the right approach

The key to success is not externally driven – it's your own attitude and approach.

- Ask your boss for a review. Stress the benefits and be persistent but not pushy
- Research your boss's agenda and priorities. Be sure your proposal benefits them as well. Run through your ideas first with a trusted friend
- Choose your moment – when is the boss most likely to be approachable?
- Think whether an agenda or e-mail report may be needed beforehand
- Start by summarising your ideas and the reasons. Emphasise you are looking to increase your contribution to the organisation as well as develop yourself
- Present your ideas, always linking them with organisational benefits "I can increase customer satisfaction by....."
- Give a positive yet thoughtful explanation of your proposal
- Be ready to compromise, have alternatives ready and avoid any confrontation
- Finish with a summary of your discussion and a request for action. Show how keen you are to move forward and agree the next steps
- Thank the person for their time – always leave on a positive note
- Summarise and record the discussion afterwards
- Check progress on intermediary actions, eg: boss needs to speak to superior

Congratulations! You may have been superb.  
But what about your boss?

'To win the game of life  
you have to play it, not  
sit in the stands'



## e Knowing your boss

Your immediate boss is a critical influence. He or she can help you bring your work to life – or simply act as a brick wall to your career development. They could even make your life hell! So you need to understand how your boss is likely to respond to your proposal and how far they will help you develop your role in the organisation.

### This is how I rate my boss

1. Score your boss on the following ten factors (0-useless, 10-brilliant).
2. Review the score. Where do they score highest and lowest? (If the boss scores 100/100 we'd love to meet him or her!)
3. Do you honestly feel your boss can improve on the low scores (if any)? What are the implications for you? Who else could fill in the gaps for you (see Creating Your Community – Stage 5). Just for interest, ask yourself how well would you do if someone was scoring you?

	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
<b>1. VALUE AND COMMITMENT</b> How much does your boss value you and show commitment to your ongoing personal development?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>2. CONFIDENCE BOOSTING AND MOTIVATION</b> How good is he/she at boosting your self-confidence and motivation?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>3. TRUST</b> How far do you trust your boss and how open can you be?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>4. ROLE MODEL-CAREER/LIFE</b> Can you learn positively from the way the boss has managed his/her career/life?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>5. ROLE MODEL – SKILLS AND EXPERTISE</b> What kind of a role model is the boss for particular skills or expertise?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>6. INFORMATION, ADVICE &amp; GUIDANCE</b> How effective is your boss at keeping you up to date on new learning and career development opportunities?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>7. ACCESS TO NETWORKS</b> Are you helped to develop your networking skills and widen your networks?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>8. STRATEGIC THINKING</b> How keen and skilful is your boss at helping you think ahead in your career and life?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>9. SELF-PROMOTION</b> How good is he/she at celebrating your successes and promoting you to other people?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10
<b>10. CONVICTION AND INFLUENCE</b> Can the boss make things happen and influence change? Are they an 'action' or 'words' person?	0 1 2 3	4 5 6 7	8 9 10

*So what options do you have if your boss scores poorly?*

## Options

These options are only possibilities – choose the ones that suit you best. You may find it useful to talk your ideas through first with someone objective – a trusted, friend or colleague. The ideas will only work if you are highly sensitive and diplomatic.

1. Be positive – your boss may be unaware of his or her shortcomings. Suggest solutions you can both put in place.
2. Reflect on whether it's your boss who has the problem – or you!
3. Ask how you can make your boss's job easier.
4. Develop your community – find new role models, mentors and coaches who can support you. (Stage 5, pg 6)
5. Put up with your boss. Don't waste energy moaning – use your energy more wisely. Use their weaknesses as your strength, eg: it may be an opportunity to develop people management skills.
6. Take charge – don't put the responsibility for change on your boss.
7. Find informal support – try to report to a couple of people, eg: by volunteering for a project in another department. Gradually liaise more and more with the more capable one until you are naturally aligned under them.
8. If your boss isn't celebrating your successes, make sure people know exactly what you're achieving.
9. Get support from someone you respect within your organisation.
10. Be prepared to move on. Leave on a positive note, you'll always need a reference.



### THE GRASS ISN'T ALWAYS GREENER

It was only when Jason Doherty left his job that he realised the grass wasn't greener after all. Luckily he left on a good note and maintained a positive relationship with his line manager. This kept the door open to re-apply for a more developmental position six months later.

*'What goes around comes around. Be positive with your boss whatever happens'*

## I can get the organisation's backing

But what if your boss is great but his/her hands are tied? If you have mapped your employer's agenda thoroughly, you should know how much scope there is to develop. You'll also know the kind of issues the organisation will be ready to support. But there can still be other barriers. Here are some ideas for gaining the backing of your employer:

### INFLUENCE THE PERSON WITH THE POWER TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

*But make sure you recognise the various sources of power:*

- Authority** – People in the right position to make decisions.
- Financial** – The person holding the purse strings.
- Interpersonal** – Strong respected characters who use their interpersonal skills to influence people.
- Personal** – The 'old boys' or 'old girls' network – people with the ear of the decision makers.
- Expertise** – People with skills and expertise central to the life blood of the organisation.
- Information** – People who know everything that's going on, eg: secretaries.
- Experience** – Wise, experienced people who have been there before – their views are always respected and listened to.

You may need to map out your organisation and highlight and engage people with different sources of power. The more of them you get committed to your ideas the better. And if you can make them think they are their own ideas, you just can't fail!

### CONNECT WITH THE VALUE CHAIN

*Avoid being vague by showing that your suggestions will add value, eg by:*

- Enhancing products or services
  - Improving image, market share or profile
  - Improving quality
  - Saving money
  - Improving efficiency and effectiveness
- Always address the 'what's in it for me' factor. How can your proposals help the person(s) you're trying to influence?

### DEMONSTRATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT GOING WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

You can do this by researching market trends and analysing competitors (somebody else may have already done this for you!) This lets you predict confidently what will happen if the organisation doesn't take action. Then show what will happen if the organisation commits.

### DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE A VISION

Have the courage of your own convictions. Don't wait for a vision to come along – it may never arrive. If you have a good idea, stick with it but make sure you take it to the right person (someone supportive, encouraging and influential).

### LEARN TO PROMOTE YOURSELF

You need to get the cynics on board so you may need to develop your persuasion, negotiation and relationship-building skills. Look for someone in the organisation you can learn from.

