

Chapter 1: The Modern Career Problem

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The Modern Career Problem

As we navigate the complex and ever-changing landscape of modern careers, it's becoming increasingly clear that traditional career advice is no longer sufficient. The idea that we should simply "follow our passion" or "climb the corporate ladder" is outdated and often misguided. In reality, many of us are struggling to find fulfilling and sustainable careers, and it's time to acknowledge that a new approach is needed.

Research by Daniel Pink (2011) has shown that autonomy, mastery, and purpose are essential components of a fulfilling career. However, many of us are stuck in careers that lack one or more of these elements, leading to feelings of disengagement and dissatisfaction. According to a study by Gallup (2020), only 34% of employees in the United States are engaged at work, while 43% are "not engaged" and 23% are "actively disengaged."

So, what's going wrong? In my work with clients, I've identified five common career failure modes that can hold us back from achieving our career goals. These include:

1. ****Lack of Clarity****: Uncertainty about our values, strengths, and goals, leading to a lack of direction and purpose.
2. ****Insufficient Capital****: Limited financial resources, skills, or knowledge, making it difficult to pursue our career aspirations.
3. ****Poor Credibility****: A lack of reputation, credentials, or experience, hindering our ability to establish trust and authority in our field.
4. ****Weak Connections****: Limited professional networks, making it hard to access opportunities, get feedback, and stay informed about industry trends.

5. ****Inadequate Adaptability****: Failure to adapt to changing circumstances, leading to stagnation and obsolescence.

To overcome these challenges, I've developed THE CAREER BLUEPRINT MODEL, a comprehensive framework that addresses four key career dimensions: Clarity, Capital, Credibility, and Connections. This model provides a structured approach to career development, helping you identify areas for improvement and create a personalized plan for success.

The four dimensions of THE CAREER BLUEPRINT MODEL are interconnected and interdependent. ****Clarity**** refers to our understanding of ourselves, our values, and our goals. ****Capital**** encompasses our financial resources, skills, and knowledge. ****Credibility**** is about establishing trust and authority in our field, while ****Connections**** refers to our professional networks and relationships.

To help you assess your strengths and weaknesses across these four dimensions, I've created the 40-question Career Profile Assessment. Please take a few minutes to complete this assessment, using the following worksheet:

****Career Profile Assessment****

****Section 1: Clarity****

1. What are my core values, and how do they align with my career goals?

----- 2.

What are my strengths and weaknesses, and how do they impact my career?

----- 3.

What are my long-term career aspirations, and what steps can I take to achieve them?

----- 4.

What are my non-negotiables in a career, and how can I ensure they are met?

----- 5.

What are my priorities in a career, and how can I balance them?

****Section 2: Capital****

6. What are my financial resources, and how can I leverage them to support my career?

----- 7.

What skills and knowledge do I need to acquire to advance in my career?

----- 8.

What are my greatest accomplishments, and how can I build on them?

----- 9.

What are my areas for improvement, and how can I address them?

10. What are my career investments, and how can I optimize them?

****Section 3: Credibility****

11. What are my credentials and qualifications, and how can I showcase them?

12. What is my professional reputation, and how can I enhance it?

13. What are my thought leadership areas, and how can I establish myself as an expert?

14. What are my networking opportunities, and how can I maximize them?

15. What are my areas for improvement in terms of credibility, and how can I address them?

****Section 4: Connections****

16. Who are my key stakeholders, and how can I build relationships with them?

----- 17.

What are my professional networks, and how can I expand them?

18. What are my collaboration opportunities, and how can I capitalize on them?

19. What are my areas for improvement in terms of connections, and how can I address them?

20. What are my strategies for maintaining and deepening my professional relationships?

****Additional Questions****

21-30: Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree."

21. I am clear about my career goals and values. 22. I have sufficient financial resources to support my career. 23. I have a strong professional reputation. 24. I have a robust network of professional contacts. 25. I am adaptable and open to change. 26. I am proactive in seeking out new opportunities. 27. I am confident in my abilities and skills. 28. I am able to balance my work and personal life. 29. I am fulfilled and satisfied with my career. 30. I am committed to ongoing learning and development.

31-40: Please answer the following questions in 1-2 sentences each.

