



Career Story: Reflect on your achievements to create a positive outlook

Degree: Master of Business (Science and Technology)

Completion year: 2014

Years since graduation: 5

Career story themes: Create a plan, develop goals, get to know yourself, adopt a positive mindset

Anna's story

Anna has been in the workforce for over six years. Her first university study was a bachelor's degree in biotechnology. Although Anna did well in her undergraduate scientific studies, she found herself drawn to the commercialisation of science. It was after she excelled in her first Biotechnology, Science, Business, Law and Ethics unit that she realised her interest and strengths lay in business rather than science. After working as a graduate research assistant with a start-up company, Anna returned to university and completed a Master of Business (Science and Technology) degree. The Master's degree was designed for students with a STEM background and focused primarily on commercialisation and entrepreneurship in science and technology.

The importance of networks

Having completed her Master's degree, Anna's transition into the workplace was fairly typical

of most students' experiences: for example, the process of applications and interviews, building a network, and leveraging her LinkedIn profile. She returned to study after working for one year as a research assistant. During this period, she maintained her network and kept in touch with former colleagues, including the CEO of a company related to the one she had worked for. As she was completing her final semester, the CEO approached Anna to 'come in for a chat'. This conversation led to a full-time position as an Account Manager for that company, where she built career experience for business processes, sales and marketing over the next three years.

Anna is currently working as the Product and Portfolio Manager for a global company that manufactures eye lasers and diagnostic devices for ophthalmologists. While in her previous job in Melbourne, she was approached by the HR team of the laser company, who were impressed by her LinkedIn profile. They connected initially via LinkedIn and discussed a job opportunity in Adelaide. This move timed well with Anna's career aspirations. She participated in interviews in Melbourne and Adelaide and was ultimately successful in securing the position, which she has held for two years. She anticipates that her next career move will be as a Product Manager, in an enterprise level company to continue her growth in product management within the technology or medical devices fields.

Getting ahead: Advice from an early career professional

Point 1: create a plan

Reflecting on the past six years, Anna shares that she learned the pivotal value of self-reflection and the creation of a career plan after graduation. Firstly, considering short and long-term career goals is important. She suggests that graduates should ask, 'What do I want to do?', and map out the 'What ifs?' as scenarios on a tree diagram to visualise and select the optimal path. She suggests adding in a realistic timeline for implementation. She explains that goals and aspirations are non-static and change organically, thus so should the career plan.

SMART goals are very helpful when devising a career plan. You will find a SMART goals guide [here](#).

Point 2: Develop your resilience and be positive!

Secondly, resilience is critical when facing the lengthy task of securing a role. Often, graduates face multiple rejections and Anna advises:

"It is important to maintain a positive and growth mindset and to be able to frame the lack of success in a positive and constructive manner, such as 'this wasn't the best fit for me', or 'my unique skillset and experiences will be the right fit for the right company'".

Use the resilience resources below to understand resilience and how it can be developed.

- [How to become more resilient](#)
- [How to deal with stress](#)
- [Growth mindset](#)
- [How do I develop my support networks?](#)

"It's important to have a positive mindset and to be able to frame rejections in a positive and transactional sense."

Having a positive mindset will assist in the development of personal resilience. You can learn positive self talk with this resource.

[Learn positive self talk](#)

Point 3: get to know yourself

Anna encourages students to think about all their accomplishments and learnings up to this point: "Use the personal history of your successes to fuel your future aspirations. Harness the strengths you've used before as intrinsic encouragement to overcome the challenges ahead of you." Self-reflect often – know yourself. By taking a reflective approach, your goals will be more likely to align with your personal values: the things that are important to you.

[The identity quiz](#) resource is a great way to start. You might also like to use the resource [Which you do you prefer?](#)

These resources will help you to recognise your accomplishments:

- [How much do you know already?](#)
- [What are your employability strengths?](#)

Point 4: develop and maintain personal and professional networks

Fourthly, Anna recommends that graduates develop a wide network of peers, industry professionals and mentors with whom they can discuss new career possibilities. Networks provide the professional and personal friendships which form important sources of knowledge,

experience and inspiration. These networks grow over time and can positively influence career choices and journeys.

Further resources

The following networking resources will help with multiple networking challenges, from meeting someone new to identifying networks you didn't realise you already have.

- [How to build effective professional networks - Part I](#)
- [How to build effective professional networks - Part II](#)
- [How to build effective professional networks - Part III](#)

Learning from biographies and career stories

What do you see when you meet a professional?

Most of the time, we see only the role someone holds now. It is likely, however, that the person has experienced a career with lots of twists and turns.

Get the most out of reading career stories or biographies by asking yourself some of the questions to the right.

1. What do you expect you will have to learn during your career?
2. What might you need to do in order to keep learning?
3. What differences, common issues, and links can you make to your own career journey?
4. Identify and reflect on key decision points in your personal and professional development, and then consider:
 - a. Who played a significant role at these times?
 - b. To whom did you go to for advice?
 - c. What can you put in place for the next time you face a major decision?
5. Biographical accounts raise a number of challenges and opportunities. These include innovative collaborations, work within other sectors, diverse locations, and different modes of work. Look for examples of these in your discipline and reflect on what might be of interest to you:
 - a. What interests you, and what can you do to make this a reality?
 - b. What challenges do you foresee, and how will you prepare for these?
6. Biographical accounts often tell us something about the interests, passions, and motivations of the people involved. Can you think of ways to combine your interests and your future work?
7. What would you like to achieve as a professional?

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This resource was developed by [Nell Kimberley](#) (Monash University) in collaboration with [Dawn Bennett](#) (Curtin University), 2019