### APPLY FOR A NEW JOB THAT GETS YOU CLOSER TO YOUR VISION

We advise you to apply for a new job every year. It has two key benefits. Firstly, it benchmarks your current employability. Secondly and most importantly if you're successful it gives you major negotiating power. Employers tend to take their employees for granted until other people recognise their talents.

### SET UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS

You may find the only way of getting true organisational commitment is by running it yourself. Who in your current organisation would you take with you?



Remember, the key is to make work more fun and fulfilling. The only thing you may need to do differently is to frame your work in a new way each day. Whatever your situation, there's more to life than work. And if you decide that your work simply cannot provide what you are looking for in life, there is an alternative.

You'll find that Route 2 offers all kinds of ideas for using your learning, playing and giving to make your vision a reality.



PHOTOGRAPHY // STEVE ALAND

‘Put yourself in your employer’s shoes’

## ROUTE 2 – GETTING YOUR LPG INTO SHAPE

### Overview

If you decide you cannot reach your vision through your work, there is an alternative route. It may be time to focus on your learning, playing and giving. Whether as individual strands of your life or when blended, your LPG can provide a wealth of opportunities to create the kind of life you really want.

The key is to get your working, learning, playing and giving into the right shape for you. This section helps you create a plan of action using the SHAPE process – i.e. *SCENARIO, HELP, APPROACH, PEOPLE, EFFECTIVENESS*:



The process helps you generate and test alternatives, select the best combination and approach for you and make the most of the possibilities created. Each step will help you devise your own LPG plans.

### HOW ROUTE 2 WILL HELP YOU

Don't worry if you find some parts of this stage difficult. You'll still get real benefits and insights that help you to:

- Create more learning, playing and giving opportunities to realise your vision
- Shape these opportunities to meet your priorities
- Develop stepping stones to move you forward

'I'm going to start putting more of the things that make me happy into my life rather than saying, 'I've always wanted to...' – Alexa Doherty

The key to this route is to look at your LPG in different ways and make more of the opportunities.

## TAKING A NEW APPROACH TO YOUR LPG

### 1. REVEALING THE HIDDEN LEARNING MARKET

Less than 10% of our life's learning goes on in formal educational settings. Are you making the most of the myriad of informal opportunities? You can learn from others or while playing, giving and working, you can learn through different media and environments – and through both good and bad experiences. Make sure learning is fun – and it will be if it focuses on skills and interests you are passionate about. What informal learning possibilities can you generate and how can you make them fun?

### 2. BLENDING PLAY INTO YOUR DAY

The most important thing about play time is not what you do – it's the spirit in which you approach it. Every morning you wake up you have a choice. You can see the day ahead as a pain – or else a chance to play and find pleasure. What you decide will make a huge difference to the rest of your day. Play should be part of your daily life – not something boxed off to the end of the day, week or year. If you're suffering from 'busy sickness', start blocking off quality time for yourself. Then consider ways of blending play into your day. How can you do this? What ideas can you come up with?

### 3. VALUING YOUR GIVING

Many of us see giving as volunteering. In fact we are giving every day of our lives – to our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, clients as well as the wider community. And we give in a number of ways, not simply financially. We give of ourselves – by listening, sharing, loving, caring and offering our skills and expertise – as well as by simply being there for people. Recognise how much you're already giving today – and the rewards of giving more, no matter how small. So how are you going to give more today? Think of a few ideas.

## 10 ways I can make more of my LPG

1. Phone a friend – bounce your ideas off some trusted friends or colleagues, asking them to generate more or help you combine them together.
2. Learn from others – who do you know who is blending their LPG in a way you'd love? What can you learn from them?
3. Be prepared to take a few stepping stones – you might want to try things out in a small way before fully committing.
4. Look at the opportunities on your doorstep – walk around your local community, visit the local library, scan the ads in shop windows. What LPG opportunities grab your interest?
5. Scan your local paper – what's going on? Where seem to be the active places in your community?
6. Get out and about – visit all your local educational institutions, voluntary bureaux, leisure clubs and tourist information offices. Find out what's on offer – from night school classes to volunteering opportunities.
7. Use your Yellow Pages – you'll be amazed how many learning, playing and giving opportunities you'll find. What are the things you've always wanted to do, but always put off? Now do them!
8. Blend LPG with work – reframe the way you see your work. It can be fun, you can make the most of internal courses as well as other people's experience, and you can give in a small way every day.
9. Create your own opportunities – self-study, set up your own club or society, organise a community day at work.
10. Look at the bigger context – ask yourself the question 'If I had five things to learn, play and give during the rest of my life, what would they be?'

## Shaping your LPG

The checklist below and then the subsequent steps will help you to shape your LPG. Take each LPG idea you have and SHAPE it by circling your answers to each question and either writing or talking the detail through in more detail. You may wish to photocopy this page.

### SCENARIO

Why is this important to me?

☐ ☒ **W** ☐ ☒ **L** ☐ ☒ **P** ☐ ☒ **G**

### HELP

How will I benefit?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

PRIME SKILLS PASSION PURPOSE PLACE PEOPLE PAYOFFS

### APPROACH

What is the best approach for me?

COMMITMENT ☐ ☐ ☐

SHORT TERM MEDIUM TERM LONG TERM

DURATION ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

HOUR DAYS WEEKS MONTHS YEARS ALL

TIMING ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

DAYTIME EVENING WEEKEND SEASONAL ALL TIME

ENVIRONMENT ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

IN WORK OUT OF WORK FORMAL INFORMAL SOCIAL COMMUNITY

STYLE ☐ ☐

PASSIVE ACTIVE

RISK ☐ ☐ ☐

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

### PEOPLE

Who is involved?

WITH ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MYSELF PARTNER /FAMILY FRIENDS THE NEIGHBOURS COLLEAGUES WIDER COMMUNITY

FOR ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MYSELF PARTNER /FAMILY FRIENDS THE NEIGHBOURS COLLEAGUES WIDER COMMUNITY

### EFFECTIVE

(1 Lowest, 10 Highest)  
How useful will this option be?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





## STEP 1 – CREATE YOUR SCENARIOS

This first step will help you create as many different scenarios as possible for using your learning, playing and giving to achieve the life you've pictured.

### What LPG scenarios can I create?

1. Start by listing your gut-feelings on the kinds of learning, playing and giving that could bring your vision alive. To help, try reviewing 'This is my present life pattern' (Stage 1, pg 2), 'I've made it' (Stage 2, pg 26), 'This will be the day' (Stage 2, pg 27) and 'I can find lots of WLPG options' (Stage 3, pg16).

Each of these sections should provide clues to ways in which learning, playing and giving can enhance the quality of your life – including your work.

