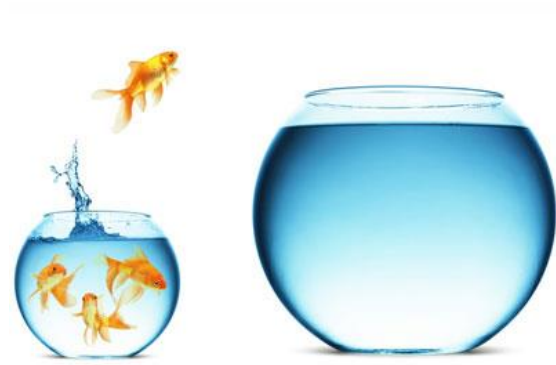


# Setting Yourself Up for Success



*"There is no scarcity of opportunity to make a living at what you love; there's only scarcity of resolve to make it happen."  
– Wayne Dyer, author & motivational speaker.*

How does this quote sound to you?

If you've ever struggled to find a job, or have missed out on an opportunity especially if you feel it was due to your mature age, this may not quite "ring true."

However, while opportunities can be hard to spot, you may be able to find them if you use a thoughtful and deliberate approach. In this information bulletin, we will look at how you can do this.

## Getting Ahead

If you are looking to find a new role it's important that you know how to identify and pursue opportunities that are a good match for your interests, skills, and circumstances.



If you are not already fully aware of these, this takes time. You can think of the process of finding opportunities as a journey that will eventually lead you to an exciting but unknown destination. You need to be patient, and persist in your efforts.

That said, work that you put in now will pay off in the future. Not only will you end up in a role that's right for you, but you'll have a better understanding of your options. What's more, people will think of you when new openings come up, and you won't waste time pursuing the wrong opportunities.

You'll also have a better understanding of where you need to build new skills – and develop existing ones – to be successful in your third age career.

## Discovering Opportunities

Let's look at a process for identifying career opportunities, and for choosing the best opportunities to pursue.

### 1. Have the Right Mindset

Opportunities are all around you, all of the time. So you need to be continually watching out for them.

Get into the habit of looking for possible opportunities every day. Keep a notebook with you, or use a smartphone app like Evernote to note down opportunities when you think of them.

Write down as many possible opportunities as you can – you can trim your list back to the most relevant opportunities later on.

### 2. Seek Opportunities

You also need to make an effort to seek out "hidden" opportunities. These are opportunities like job openings that aren't advertised, and projects that you can initiate because you have spotted an unfulfilled need within your organisation or industry, or expertise or mentoring you can provide based on your experience.

Network with people in the industry you want to secure a role in, to keep on top of the latest news and events. If any of your friends, colleagues, or connections are working for a department or organisation that you're interested in, ask if they'll make an introduction to other influential people on your behalf.

Make sure that you stay up-to-date on your industry, so that you're aware of relevant trends and new technologies – these often create new opportunities.

For instance, you can often find statistics and data for your industry in trade journals or trade groups. Social networking services like Twitter and LinkedIn are also useful for identifying trends and opportunities, and for networking with influential, well-informed people.

When you're looking for opportunities, you can also ask questions like:

- Which parts of the industry are growing? Are you interested in any of these areas?
- What new technologies are there? How might these impact how your industry works?
- Is there a need in your industry that no one is filling?
- Are any customers, vendors, or suppliers experiencing problems in your industry? (Problems often point towards great opportunities.)

#### Tip:

You may want to consider volunteering for an organisation, cause, or committee that you really believe in. Pro bono work is not only rewarding, but it can help you widen your network and spot new opportunities. It's also a great way to add to your knowledge and skills in a particular industry or field. It also allows you to get relevant current experience on your CV and who knows it may even lead to paid employment.



### 3. Identify Your Strengths and Weaknesses

As you seek out opportunities, you need to understand what your strengths and weaknesses are. This helps you identify the opportunities that are most relevant for you, and understand which skills you need to work on.

To discover your strengths, consider these questions:



- What tasks or projects do you most enjoy? Keep in mind that these tasks probably rely on your strengths.
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What values do you believe in, that you don't often see exhibited in others?
- What resources do you have available that other people don't have?
- What influential people do you have in your network who could help you?
- What do others see as your strengths? (If you're not sure, ask other people to identify them!)

Next, look at your weaknesses. To identify these, ask yourself these questions:

- What tasks do you often avoid, because you don't feel confident doing them?
- What do other people see as your weaknesses? (Again, ask them if you're unsure.)
- Are you confident in your education and skills training? Where are you weakest?
- Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your career? (For instance, do you have low self-confidence, or do you procrastinate?)

Once you've identified your strengths and weaknesses, think about whether you could turn any of these into opportunities. You can do this by taking advantage of your strengths, or by eliminating your weaknesses.

### 4. Identify Other Factors Important to You

It's also important to understand factors that are important to you in your life stage. This helps you identify opportunities that will be a good fit for you.

You'll also want to think of other factors that are important when choosing opportunities to pursue. This will help you narrow your choices down in the next step. Factors to consider might include:

- Fit with current lifestyle.
- Salary/compensation.
- Job security.
- Fit with overall career and life goals.
- Future training/development available.
- The opportunity itself; does it interest and excite you?

### 5. Narrow Your Choices

When you have a good understanding of your own strengths, weaknesses, and interests, and of the opportunities available to you, it's time to use this information to choose the best opportunities to pursue.

After all, if you spread your efforts and attention too thinly, you won't accomplish anything of value. By focusing your energy on just a few opportunities that really match your interests and strengths, you'll likely find a better fit.

First, spend some time thinking about each opportunity. Consider factors such as:

- What it involves, on a day-to-day basis, and how it fits with your lifestyle.
- The rewards associated with it.
- The knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and experience needed to take full advantage of it.
- How likely you are to find it satisfying.
- What career path the opportunity leads to.
- How easy it is to access the opportunity.
- The risks associated with it.



Once you've identified the best opportunity to pursue, check your decision with your intuition. Does it feel right?

### 6. Prepare, and Take Action

Once you've identified an opportunity or industry or role to aim for, you need to prepare, and then take action!

An effective way to do this is to write this goal down and keep it somewhere you see. You can then think through the steps that you need to follow, and work towards these on a daily basis. Focus on the activity not the outcome. If you put in the effort and do something different, you are likely to get more success in finding a new and satisfying role than if you did nothing.

## Summary

To spot career opportunities, follow these steps:

1. Have the right mindset.
2. Seek opportunities.
3. Identify your strengths and weaknesses.
4. Identify other factors that are important to you.
5. Narrow your choices.
6. Prepare, and take action.

## Identifying Career Opportunities



Keep in mind that finding great opportunities is an ongoing process, not a destination! Keep your eyes and mind open, and be patient and persistent. You never know what doors will open for you when you start looking!

All the best with your career search.

If you feel like you may benefit from our help, please know we would be delighted to help you. We can be contacted via [June@selectionpartners.com.au](mailto:June@selectionpartners.com.au) or see our website [www.selectionpartners.com.au](http://www.selectionpartners.com.au) for our career coaching options.

*June Parker* 😊