Career Planning Seminar
Version for distribution

What I did while not being on holiday: what went to plan, and what didn’t

Duncan Hall
2018-07-06
Outline

Frameworks I’ve found useful for career planning
Helpful heuristics
What didn’t go according to plan
Lessons I learned along the way
Summary, Q&A
Frameworks I’ve found useful for career planning:

Pro’s – Con’s
Strengths – Weaknesses
Opportunities – Risks
Planning horizons:
• Short term: ~today; ~week; ~month
• Medium term: this coming year
• Longer term: next five years+

Your LIFE is much, MUCH, more than your career
From Engineering New Zealand: Top 10 tips

1. **Be you**
   Figure out what works for you – and don’t try to be someone you’re not

2. **Focus on first principles**
   Use critical thinking to find the simplest solution

3. **Keep learning**
   The best engineers never stop learning

4. **Stay focused on your goals**
   Make sure you know what they are and where you want to end up

5. **Questions are good**
   Never be afraid to ask

6. **Take every chance to gain new experiences and demonstrate leadership**

7. **Leadership opportunities are everywhere:**
   Sports teams, work projects, community groups

8. **Be passionate**
   Do what makes your heart sing

9. **Have fun!**
   Find a balance between working and spending time with friends

10. **Stay generalist if you can**
    Doing a great job and taking every opportunity that comes your way will give you more options than taking a very specialised route
Online career planning (from my employer):


For entrepreneurs / starting up your own business

If you decide to start up your own business seek advice about tax obligations. Investigate thoroughly what’s involved in running a small business, for example:

- [Business.govt.nz](https://business.govt.nz)
- [Small Business Administration](https://www.sba.gov)
- [Business Owner’s toolkit](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/docs/166277_Business_Owners_Toolkit.pdf)
- [The Business Owners’ Idea Café](https://www.thebusinessownerscafe.co.nz)
- [Home Businesses](https://www.business.govt.nz/home-businesses)
Helpful heuristics

If you come to a fork in the road, take it

But also, $\text{are}$ NOT important

Second order (and +) terms dominate, e.g. \texttt{FUN}

Listen to your quiet inner voice

Mens sana in corpore sano: look after yourself

  Stress: distress, eustress

Invest in your own CPD

Cultivate ‘real options’ perspectives

Think of your career as a portfolio of projects

Always have at least one alternative plan

Always prepare an exit plan
What didn’t go to plan: e.g. first year following ME

LIST AND INDEX
OF
PERMANENT OFFICERS
IN THE
POST OFFICE
ON
1 APRIL 1981
What didn’t go to plan: e.g. first year following ME

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What didn’t go to plan: e.g. first year following ME
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• UAT for 9,000 hours of software development
• Circuit switched PSTN dimensioning: \( \lambda, \mu, \text{Poisson, Erlangs} \)
• IDN, ISDN, X25, part time teaching
• $ for WAS

But my quiet inner voice said:
• Start to understand the world of $
• Get some ‘mud on your boots’
• When offered, decide to go all the way south
Unexpectedly, the best decision I ever made . . .
Almost all risks can be re-phrased to then describe opportunities: both are deviations from expectation.
Source/Cause/Hazard
[Any of below]

Actual Risk
Current risk score:

Impact
[Potentially all of below]

If

............... 
............... 
............... 

it will result in
............... 
............... 

Protective controls, current / future:
- Policies
- Process
- Organisational structures
- Culture
- Tools
- People

Corrective controls

Risk Owner: Treatment Manager:
## Likelihood-Consequence Matrix

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### Consequence

- **Negligible**: >70% external take-up, material impact.
- **Minor**: 5%-10% delay to project that can be made up, impact on project <=10% of project budget, limited short term system outage, minor legal issues, non-compliances and breaches of legislation, no capability gaps, minimal adjustment to skill sets required, insignificant injury, no lost time, no long term effects.
- **Moderate**: 61%-70% external take-up, some quality &/or system compromises, 5%-10% delay to project that can't be made up, impact on project 11%-20% of project budget, minor re-prioritisation of key initiatives or deliverables, minor delay to the delivery of services or key objectives, minor re-prioritisation of key initiatives or deliverables, some delay to the delivery of services or key objectives, minor quality and system issues.
- **Major**: 75%-90% chance of event occurring, frequent, occurs every 6 months or more frequently, expected to occur in most circumstances, significant quality concerns &/or system compromises, 11%-15% delay to project that maybe made up, impact on project 21%-30% of project budget, some additional external resources required, moderate re-prioritisation of key initiatives or deliverables, some delay to the delivery of services or key objectives, poor optimisation, multiple areas of the Ministry affected.
- **Extremely Major**: Central agency concern, significant quality concerns &/or system compromises, >15% delay to project that can't be made up, some additional external resources required, major reprioritisation or key initiatives or deliverables, major delays to the delivery of services or key objectives, major impact on staff engagement, multiple areas of the Ministry affected, significant loss of confidence in Ministry from internally and internationally.

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THE LADY OR THE TIGER
AND OTHER STORIES
FRANK STOCKTON

Introduction by Francis R. Gemme
In hindsight, life is full of ‘predictable surprises’:
The unexpected happened: in 1984, again in 1987
In the meantime, instead of completing a BCom:

Photo of University of Otago MBA11
Unexpectedly, the MBA delivered the opposite of my plan:

Claymation video of Plato’s cave allegory
Gareth Morgan
IMAGES OF ORGANIZATION

New Edition of the International Best-Seller
What’s in your toolbox?

- Decomposition
- Abstraction
- Quantification
- Visualisation
- Peer review

‘Reductionist’

Note:
- Useful for ‘tractable’ problems
- Challenged by ‘wicked’ problems
A helpful way of looking at career opportunities

Real options exist because of three factors:

- Uncertainty about the future (risk)
- The time irreversibility of decision outcomes
- The ability to act on new information

Recognise:
- The inevitability of change,
- Options for flexibility, and
- Opportunities to exercise judgement
Examples of real options:

• Option to delay
  – Wait for new information and learn before committing,
  – Or accelerate decision in light of recent information

• Option to expand beyond initial position
  – Expansion contingent on initial investment

• Option to abandon or switch
  – Once additional experience and learning is gained
Indonesia:

Photo of collaborative planning
Ulaanbaatar, Outer Mongolia:

Photo of the team in Ulaanbaatar
Yes, it’s a long way down
Up on the new surface
In the New Mexico desert
In the Western Australian desert
Lessons I’ve learned

Expect the unexpected
View your CPD as an investment, not an expense
   Say ~2% of income?
   ROI is qualitative as well as quantitative
Explore outside your ‘cave’
Many real-world problems are ‘wicked’
Power = control over resources and destiny
Management ≠ Leadership ≠ Diplomacy
Try to be nice to everyone:
   You never know who your next boss might be
Summary

Frameworks I’ve found useful for career planning
Helpful heuristics
What didn’t go according to plan
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