2. Now highlight the most attractive ideas. Your LPG scenarios may meet one of the aims below – or a combination of them:



To improve my work performance, employability, satisfaction or ability to get a worthwhile job.



To learn new things; grow in confidence; learn more about myself, other people, the world around me and/or my role in it; or simply learning for learning's sake.

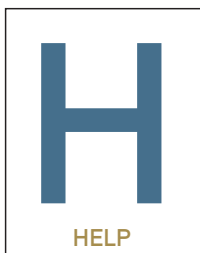


To enjoy myself, have fun, relax, be healthier and/or spend time with fun people.



To give time, resources, skills, talents to my family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, clients and/or wider community.

3. Consider how the scenario you've created meets one or more of the above. If you have trouble coming up with suitable scenarios, you might need to adopt a new frame of mind to open out your thinking about your LPG. There are lots of ways of taking a new approach to learning, playing and giving.



## STEP 2 – SEE HOW EACH SCENARIO HELPS

The next step is to find out how well each scenario helps you achieve and sustain your vision. Before going down a particular route, you need to test it out. The acid test is 'Does it match those six Ps which are my life's essentials – and 'what will happen if...'

### I can test my ideas

1. Ask yourself the following questions:

#### PRIME SKILLS

Will it enable me to use or improve the skills I love using and am really good at (my top prime skills)? Will it enhance my employability or improve my performance?

#### PASSIONS

Does it allow me to engage in my real interests (my top passions) whether learning more about them, getting practically involved in them or sharing them with others?

#### PURPOSE

Is it something that brings meaning and purpose into my life? It may be helping a particular cause, bringing fun and happiness to others or learning more about myself and my preferred role in life.

#### PLACE

Can I use this learning, playing or giving opportunity to spend more time in an environment that energises and inspires me (top environments)? For example you may be stuck behind a desk all day but love the outdoors or are working in a pressurised, results-orientated place and would like to spend time in a more relaxed learning environment.

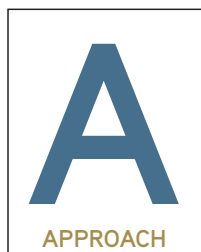
#### PEOPLE

Will it allow me to be around people who inspire me, help me come alive and bring out my best (top people characteristics)? Hopefully this is how you would describe your work colleagues, but if not, who has similar passions, values and experiences to yourself? Are there any other groups of people you've always wanted to spend time with?

#### PAY-OFFS

Do the benefits really motivate me (top pay-offs)? For example gaining a qualification may get you recognition; playing more may improve your health and lifestyle; spending more time with a lonely neighbour may help you make a difference.

2. Now circle each of the Ps your scenario meets. You may well find that the option which at first glance seemed the easiest and most straightforward, fails to take you down the best path. So at this stage be prepared to reject or reshape your scenario if you're not happy with the results.
3. If your idea doesn't match your six Ps, STOP RIGHT HERE and start testing another scenario.



### STEP 3 – FIND THE BEST APPROACH

Now ask yourself: What is the best approach for me? We all have preferences in the way we approach our learning, playing and giving. This depends on commitments, confidence, level of risk, and preferred level of involvement. Think about the level of commitment you need, the risks you're ready to take and the type of involvement that suits you best. Do you need to commit just a few hours or days – or will it take weeks, months or even years? It may even be an ongoing commitment for the rest of your life. Do you prefer a low-risk approach, staying within your comfort zone? Or would you like to stretch yourself a little – or even take a big risk and stretch yourself to your limit? Do you see your involvement as low-key, eg: observing and reflecting or are you keen to throw yourself into your ideas?

1. Read through the following examples.
2. Consider how you can improve your approach to each LPG in turn.

## time – 'I'm too busy'

**L**

Learn from everything around you. It doesn't have to be formal study. It could be a new challenge at work or just learning from people you meet. Ask why you're busy and what else is suffering as a result. Try using 'dead time', eg: travel to work for learning.

**P**

Set quality time aside for play. Better still see every day as a chance to play. Make sure you are busy being happy, ie: doing the things you enjoy not hate. Don't let life get in the way

**G**

Giving doesn't have to be 24-7. It only takes a second to give a compliment, a few minutes to listen to a problem and a couple of hours a week to make a major difference in someone's life.

## awareness – 'I didn't know it existed'

**L**

Visit your local college, university or training provider. Phone Learn Direct and use the Yellow Pages. Find people with expertise or contacts in your chosen area and fix an information interview (Stage 5, pg 16). Look at night school classes, self help resources in your library and staff development programmes at work.

**P**

Use local leisure websites, tourist information offices and local papers. Pop into local community, arts and leisure centres to see what's on offer. Think of times you had most fun. What were you doing? Can you do similar things now? List all the things you always wanted to do but put off and see how you can achieve them.

**G**

You'll find hundreds of opportunities on your doorstep from supporting elderly neighbours or homeless projects to joining the Samaritans. Check out voluntary bureaux, and ask people involved in the community. Think creatively and link giving to your passions – eg organising a youth football team or running for charity.

## motivation – 'I can't be bothered'

**L**

You'll learn far more if learning is relevant, interesting and fun. Focus on your passions and prime skills. What would really excite you about them? What's a really fun way of learning? Find someone to encourage and motivate you.

**P**

You never know what you're missing until you try it. Find someone to go along with, eg: keeping fit is far easier with others. Take small steps and just do it. If you're demotivated ask why. Perhaps you're not doing enough of the things you love.

**G**

The benefits are enormous – you always receive more than you give. You meet new friends, boost your confidence, gain new skills, find fulfilment, put your life in perspective – and even enhance your CV.

# — make it happen —

## money – 'I can't afford it'

**L** Learning from experience (yours and that of others) costs nothing. Library and web resources are free. Seek financial support, eg: career development loan or part-time job. See it as an investment. You buy cars, clothes etc. – but how much do you invest in yourself?

**P** Enjoying the company of good friends is free. Find a way of being paid for your pastime or getting it subsidised, eg: volunteering to help on the school skiing trip, being a tour guide in the local gardens, joining a band. Organise your own entertainment.

**G** It's too easy to just give a couple of pounds to a good cause. The real challenge is to give your time and commitment – a couple of hours a week costs you nothing. Be honest, stop making excuses and make it happen. Start in a small and manageable way.

## commitments – 'I've got the family to look after'

**L** This can be a valid reason but is often simply an excuse not to live your dreams. But does your family honestly need you 24 hours a day? Or do you perceive they do? Can you find a flexible way of learning, perhaps from home, eg: Open University or distance learning course. Can you learn together as a family, eg: learn French with your children?

