

New Year

New job or different mindset?



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CONTENTS:

STEP 1: reflect on your goal _____	3
STEP 2: choose an approach _____	3
STEP 3: set a smarter goal. A resolution is not enough _____	4
STEP 4: creative exploring _____	7
STEP 5: start researching _____	7
STEP 6: understand recruitment processes _____	8
STEP 7: love your job more _____	9
STEP 8: prime yourself for the job you want _____	9
STEP 9: make use of social media _____	9
STEP 10: use different ways to search for a job _____	10
CHECKLIST _____	11



STEP 1: REFLECT ON YOUR GOAL

Give serious consideration to what you want from your career. Are you looking for a new challenge, different environment or a change in perspective?

Reflect on your current situation and where you want to be. This could be one long-term goal or several short-term goals.

Looking at the whole picture can help support the career decision making process. This can include your partner, family, health and wellbeing, financial commitments, social life, as well as the workplace culture and actual job role.

STEP 2: CHOOSE AN APPROACH

Identify what your focus will be. Perhaps you want additional responsibilities in the same company or a change of environment. Where do you want to be and how will you get there? What resources can you access?

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU:

- Use recruitment websites to search for job roles and salaries
- Visit company websites to gain an understanding of their workplace culture, departments, live jobs and how to make speculative applications
- Be creative by growing and using your network
- Improve your knowledge and skillset through professional development opportunities
- Identify what employability skills you need to improve and get support with this e.g. CV review, mock interviews, presentation skills, psychometric tests, assessment centres
- Reflect on how you can market yourself to employers by thinking about your strengths and what you have achieved throughout your career

Moving away from a role, or employer, is a big step. Before you do this, take time to make a list or discuss with someone what you are leaving behind. Recognise what you do not want in a role or workplace so that you can avoid this in the future.

STEP 3: SET A SMARTER GOAL. A RESOLUTION IS NOT ENOUGH

Most of us know about **SMART** goals, but then forget to think about each element. Let's get you setting **SMARTER GOALS**.

- You need a goal which is **SPECIFIC**. The goal should clearly state what you want to achieve. If you are looking for a new job, you need to be clear on what job you would like
- It needs to be **MEASURABLE**. You need to know where to start so you can monitor progress. Getting a new job is a clear measure of success but you need to break it down into sub-steps such as: revise your CV, gather information on the current challenges in the industry etc
- The goal must be **ACHIEVABLE**. It can be useful to set smaller steps before reaching your goal. Knowledge and experience are needed for senior management and specialist roles and becoming a director or head of a department takes time. If you have a postgraduate qualification but little experience, a graduate scheme might be an option within a larger company
- It also must be **REALISTIC**. Most things are possible if we set our minds to them and focus. Research and networking can help here. Meet people who are where you want to be and learn about their journey. Compare salaries and required skills across similar roles and look at alternative jobs that would value your skillset
- **TIME BOUND** means to set a time scale for what you would like to achieve. Talk to people and get a sense of how long it will take to move from x to y. Get a clear understanding on all the sub-steps and create a timeline
- The goal should be **EXCITING**. It must have personal meaning for you and be something that you want to do. Make sure it motivates you
- Finally, it should be **RECORDED**. You need to write it down and monitor progress. An action plan with your main goal and sub steps might be useful. Alternatively, make a list or timeline that you can refer to

ACTIVITY

A resolution is not enough - set **SMARTER** Goals

Write your goal down and then review:

Is it specific? In what way? Make a note.

How can you measure it? List the criteria you will use.

How is it achievable?

Is this a realistic goal? You may need to break a long-term goal into sub-goals.

What will the time scale be to achieve this? If you do not know, find out and write it down.

Is it exciting for you? Is it something you want to do? You want to write a big YES! If not, it is probably the wrong goal.

Now write your goal down taking all the above into account. Save it to your phone or display it somewhere you will be able to easily review it.

STEP 4: CREATIVE EXPLORING

Find a calm space and make a list of what interests and motivates you; be creative and dream big! Your list can include career and more personal goals. It can be helpful to meet with a careers coach or friend to discuss this further. This might include working abroad, managing people and projects, working in a different sector, designing a new product, or getting on the property ladder.

Be realistic with yourself and review each idea on your list. What do you need to rule out? What is a possibility? Are there things you need to research further? Who can support you?

