

# **Key Steps and Skills to Advance in Your Career**

Kate Osterland  
APMP Training Day 2024  
9/13/2024

# Objective for this Talk

Share a mix of actionable advice and inspiration based on my career successes (and missteps) for people who want to progress in their careers - whether taking it to the next level in their current company, or considering starting their own business



## About me:

Recently launched my own company to help businesses solve their supply chain issues, and am coaching others who starting their journey at the same time

Former Vice President of Supply Chain and Logistics for magniX Aerospace company

Prior to joining magniX worked for Rolls-Royce plc, where I was promoted several times within Supply Chain and Operations Leadership

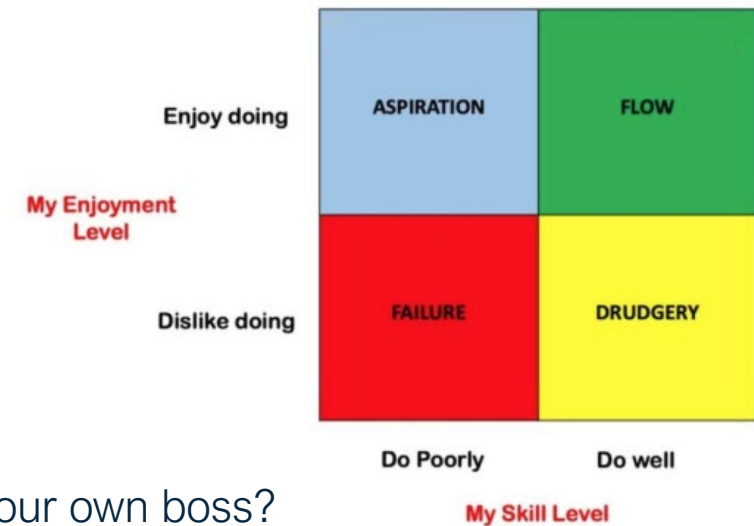
Developed 13 direct-employees to earn promotions, plus many other employees at various companies

My favorite accomplishments are related to my impact on culture and developing my people

# Agenda

- Identifying your Career Goals
- Possibilities for a Career Move
- Positioning Yourself for Your Next Step
- Practicing the right Mindset
- Secret Sauce
- Getting your Network on board and Seeking Support from Advocates
- Tips for Efficiency
- Key Takeaways

# Identify your Career Goal



- What is your next major career goal? To earn a promotion? To become your own boss?
- Understand what is driving this desire: This will help keep you motivated through the tougher days
- If you are unsure where you want to move your career:
  - Request informational interviews with people whose work looks exciting to you
  - Speak to your boss / people in your desired career path to understand what their work entails
  - Conduct a 1-week Personal Inventory to understand where you get the most joy from your work
    - Track your meetings and tasks for one week, and rate them R/A/G, 😊/☹️, etc., and reflect on your energy after each
    - Consider how you can do more activities that put you in the upper right quadrant “Flow”
    - How do you learn the skills in the upper left quadrant “Aspiration”
  - Bonus points: Get **your boss** to do the same exercise – are there any **tasks** you can take from their plate that help show that you are ready for a **promotion**?

# Possibilities for a Career Move

- Once you decide where you get the most joy: Figure out what option best serves you and others
- Do you want a change that keeps you within your current company / career path
  - This might look like a **promotion** within your current skill set or team
  - This could be a move to another **product team** or another **geography** in your current role
  - Can you request a temporary **secondment** to another position, or dedicated time to **shadow** someone else?
    - Request should be well-defined in scope, timeline and deliverables
- Do you want to start a new business or a side-hustle
  - If you like to deep dive documents and spreadsheets: can you **freelance** for smaller companies who don't have your skills
  - If you most enjoy **training** new employees: Launch a training company, or create **how-to videos** and post to YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.
  - If it is unrelated to your current job, can you just **dive in**: Dog walking, laser cutting wooden and resin home designs both successfully pursued full-time by former Rolls-Royce colleagues