**P** Don't be a martyr. Without quality time to re-charge the batteries you'll never support the people who need you. Avoid dull routines – try new routes to work, don't get stuck in front of the TV for hours, do something new each week. Bring fun and excitement to the home by seeing every situation as a chance to play. Remember play is the spirit with which you do things not the activity itself.

**G** The love and compassion you show your family and close friends is a wonderful gift in itself. Have you ever asked those close to you; 'What five things would you love to do with the rest of your life' and then started to help them make this a reality? Family does come first but we can all find a couple of hours a week to make a difference in some small way.

## work – 'My work won't allow me to'

**L** The old excuse -blame someone else. Have you found what motivates your employer and sold your ideas as benefits? Can you do it informally - learning from colleagues or volunteering for key projects? What time, money and effort will you put in? If your employers see you putting nothing in, why should they?

**P** Is it your work – or the spirit with which you walk in the door every day? If you get up thinking you'll have a boring day, you will! If you go into work determined to have fun, that same day will be totally different. Don't take the easy option and act the victim. If things get unbearable it may be time to look elsewhere. Don't moan – make change happen.

**G** It's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. What's stopping you creating a bit of time at work for giving. It could involve reaching out into your local community or as simple as giving feedback and encouragement to a colleague. If your organisation has no community focus why not create one?



# — make it happen —

## confidence – 'I'm no good'

**L** Lots of people lack self-belief, often due to past experiences and people. If your 'inner voice' says 'I can't', 'I have nothing to offer', 'That would be too scary', ask yourself who is telling you this and why. The answer is you and for no reason – except that you're used to saying it. Everyone has issues with self-confidence – not just you. Learn to take small, safe risks – perhaps start a taster course.

**P** Find a friend to go with to new places or join new groups. Observe before you jump in. You don't have to be a world expert – there's always a place for you round the table. Find people at work or socially who are fun and boost your confidence. Use play as a safe setting to try new things in. You'll be amazed at the new skills you can develop, eg: become treasurer of a society, organise a quiz night or try amateur dramatics.

**G** You have so much to give. We can't all be the life and soul of things. Millions of us simply need someone to listen. Thousands of organisations just need a willing pair of hands. Hundreds of events wouldn't happen without people behind the scenes. You've probably given lots in your life so far. Think about what you've achieved and gained. Don't undervalue or undersell these experiences.

## age – 'I'm too old'

**L** Who says so – that voice again! It's never too late to learn new things so stop those self-limiting beliefs. Think of everything you're passionate about but haven't learnt as much as you'd like. What exciting new learning will you try? Most colleges and universities offer programmes for lifelong learning or continuing education. Make an effort to find out what's available.

**P** Just look at the age of some people doing the London Marathon – what's stopping you is not your age but your frame of mind. You may not be as energetic in your play but that shouldn't stop you. So how are you going to inject play into your day? You may well find with your experience you are ideally suited to coach, teach or train other people using your passions and prime skills.

**G** Sharing your experience is an invaluable form of giving – whether to children, grandchildren or grown-ups. Organisations are crying out for committed, reliable people with bags of life experience. Look at how friends or colleagues give – is there anything that interests you? If not, what does? What lessons has life taught you and how can you pass them on to others?

## pressure – 'What will others think'

**L** Live your own life rather than other people's. See the value in learning for yourself at first hand. Don't be afraid to do things differently from family and friends. In time you may well become a role model for them by breaking new ground. Avoid hanging around negative people, they will drag down any development plans you have.

**P** Be true to yourself and be honest about what brings fun, excitement and energy into your life. If it means doing things differently from your friends see this as an opportunity to create further friendships. Don't waste valuable energy worrying about what other people think – they're too busy worrying too. True friends value you for who you are not who they think you should be.

**G** It may sound strange but try giving in a small way every day. Say hello to people on the street rather than bustle past. Ask the sales assistant about their day, introduce yourself to those new neighbours you've never spoken to. Such things seem odd because we've all become so self-centred – but small things go a long way.



## STEP 4 – CHOOSE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

1. List the people who will be involved in your learning, playing and giving. There are a wide variety of people who could share in – or benefit from – these activities, including:
  - Yourself
  - Partner
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Neighbours
  - Colleagues
  - Clients
  - Wider community
2. It's important to find the right people for you, so revisit This Is My Community (see Stage 5) to remind yourself who they are.



Imagine your life as a band. Who do you enjoy playing with? Who do you learn your part from? Who are you performing to? How are you going to keep your band going?



## STEP 5 – MAKE IT EFFECTIVE

How effective do you feel this scenario will be, and how can you make it more effective?

1. Jump a couple of moves ahead and imagine yourself having made this scenario real. What have you achieved? Make a note of these.
2. How do you think, feel or act differently?
3. Have the benefits outweighed the investment made? What could you have done to make it more effective?

To answer these questions you need a measure of effectiveness in the first place. Your criteria will be personal to you and your situation, so try to create your own. You may wish to make use of previous exercises to develop your criteria and measure the progress made, eg: the life pattern check in Stage 1, page 5.

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Here are a few additional ideas:

VISION	It will get me as quickly and easily as possible to my ideal picture
SUSTAINABILITY	It will enable me to sustain the life I want
QUALITY	It will enhance the quality of my life by giving me more work/life balance
ENJOYMENT	It will make me happier
EMPLOYABILITY	It will get me a new job or a stepping stone to my ideal one
UNIQUENESS	It will build on and grow my unique talents
CONFIDENCE	It will increase my own self belief and commitment

Having set out your measure of effectiveness and jumped into the scenario, how effective do you feel this particular option will be. What can you do to make it even more effective? At this stage don't be afraid to throw the idea away or reshape it if the cost/benefits are not great enough.