31. What are my greatest strengths and how can I leverage them in my career? 32. What are my areas for improvement and how can I address them? 33. What are my long-term career aspirations and what steps can I take to achieve them? 34. What are my non-negotiables in a career and how can I ensure they are met? 35. What are my priorities in a career and how can I balance them? 36. What are my thoughts on work-life balance and how can I maintain it? 37. What are my strategies for managing stress and burnout? 38. What are my plans for ongoing learning and development? 39. What are my goals for the next 6-12 months and how can I achieve them? 40. What are my thoughts on career satisfaction and fulfillment, and how can I cultivate them?

Once you've completed the assessment, add up your scores and review the results. This will give you a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses across the four dimensions of THE CAREER BLUEPRINT MODEL.

To further deepen your understanding of the Career Blueprint Model, let's break down each dimension into sub-steps. For Clarity, this includes:

* **Values Clarification**: Identifying your core values and how they align with your career goals * **Strengths Assessment**: Understanding your strengths and weaknesses, and how they impact your career * **Goal Setting**: Setting clear, achievable goals that align with your values and strengths

For Capital, this includes:

* **Financial Planning**: Creating a financial plan that supports your career goals * **Skill Development**: Identifying the skills and knowledge you need to acquire to advance in your career * **Investment Strategy**: Developing a strategy for investing in your career, including education, training, and networking

For Credibility, this includes:

* **Personal Branding**: Establishing a strong personal brand that reflects your values, strengths, and goals * **Networking**: Building relationships with key stakeholders and networking opportunities * **Thought Leadership**: Establishing yourself as an expert in your field through thought leadership areas

For Connections, this includes:

* **Relationship Building**: Building strong relationships with key stakeholders and professional networks * **Collaboration**: Identifying opportunities for collaboration and capitalizing on them * **Community Engagement**: Engaging with your professional community through events, conferences, and online forums

According to research by Carol Dweck (2006), having a growth mindset is essential for career success. By acknowledging areas for improvement and being open to learning and development, you can cultivate a growth mindset and set yourself up for success. Dweck's research shows that individuals with a growth mindset are more likely to take on challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, and achieve greater success.

The concept of THE VISIBILITY-WITHOUT-BRAGGING FRAMEWORK, developed by researchers like Brené Brown (2012), also highlights the importance of authenticity and vulnerability in career development. By being true to ourselves and our values, we can build stronger relationships and establish a more authentic professional brand. Brown's research shows that individuals who are willing to be vulnerable and authentic are more likely to build trust and establish strong relationships.

To illustrate the application of THE CAREER BLUEPRINT MODEL, let's consider the case of Sarah, a marketing professional who feels stuck in her career. Sarah completes the Career Profile Assessment and identifies areas for improvement in Clarity, Capital, and Connections. She realizes that she needs to clarify her values and goals, develop new skills and knowledge, and build stronger relationships with her professional network.

Using the Career Blueprint Model, Sarah creates a personalized plan for career development. She starts by clarifying her values and goals, and then develops a plan for acquiring new skills and knowledge. She also starts building relationships with key stakeholders and networking opportunities, and establishes herself as an expert in her field through thought leadership areas.

Over time, Sarah sees significant improvements in her career satisfaction and fulfillment. She feels more confident and self-assured, and is able to take on new challenges and opportunities. She also builds a strong professional network and establishes herself as a leader in her field.

In addition to the Career Profile Assessment, it's also important to regularly reflect on your career progress and adjust your plan as needed. This can be

done through regular journaling or logging, where you track your progress, reflect on your experiences, and identify patterns and themes that can inform your career development.

Some additional reflection questions to consider include:

* What are my thoughts on career satisfaction and fulfillment, and how can I cultivate them? * What are my strategies for managing stress and burnout, and how can I prioritize self-care? * What are my plans for ongoing learning and development, and how can I stay up-to-date with industry trends and advancements? * What are my goals for the next 6-12 months, and how can I achieve them? * What are my thoughts on work-life balance, and how can I maintain it?

By regularly reflecting on your career progress and adjusting your plan as needed, you can ensure that you're on track to achieving your career goals and living a fulfilling and satisfying career.

In conclusion, the modern career problem requires a new approach, one that takes into account the complexities and challenges of the modern workplace. By using THE CAREER BLUEPRINT MODEL and completing the Career Profile Assessment, you can gain a deeper understanding of your strengths and weaknesses and create a personalized plan for career success.