STEP 5: START RESEARCHING

There are many ways in which you can research your career ideas:

- Careers websites – use websites such as [jobs.ac.uk](https://www.jobs.ac.uk), [Prospects](#), [TARGETjobs](#), [The Guardian Jobs](#), [Monster](#) and [Inside Careers](#) to learn about different sectors and job roles
- Job descriptions and person specifications – read job descriptions carefully to understand what you would be expected to do and identify how you meet the criteria
- Social media – use LinkedIn to connect with professionals in roles you aspire to be in



STEP 6: UNDERSTAND RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

As part of your research and preparation for your next steps, it is important to understand and be confident in the recruitment process. This could include a CV, covering letter, supporting statement, application questions, video and telephone interviews, psychometric tests, assessment centres, panel interviews, and presentations. What are you less confident in? How well do you market yourself to employers in person and in writing?

Each recruiter and employer will have their preferred way of assessing candidates. Identify what you need to improve on and get support from people and online resources. For example, consider getting your CV reviewed by a careers or HR professional. There are several recruitment sites which can offer a free CV review. Practice online tests in advance and arrange a mock interview with a professional or friend who can give you constructive feedback.

Use the **STAR** technique to evidence your skills and qualifications for the job you would like to apply for. You can practice talking and writing about your experiences.

Situation – the context

Task – your goal

Action – what you personally did

Result – the outcome

STEP 7: LOVE YOUR JOB MORE

It is possible that now is not the right time to make a move to a different company due to a lack of experience, skills or qualifications. Look at the tips below which can help you have a new perspective on your current job:

- **Decide to like your job** – make a list of all the positive traits e.g. responsibilities, location, flexible working, social events, financial incentives, colleagues or time off
- **Professional development** – speak to your manager about accessing internal or external development opportunities to acquire new or refresh your knowledge and skills
- **Reflect on what you have achieved** – think about successes in your current role that could be transferable e.g. learning new systems; training others; managing events, people and budgets
- **Look for new challenges** – show your commercial awareness and identify how you can help your employer further e.g. collaborate with others to increase revenue or bring in more clients, make suggestions as to where the business could expand to, sit on committees or working groups looking to influence change
- **Corporate social responsibility** – find out what your employer is committed to and how employees can be involved e.g. volunteering; supporting communities in the UK and overseas; managing their environmental impact

STEP 8: PRIME YOURSELF FOR THE JOB YOU WANT

- Invest in literature (books, credible journals and websites) on the career or sector you want to work in
- Network with professionals in the industry to gain further insight through LinkedIn, events and conferences

STEP 9: MAKE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Market yourself on LinkedIn by highlighting your skills, experience, qualifications and achievements. Connect with ex colleagues and peers for endorsements and recommendations. Grow your network further by connecting with recruiters and professionals in the sector you want to be in. Follow companies you have an interest in via LinkedIn or Twitter and share information which will boost your credibility and demonstrate your motivations for your next career move.

STEP 10: USE DIFFERENT WAYS TO SEARCH FOR A JOB

- **Recruitment websites** – register on reputable sites and access the careers advice pages; be specific in your search; ensure your applications are tailored
- **Networking** – identify who might be able to help you and how you can grow your network to access new opportunities
- **Company websites** – sign up for job alerts directly on employer websites
- **Speculative applications** – market yourself to employers with the view to exploring the possibility of you joining their organisation
- **LinkedIn** – ensure your profile is up to date and search for jobs that match your skillset and experience

Read this article on [Implementing a job search strategy](#)

STEP 11: PLAN HOW TO STAY FOCUSED

Recognise that moving on to a new job does not always happen immediately. Focus on how you can make the most of your current job and set yourself some challenges which can enhance your CV and applications.

Look for professional development opportunities and discuss with your manager how you can take on additional or different responsibilities. It can be helpful to reflect weekly or monthly on what your achievements in your job have been. Why are you in your job? What have you achieved? What more can you offer? Where could this lead?



CHECKLIST

Have you:

Step 1: Reflected on your goal?

Step 2: Chosen your approach?

Step 3: Set a **SMARTER** Goal?

Step 4: Done some creative exploring?

Step 5: Started researching?

Step 6: Understood recruitment processes?

Step 7: Identified how you can love your job more?

Step 8: Primed yourself for the job you want?

Step 9: Made use of social media?

Step 10: Identified different ways to search for a job?

Step 11: Planned how to stay focused?

Adopt a positive mindset by aiming to enjoy your time at work and reflect on your achievements. Your next career move can be a long-term goal which you can work towards by developing yourself, widening your knowledge and your network, and gaining confidence in marketing yourself.

All the very best for this month, 2019 and onwards.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nadine Lewis is a qualified careers consultant in higher education. This e-guide offers practical steps to get you thinking about your future career. There are tools for reflection, creating a goal and adopting a positive outlook towards your current situation.

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