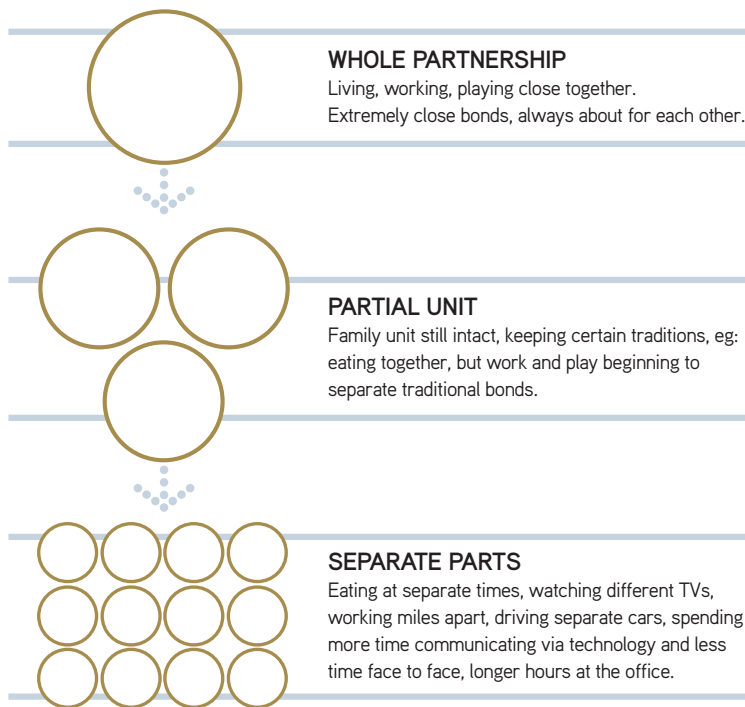
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‘It’s the spirit with which you do things that makes it play, not the activity itself’ – Dick Bolles



## Creating family-based LPG

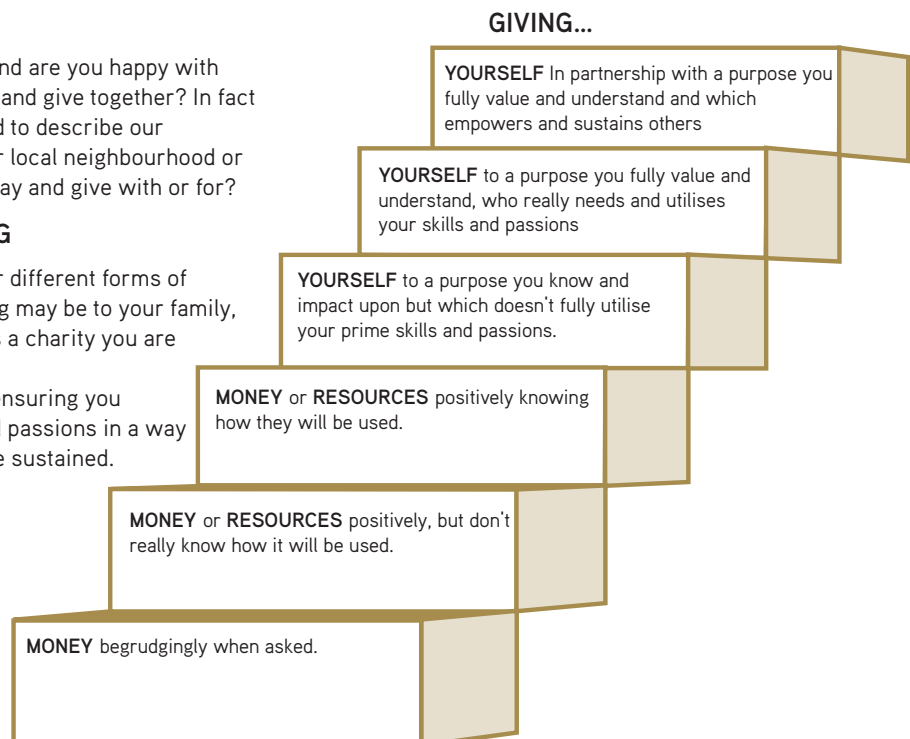
In shaping their learning, playing and giving, some people have found it useful involving their family and also considering different forms of giving. The diagram below shows how the family unit has gradually fragmented over the centuries.



How close are your family – and are you happy with this? How can you learn, play and give together? In fact the same diagram can be used to describe our communities. Who within your local neighbourhood or community could you learn, play and give with or for?

### THE WISE ART OF GIVING

You may also wish to consider different forms of giving. The wisest art of giving may be to your family, friends, neighbours as well as a charity you are absolutely passionate about. The key is ensuring you exercise your prime skills and passions in a way that is both needed and will be sustained.





PHOTOGRAPHY // MCCOY WYNNE ASSOCIATES



Sally Cross took time off to travel. Previously she had been driven by what society and other people thought she should be at this point in her life (ie: married and a mum). Now, rather than worrying about what others think, she is free to do whatever takes her fancy. Back at work, Sally has shaped her life around playing and giving with family, friends and the wider community, as well as a new work role which she loves.



## ROUTE 3 – FINDING NEW FORMS OF WORK

‘Find a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life’ – Confucius

If you're unfulfilled and unhappy at work, you're likely to be thinking of finding a new job. You may even be considering a different line of work or type of employment. This section explores the wealth of options available and shows how you can make the most of them. It also provides practical advice and tips for creating your personalised approach to finding new forms of work.



### SMASH THE GLASS CEILING

Mark Ready was unhappy with pay and promotion prospects in the glazing business and explored other career alternatives. With an interest in accounting and finance, he enrolled on an access course and progressed to a degree.

When he researched the jobs market, he found himself in a Catch 22 situation – no experience meant no job while no job meant no experience. He managed to find a six-month placement as a financial assistant which has since been extended. Although he has yet to gain a permanent position, Mark is moving in the right direction

### HOW ROUTE 3 WILL HELP YOU

Don't worry if you find some parts of this stage difficult. You'll still get real benefits and insights that help you to:

- Become more creative and proactive in finding new forms of work
- Develop new approaches to increase your chances of success
- Manage the risks that new forms of work may present

### Am I looking for a new job – or a new life?

Before you start firing off job applications, stop and think hard about why you're looking for new kinds of work.

Remember that real happiness and meaning tend to come into your life when you're applying your prime skills, passions and purpose in the right places and with the right people and pay-offs to meet both your own needs and those of the wider world.

And the more opportunity you have to blend your working with your learning, playing and giving, the more you'll find this happening. So what are you looking for in your work? In broad terms you are facing three options:

- 1. MAKE A LIFE** – This means finding work that also offers opportunities for learning, playing or giving. It implies work that combines as many as possible of the six Ps which are your life's essentials.
- 2. EARN A LIVING** – This means deciding to give satisfaction at work a lower priority. Work then becomes a means to an end. It finances your life outside work to the full.
- 3. PICK AND MIX** – This means deciding on a combination of both the previous options in some way.

The clearer you are about what you want from work, the more targeted your approach, and the quicker you'll get there.