CHAPTER ACTION STEPS:

1. Complete the Career Profile Assessment and review your results, identifying areas for improvement and strengths to leverage.
2. Reflect on your values, strengths, and goals, and consider how they align with your current career trajectory.
3. Research and explore resources and tools that can help you address areas for improvement, such as online courses, workshops, or mentoring programs.
4. Reach out to your professional network and schedule meetings or conversations to discuss your career goals and aspirations.
5. Start a career journal or log to track your progress, reflect on your experiences, and identify patterns and themes that can inform your career development.
6. Regularly review and adjust your career plan, using the Career Blueprint

Model and reflection questions to guide your progress. 7. Prioritize self-care and stress management, and make time for ongoing learning and development. 8. Seek out opportunities for collaboration and networking, and establish yourself as an expert in your field through thought leadership areas.

As we delve deeper into the modern career problem, it's essential to explore real-life examples of professionals who have successfully navigated the complexities of the modern workplace. Let's take a closer look at the story of Emily Chen, a 35-year-old marketing specialist who found herself at a career crossroads.

Emily had been working in the marketing industry for over a decade, with a string of successful roles under her belt. However, she began to feel unfulfilled and restless, sensing that she was not utilizing her skills and strengths to their full potential. Despite her outward success, Emily felt stuck and unsure of how to pivot her career to align with her true passions and values.

To gain clarity, Emily decided to use the Career Blueprint Model, starting with the Career Profile Assessment. Her results revealed that she had a strong creative streak, with a talent for writing and design. However, her current role was heavily focused on data analysis and campaign management, leaving little room for creative expression.

Armed with this new insight, Emily began to explore framework sub-steps that would help her bridge the gap between her current role and her desired career trajectory. She started by identifying her "anchor strengths" – the skills and abilities that she was known for and excelled in. In Emily's case, her anchor strengths included her writing and communication skills, as well as her ability to think creatively and outside the box.

Next, Emily focused on developing her "bridge skills" – the skills and knowledge that would enable her to transition into a new role or industry. She realized that she needed to develop her skills in digital marketing, particularly in areas such as social media and content creation. To address this, Emily enrolled in an online course and began attending industry events and workshops.

As Emily worked through the Career Blueprint Model, she also encountered several common mistakes that could have derailed her progress. One of the most significant mistakes she encountered was the temptation to try to change everything at once. Emily realized that she couldn't simply quit her job and start fresh; instead, she needed to take a more incremental approach, building on her existing strengths and skills while gradually introducing new ones.

Another common mistake that Emily encountered was the tendency to focus too much on external validation. She had a habit of seeking feedback and approval from others, rather than trusting her own instincts and judgment. To overcome this, Emily started practicing self-reflection and self-trust, learning to tune into her own inner voice and intuition.

To help you avoid these common mistakes and stay on track, let's explore some additional framework sub-steps that you can incorporate into your own career development plan:

- * Identify your "career non-negotiables" – the values, skills, and work environment that are essential to your career satisfaction and fulfillment.
- * Develop a "career roadmap" – a visual representation of your short-term and long-term career goals, including key milestones and benchmarks.
- * Establish a "career support network" – a group of trusted advisors, mentors, and peers who can provide guidance, feedback, and encouragement.

In addition to these framework sub-steps, it's also essential to work through specific worksheet prompts that can help you gain clarity and insight into your career goals and aspirations. Here are a few examples:

- * What are the top three values that I want to honor in my career, and how can I align my work with these values?
- * What are the key strengths and skills that I bring to the table, and how can I leverage these to achieve my career goals?
- * What are the most significant challenges and obstacles that I'm likely to face in my career, and how can I develop strategies to overcome them?
- * What are the key milestones and benchmarks that I need to achieve in the

next 6-12 months, and what steps can I take to ensure that I'm on track to meet these goals?

By working through these worksheet prompts and incorporating the framework sub-steps into your career development plan, you'll be well on your way to creating a personalized blueprint for career success. Remember, the modern career problem requires a new approach – one that's tailored to your unique strengths, skills, and aspirations. By taking a proactive and intentional approach to your career development, you can overcome the challenges of the modern workplace and achieve a fulfilling and satisfying career that aligns with your values, passions, and goals.

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