

## Thinking About a Career

I am asked by students from time to time to “find them a job” or “help them find a job.” What is generally missing from this request is information that helps me help them. Here, I lay out that information – role, responsibilities, risks, rewards – that students need to provide to me or anyone else for that matter from whom they are requesting help.

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime (Tripp, 1987).

When I use “you” I mean the student.

### Role

The role you play is the position you hold in an organization. It is your next aspiration. It is the completion of the sentence, “At the next step of my career I wish to be...” It is not, therefore, the ultimate goal (e.g., president), but may well be a critical step on the path to the ultimate goal. You may have a number of alternative positions that appeal to you as the next step.

I, for example, am a Senior Lecturer in the Global Business and Transportation department at SUNY Maritime College. This is not my only role in professional life (See Drogan, 2010). You may thus have multiple roles.

You need to specify the role you would like to play.

### Responsibilities

Roles have associated responsibilities. For example, my role as a Senior Lecturer carries with it the responsibilities to teach, advise students, and participate in the academic governance of the college.

Another example:

The Captain (alt. Master or Shipmaster) of a merchant vessel is a licensed mariner in ultimate command of the vessel. The captain is responsible for its safe and efficient operation, including cargo operations, navigation, crew management and ensuring that the vessel complies with local and international laws, as well as company and flag state policies (“Captain (nautical),” 2010).

You need to specify the desired responsibilities.

There may be a conflict between role and responsibilities. You must decide how to resolve this conflict.

### Rewards

Pay is one of the rewards and elements of satisfaction of a job, but not the only one. For example, elements of job satisfaction may include:

Pay;

Hours of work;

Future Prospects (promotion and job security);

How hard or difficult the job is;

Job content: interest, prestige and independence; and

Interpersonal relationships (with co-workers and with management) (Clark, 1998).

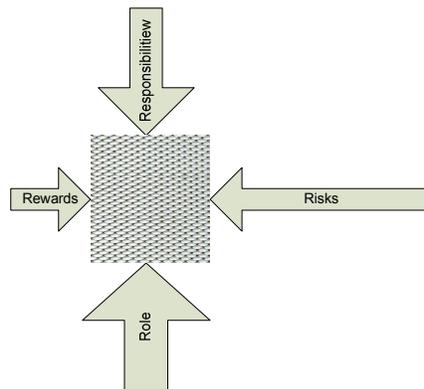
You need to specify the desired rewards understanding the potential for conflict with the roles and responsibilities previously specified.

## Risks

The final “R” to be specified by you is the risks that you are willing to accept and, just as important, unwilling to accept in the opportunity being pursued. For example, you may choose to accept the risks of extended travel. On the other hand, you may not want to be apart from your family for a lengthy period.

## Integration

Roles, responsibilities, rewards, and risks, all with different levels of importance to you, define a kind of mesh intended to help you and those working on your behalf (more about this in a bit) to trap the opportunities as quickly as possible.



The task of thinking through the Four Rs requires an ability and willingness to ask yourself hard questions and provide honest answers. In short, introspection (Drogan, 2009). This is not easy and it helps to have a friend, the kind of friend who is deeply concerned with your welfare and who will ask the hard questions and provide the possibly unwelcome answers when you are reluctant to do so.

Decisions regarding your career are amongst the most difficult to take. They are not, I would suggest, to be entered into lightly nor made quickly.

## Putting Others to Work

You would like to have as many people working on your behalf as possible. This means that they need to know what they are being asked to do. In short, you want them passing the mesh through the career marketplace and finding opportunities for you to consider. The description of the mesh becomes your marketing profile. It helps others know who you are and what you want.

Here is an example of a marketing profile.

Street	Name	Office: Telephone
City, State, Zip	E-mail	Home: Telephone

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#### PROFILE

Financial Controller with experience managing complex business issues in multinational manufacturing environments. Strategic business partner who adds value by making financial information understandable and actionable across the business at all levels. Have developed a strong reputation for financial control, system development and for improving processes and procedures across functional areas. Resourceful, inquisitive and analytical problem-solver and continuous improvement leader.

#### KEY SKILLS

- Analysis & Modeling
- Budgeting & Forecasting
- Cost Accounting
- Financial Reporting & Control
- Investment Evaluation
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Staff Supervision & Mentoring
- Strategic Planning
- System Implementation & Development
- Team Building & Leadership

#### OBJECTIVE

Financial leadership position (Controller, CFO or similar)

#### TARGET COMPANIES

Ametek	Charter Oak Partners	Heartland Industrial Partners	Lorad Medical
Applera	Conoptics	Honeywell	Novamatrix Medical
ATMI	The Eastern Company	Hubbell	Perkin-Elmer
Branson Ultrasonics	Ensign-Bickford	Ingersoll-Rand	SPX
Canberra	FKI Industries	ITT Industries	Thermo Electron

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**PECHINEY** (formerly American National Can Company) Norwalk, CT **1989 – 2002**  
Cebal Americas division (\$240MM manufacturer of tube packages for toothpaste, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals) of Paris, France-based aluminum producer and converter and specialty packaging manufacturer.

**Division Controller** 1999 - 2002

I. Direct Finance, Accounting and Information Systems for a global business with seven manufacturing plants in the United States, Brazil, Canada and Mexico.

**Manager, Financial Systems & Control** 1994 – 1999

**Senior Financial Analyst** 1991 – 1994

**Financial Analyst** 1989 – 1991

#### **GENERAL FOODS**

Birds Eye business unit (manufacturer and distributor of frozen vegetables).

**Senior Financial Analyst**, White Plains, NY 1988 – 1989

**Financial Analyst**, Waseca, MN plant 1986 - 1988

**1986 – 1989**

#### EDUCATION

MBA Finance, 1986, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison, WI

BA Economics, cum laude, 1983, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI

This is mesh looked at in another way. It is the short answer to who you are and what you are looking for. You should have one.

## Coda

The above is all hard work. You will not get it done in one pass. This is work that ought to be a regular part of your career. For example, while I think I am probably in the last job I will ever have before I really retire, my resume is current as of September 5, 2010. You never know when a door may open and you need to be prepared to step through before the door shuts or someone else steps through.

I was searching for interesting people to speak with and interesting things to do after my retirement from IBM in August 2001. I attended many different groups concerned with the subject of career transition. One of my favorites was and still is New Canaan CaTS. Here's a bit about what's behind this group.

### **What is New Canaan CaTS?**

New Canaan Career Transition Support ("CaTS") consists of volunteers from two New Canaan, Connecticut churches-- First Presbyterian and St. Mark's Episcopal-- who provide free, positive and informative assistance to those in job transition.

## **New Canaan CaTS History**

New Canaan CaTS was founded in 1989 at First Presbyterian by William "Mac" Walker to supply career management resources for the community. Mac firmly believes that an individual who develops a personal job search plan is likely to make a quicker, more successful change.

At about the same time, Jim Lisher started a group at St. Mark's Episcopal with a similar charter. A few years later, the two groups merged to better focus their combined resources to help job searchers in Connecticut and beyond.

Over the ensuing years, CaTS has continually enhanced the services available to those faced with a change in employment. In addition to its signature bi-weekly workshops, CaTS maintains a comprehensive web site ([www.newcanaancats.org](http://www.newcanaancats.org)), offers abundant networking opportunities and provides complimentary you-on-you help to those in need of it.

There is a great deal of useful information on the CaTS site. Please visit.

That's enough for now. I wish you well and you know how to get in touch with me if you think I can be any help.

James Drogan  
September 10, 2010

## **References**

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