

Myth – Career progression requires a formal career path

At one point in your career you may have developed, or been given, a career plan. In fact, the promise of a formal career path often attracts people to organizations. In such a planned path, the set of jobs and experiences outlined over an extended period, five to ten years, for example, brings a sense of predictability and comfort, giving people a false sense that their career will take a certain course.

In reality, organizations and careers are necessarily much more fluid. Markets, strategies and organizational structures always change over time, in the process changing the types of roles offered in a company, surfacing opportunities that previously were not available or even considered. This is especially true in the dynamic times we live. With globalization, restructuring, acquisitions and downsizing being the norm, there is little predictability in careers. Time and again we've seen opportunities emerge that could never have been predicted. So, instead of developing a formal career path, the strategy should be to learn all you can while in your current role and be always open to opportunities that allow you to do what you love. Call it career improvisation.

Career improvisation does not mean you don't have career direction or a sense of the type of roles you want to assume as you progress through your career. Instead, it suggests that you are open to opportunities and not constrained to a defined path. One thing is for sure--your career will not be a straight road but instead will be full of twists and hills. So, be ready for the ride and get ready to turn and change gears.

Truth – You can't plan a great career, be ready to improvise

About the Author: Joe Frodsham is co-author of the book, *"Make It Work: Navigate Your Career Without Leaving Your Organization"*. Joe has been in a leader in a number of Fortune 500 companies, and is now the Owner and President of CMP (Career Management Partners). Please contact us for any of your talent inquiries at 972.680.9200 or visit us at www.careemp.com.