‘Let us stop equating work with earning a living, but rather think of it as an important component of making a life’ – Ralph Weinrich



#### MAKING A LIFE

Running her family business, Farah Latif Raz (left) works, plays, learns and gives every day with her extended family. Her work ethos is based on respect caring for each other, sharing responsibilities and having fun together. Virtually all Latif's life's essentials are blended within her work.



‘Find a job you like and you add five days to every week’

– H Jackson Browne



#### EARNING A LIVING

After the birth of her new son Seamus, work has become a means to an end for Sue Higgins. Although it provides her with a salary, her job is strictly part-time and her real passion is to spend quality time with her child.

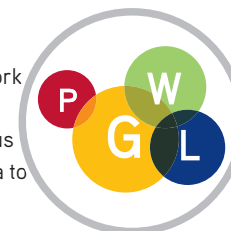


‘People want three things from work: money, meaning and magic. Money feeds the stomach, but meaning and magic feed the spirit and soul’ – Mike Pegg



#### PICK AND MIX

Dave Lewis really enjoys his work as a doctor supporting an inner city community. Although his work meets many of his life's essentials, he has made a conscious decision to work part-time to allow his partner Maria to pursue her surgical career. The added benefit is he spends far more quality time with his children.



‘We are not born to work, we are born to enjoy life, work is only part of it’

Stop worrying about job interviews for a moment and consider something far more important – your ‘life interview’ – Imagine every year you go before an interview board chaired by yourself. You are asked one simple question, “What kind of life are you going to create and sustain for yourself this year?”

You are given three options, which one would you choose?

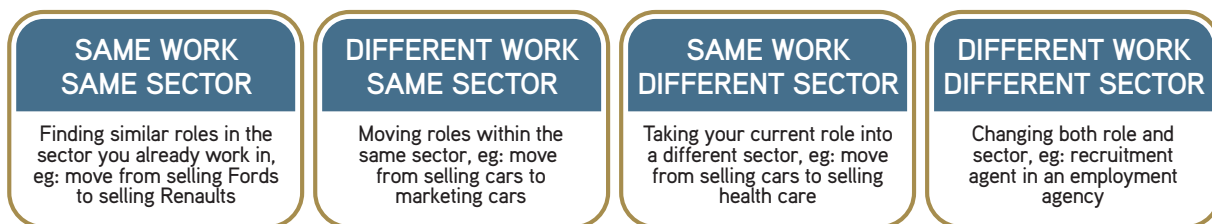
- TERRIBLE
- REASONABLE
- EXTRAORDINARY

What kind of work will make the difference between leading a reasonable and extraordinary life? It may be about earning a living to do what you’ve always wanted to do but always put off. It may be something that brings real meaning and purpose into your life. It could be a stepping stone which provides you with the skills and confidence to get that ideal role or take another step closer.

Whatever your situation and reasonable excuses, eg: family, commitments, time, motivation, please aim for extraordinary things in life and work that makes you happy – you can always compromise later. Each one of us has the potential to do at least one really exciting thing this year. If finding new forms of work helps you enhance the quality and meaning in your life as a whole, be clear what you’re looking for. The exciting thing is you have a number of pathways available to you.

## My career pathways

In searching for new work, there are four broad approaches you can take:



The level of risk varies with each. Securing a similar job in the same sector is far safer and easier than jumping into a completely new role in a totally different sector. However, it may not be as rewarding.

There are also four broad types of work:

TRADITIONAL – Full-time 9-5 type of job with standard package.

FLEXIBLE – eg: Part-time work, job-share, remote or home working, annualised hours, secondment, interim or seasonal work.

UNPAID – Voluntary, career break, dependency break, work shadowing.

SELF-EMPLOYED – Freelance work, consultancy, project-based, owner/manager of business.

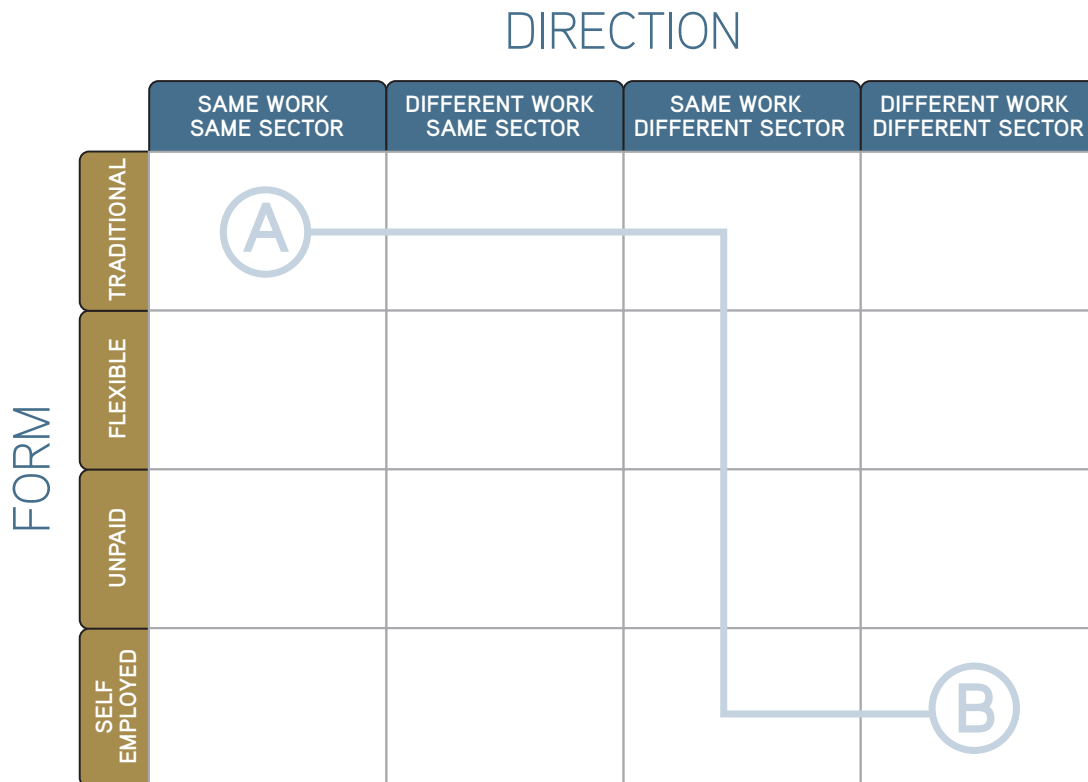
The level of flexibility will depend on the employer and the sector. Combining both the ‘direction’ and ‘form’ of work provides you with no fewer than 16 potential alternatives.

## ‘The best journeys are not always in straight lines’

– David Baird

## Getting from A-B

How quickly you get there depends on the route you choose.



You now have 16 options you can take to move closer to your vision. Where are you going to start and which pathways are going to get you there quickest?

e

### My ideal environment

1. Consider the direction of work first – which of the four options looks most suitable for you?
2. Now consider what each of the forms of work with this direction would look like. Don't forget you may wish to explore a combination of several steps to get you to your ideal environment.
3. Be realistic – try to focus your energy on no more than two or three areas. Remember to start where you feel comfortable and then stretch yourself. The bigger the leap, the more risky and challenging – but more rewarding it may be.

Having begun to target your efforts, you are now in an ideal position to start your job (or life) search. Before you begin, it's worth reflecting on other people's experiences.

### Learning from experience

Our experience with more than 20,000 individuals over the past 10 years has identified several key factors for success in job hunting. The main difference between success and failure is not an external barrier such as "there are no jobs out there". It is your personal approach.

'He who walks in another's tracks leaves no footprints'

– Confucius



#### **FOLLOW THE CROWD**

- Wonder why you are doing it
- Search where everybody else does, eg: papers and internet (less than 10% chance of success)
- Aimlessly firing off lots of vague, unfocused CVs



#### **SELECT A CLEAR TARGET & STRATEGY**

- Understand clearly what/who you are going for
- Talk to as many people as possible
- Produce personalised cover letters and CVs tailored to the job



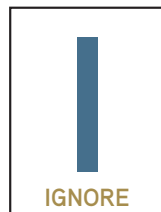
#### **ASSUME THINGS ABOUT**

- The job market based on ignorance, hype or bad advice
- Base assumptions on limited experience or second-hand information
- Assume all employers need same skills
- Focus solely on large companies



#### **UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW**

- The market works and what employers need
- Speak directly to employers about future needs
- Know how they prefer to recruit and their criteria
- Explore massive growth opportunities in small businesses (less than 20 staff)



#### **IGNORE HELP AND ADVICE**

- Isolate yourself from your support community
- Unaware of help available on your doorstep, eg: family, friends, professionals
- Fail to act on feedback



#### **CREATE A SUPPORT COMMUNITY**

- Ask for leads from family, friends, colleagues
- Actively seek encouragement, support, advice, and guidance from people
- Listen continually to feedback and improve



#### **LACK OF MOTIVATION**

- Wait passively for things to happen then react
- Put in an hour a day – at best – half-heartedly
- Go through the motions for the sake of it



#### **COMMIT TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN**

- Take proactive approach to create new opportunities
- Show commitment to hard work, realise job search is a job itself (put in 35 hours a week)
- Use energy wisely – target jobs you find exciting



#### **UNDERSELL YOURSELF**

- Fail to spend quality time reviewing what you offer
- Unclear where you are going and why you want the job
- Little experience of self-promotion, eg: never stood up in public



#### **ENJOY PROMOTING YOUR ABILITIES**

- Have clear view of own strengths and the skills you love using and are really good at
- Clarify your vision and have strong rationale based on far deeper self-knowledge
- Develop confidence – keep stretching yourself



#### **REACT BADLY TO REJECTION**

- Take rejection personally
- Blame yourself not your technique



#### **SHAPE YOUR OWN FUTURE**

- Gain and learn from feedback
- Use a technique that works and change if required



#### **END THE PROCESS TOO EARLY**

- Stop when the going gets tough
- Finish it when you find a job



#### **SUSTAIN IT OVER A LIFETIME**

- Recognise job search means rejection.
- The most successful are often rejected the most
- Go on looking even when in the new job



### Creating your work search plan

This section gives you lots of useful ideas to help you plan your search for new work. Any single one of these could make the difference between failure and success.

Read the overview overleaf for a summary of the top ten tips. When you've identified a few, you might like to try, turn to Job booklet for a more detailed version.

You may wish to highlight each action you see as important to your chances of success and then review and prioritise them to create your own action plan.

Most people spend more time planning their holiday than their life. Why not use that effort to get what you want fifty-two weeks a year instead of just two?



'If you get battered and bruised by the job search, don't blame yourself, blame the technique you use'

## Mastering the ART of jobhunting

### 1. GET IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

You need to be:

A – Active: Be proactive, create opportunities and work on improving your job-seeking skills.

R – Reflective: Keep thinking about your ideas, handle rejection and use feedback to your advantage.

T – Tenacious: Have the resilience and determination to move forward despite any disappointments. Recognise it's a long-term investment.

### 2. UNDERSTAND HOW THE MARKET WORKS

Eighty per cent of the job-seeking population are competing for 20 per cent of the opportunities.

So don't just follow the crowd and rely on job ads in papers and on the internet – most jobs are either not advertised or go to 'inside' candidates. The secret is to understand how employers prefer to fill vacancies – and then match your approach to it.

### 3. GET AS MUCH HELP AS POSSIBLE.

Jobhunting is a lonely process and almost impossible to do by yourself. We all need a little help from our friends.

Do you need to:

- Build your community (see Stage 5)

- Seek information interviews (see Stage 5, pg 16)

- Find someone to discuss your vision (see Stage 2, pg 26)

Ask someone to do some of the work for you (who can help you with 1-10). Gain some professional advice.

### 4. LOOK AT THE BIGGEST CONTEXT

Don't keep your focus narrow and fail to see the bigger picture. Look ahead and make sure that your job search fits into a longer-term game plan.

Make sure you broaden your horizons by using various techniques to generate lists of ideas that interest you.

You might pick three things you are passionate about and see them as sectors of employment. Or you could find three friends who are in jobs that appeal to you or keep a close eye on current affairs for growth areas you could work in. You'll find lots of ideas to get you thinking in the Job booklet. Remember to stay positive and realistic – accept that you're going to get rejected more times than you're accepted.

Jobhunting, preparing a CV for selection and interviews for employment can all be challenging tasks. You may wish to look in more detail at these areas. The Job booklet will help you to do this with practical help, advice and examples to support you.

'If you don't know what you're looking for, you won't find it'

'If you ask for help and articulate what you want, other people come to you'

## 5. GET ON THE INSIDE TRACK

With most jobs filled before they go public, you need to tap into the inside market yourself. Ways of doing this include:

- Keeping in touch with people and developments in your chosen field
- Catching opportunities before they go public
- Volunteering to work unpaid or on a trial basis
- Finding work-shadowing opportunities
- Taking temporary or lower-grade work to create the right networks
- Getting as many people as possible looking for you
- Tapping into networks related to your field/industry
- Joining organisations or projects to meet new people who can help your job search

## 6. TRY SOMETHING NEW

Try a fresh approach and use your imagination. Stop playing safe and push yourself harder. You may be surprised what you are capable of. Ideas you could try include:

- Look at the jobs you don't want to find the ones you do, eg: look beyond the advertised vacancy, what other unadvertised jobs might this organisation potentially have? Do any of these match your vision?
- Advertising yourself by writing articles or promoting yourself at trade fairs
- Keeping your CV up to date and looking for work as a consultant or freelance
- Getting out and about and checking out business opportunities on your doorstep
- Contacting professional or trade journals to get advisory interviews with authors
- Research companies (and their suppliers, distributors, competitors etc) in sectors you'd like to work in
- Scan your local paper for companies that are expanding or have won orders or government awards, and make contact before new jobs are advertised

## 7. GET THE BASICS RIGHT

Master key skills such as telephone technique, research and networking, and don't overlook the traditional visible job market. Key tips include:

- Find out the days on which papers advertise particular types of job
- Don't be put off by titles and salaries – find out exactly what jobs entail
- Use your local careers service (private or local university) or JobCentre
- Get onto as many useful mailing lists as possible
- Keep up to date with the directories, publications, journals and magazines through which employers recruit, and make sure you surf the internet
- Look into doing a possible personal or career development course
- Draw up a hit list of organisations to target
- Always do your groundwork before sending off speculative letters

‘Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go’ – T S Eliot

## 8 THINK WIN-WIN

This involves taking a broader look at your potential employer and thinking beyond the job you are going for.

Focus on the needs of the whole organisation by gathering all the market intelligence you can find on its priorities over the next few years based on changing customer needs, new markets and competitors, new products etc.

Be clear on how you can add value and use the information and job specification to list what you can offer, why you want the job and how you can make a difference.

## 9 LEARN TO MANAGE REJECTION

Dealing with rejection and critical feedback is all part of jobhunting – but don't let it keep you trapped in a safe – but unenjoyable – job. There are lots of ways you can avoid losing your self-esteem including:

- Recognising it is not you who is being rejected – just the technique you use
- Making sure you have done your homework
- Remembering rejection has benefits – why work for a firm that does not value you?
- Gaining feedback and responding positively to it
- Hanging around positive people

## 10 TRUST IN YOURSELF AND KEEP ON GOING

Always have lots of Plan Bs up your sleeve.

If you feel powerless look at the little things you can control and work on them. Remind yourself that employers need your unique skills and experience, and focus on what excites and energises you.

Be ready to compromise – take a lower-level position as long as it's taking you in the right direction or buying time to chase your dreams. Learn to ask for what you want and go with your heart – your instinct is almost always right.

'We can do anything we want to do if we stick with it long enough' – Helen Keller



## GETTING IN THE FAST LANE

Dave Appleyard loved fast cars but his car fleet sales work didn't provide the lifestyle he hoped for. His aim was to secure a marketing/sales role in a big international company with good salary prospects and support. His jobhunting failed but feedback suggested he needed more commercial experience and professionalism.

As a result, he changed his technique and used family contacts to find a placement in a small healthcare business which provided a stepping stone. Six months on Dave is far more focused and mature in his approach and has just received three new job offers.

## Take action – create an early win

Now it's all up to you! You've read all the suggestions and hopefully gathered some good advice from friends and colleagues. It's time for action.

e

### I can start right here

1. Take a piece of paper and set down a specific objective for your job search in the centre of the page, eg: 'to gain a retail marketing job in the North East in the next four months'.
2. List all the actions you could take to do this.
3. Then number each in priority order.

To get you started think of an early win which you'll find easy to achieve.

You now have your own personal work search plan.

4. Finally set a clear timescale.

What positive action are you going to take in the next:

- Second
- Minute
- Hour
- Day
- Week
- Month?

**YOU'VE NOW GOT THREE OR MORE POTENTIAL ROUTES TO TAKE. YOU MAY EVEN WISH TO CREATE YOUR OWN COMBINATION. WHATEVER CHOICES YOU MAKE IT'S NOW IMPORTANT TO TURN PLANS INTO ACTION.**

## IT'S MY LIFE!

Collect and consider everything you've gained from this stage in a file or notebook. Use your Life planner to:

1. Check you have done all the exercises.
2. Record the lessons you have learned and what you found surprising or puzzling.
3. Note down any ideas that could form part of your plans for the future.



THE WINDMILLS APPROACH TO  
WORKING, LEARNING, PLAYING & GIVING

‘When the wind blows, some people  
build walls – others build windmills’

**Windmills is about dealing positively with the winds of change in your life.**

The Windmills approach to working, learning, playing and giving will open your eyes to possibilities you never dreamed existed. You'll discover it's far easier than you imagined to achieve the life you really want and deserve. You'll find out how to make some plans for the future that will begin to make that ideal life a reality.

#### THE WINDMILLS PARTNERSHIP

Windmills is a partnership between The University of Liverpool's GIEU (Graduate Into Employment Unit) and Dr Peter Hawkins. It has evolved from extensive delivery programmes funded by National LSC, NWDA, Greater Merseyside LSC, IAG Partnership, ESF, DfES and GONW.

#### DR PETER HAWKINS



Dr Peter Hawkins is a Fellow of The University of Liverpool and a world expert on career and life management.

As a visiting lecturer at Harvard University and advisor to UK Government, he writes, speaks and consults on an international basis.

Peter is the author of seven books, including the acclaimed 'Art of Building Windmills' and enjoys working with a range of partners including VSO, KPMG, Unicef, European Commission, BBC, DfES and the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Passionate about working with people with special needs, Peter leads a charity for adults with learning difficulties and is an advocate for individuals with disabilities.

#### THE WINDMILLS TEAM

The Windmills team is part of GIEU, based at The University of Liverpool. Team members, in particular Helen Wakefield and Sharon Nicholson, have significantly contributed to the concepts, development and writing of this resource.

Windmills was developed through the team's experience and its success has included; increasing the employability of 20,000 under-employed and unemployed individuals; enhancing the competitiveness of 2,000 businesses; creating 1,250 entirely new jobs, and adding over £30 million value to the economy.

Windmills includes a portfolio of job, career, work and life resources together with tailored training programmes. The process has been successfully used with a range of clients, including women's groups and graduates, as well as for staff development, public, voluntary and commercial organisations and career and life practitioners.



For more information visit our website [www.windmillsprogramme.com](http://www.windmillsprogramme.com) or contact:

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