# Position yourself for the Next Step

- **Understand the career path:** what are the **requirements** of the role you want next
  - Identify gaps and opportunities to resolve – internal training, external professional development
- **Be known as a high-performer in your current role:** Develop a strong **reputation** for leadership, delivering **high-quality** work, working well **cross-functionally**, and next-level thinking
  - **Document** your performance and **update** this regularly
- **Demonstrate skills in line with the desired role:** and show how other skills and experiences are transferable
  - **You DO NOT need to have 100% of the skills listed in the job requisition!**
- **Take on projects above and beyond your current responsibilities:** Working **cross-functionally** allows you to build your network, to see the **bigger picture** and to solve more impactful problems – often a critical skill as you move to higher levels
- **Utilize your network and communicate:** Make sure your boss and mentors are **aware** of your career goals, and **update** them on your progress
- **Ask for what you want:** Make a **proposal** with **data** that shows you have done your **homework**, showing **value** to your boss or the other involved parties

# Practice the right Mindset

- **Keep a positive attitude:** People want to work with positive, happy people
  - Assume **Positive Intent** of others: keeps you open to **learning**, understanding, and **building relationships**
  - What you focus on, you **attract** into your life, **focusing** on what you want will help you see it in your future
- **Take care of your physical and mental health:** promotions often lead to more **responsibility** and more **stress**
  - Maintain relationships, **exercise**, meditate, spend time in **nature**
  - Try adding **Walking Meetings** for one-on-ones
- **Breathing practices for stress relief, clearing cortisol, and keeping calm in tough situations**
  - Breathe out 2x as long as in-breath (4 and 8 seconds)
  - Shoulder shrug (<1 min)
  - Tensing/Untensing your muscles (2 mins)
  - Box Breathing (2-5 mins)



# Secret Sauce: Getting comfortable with Discomfort

- Chasing a dream can be scary: Will I embarrass myself? What if I fail? What if I succeed?
- Acknowledge fears and worries, and reframe them as opportunities
- Taking on the stretch role, the scary position, or the cross-country move can catapult your career: don't be afraid to say **Yes!** or to seek out these opportunities

Things that make us Uncomfortable	Feels like/Looks like	Reframe the Obstacles to opportunities:
Being Told "No"	You can't get what you want A rejection of you as a person	"No" is a request for more information about the topic
Ambiguity and Uncertainty	"If I can't solve this, will I lose credibility?"	"This is where I can shine the brightest, and add the best value to my teams and clients" No job comes without ambiguity, this is why you are here
Generally hard things / Obstacles	"This is too hard" "I want to stop"	These obstacles are opportunities to show off your skills Growth happens when I step outside of my comfort zone

# Get your Network on-board

- Share your goal with others
  - Writing it down and sharing with others increases **accountability** and **commitment**
  - If this makes you too nervous start with your **closest** friends and coworkers
- Advocate for yourself
  - Understanding your “Why” is the start of a **compelling** case when you ask for something
  - DATA – **Document** your wins (and pay attention to the losses)
    - These will **support** your justification for a **promotion**, or become part of your business **marketing**
  - Show how the change you are requesting **benefits the other person** as well as you
- Look for opportunities to help others
  - Demonstrates your skills in **Leadership** and **Teamwork**
  - People want to **reciprocate** and help those who have helped them

# Seeking Support from Advocates

- Think about the people who have supported you in your career (current/previous bosses, mentors, suppliers, customers)
- Ask for help that is reasonable for their role, and depth of your relationship – Example asks:
  - “You have been a **big help** to me in the past with *ABC*. I’m really interested in *ABCDE*, can you **share** some information with me / **introduce** me to someone who does this?”
  - “Dear Ms. Boss-lady, I am really interested in taking the **next step** in my career [making sure I am on your radar for succession planning]. Can we **discuss** what the path looks like, and what steps I might need to take to get there?”
  - “We **worked closely** on this project a few years ago, would you be willing to write a recommendation on LinkedIn about how we collaborated?”
- **Be prepared for the conversations:** Have questions from your **research**, don’t expect them to come with the answers
- **Keep up with your connections over time:** When you think of someone, sending a quick “hello” text goes a long way

Not everyone will be able to say yes to helping you *at this moment*,  
but the **majority** of people truly do want to help



# Homework

- Introduce yourself to someone new at lunch
- Share one of your career goals with them
- Be open as they share a career goal with you
- Celebrate a new connection and support!

# Tips to Improve Efficiency

Recommended Books:  
Atomic Habits, James Clear;  
The One Thing, Gary Keller and Jay Papasan)  
Ask for it, Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever

- Map out a path to get where you want to go:
  - Break the goal down into bite-size steps: "The secret of getting ahead is getting started, the secret to getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small, manageable tasks, and starting on the first one." – Mark Twain.
  - Track your progress and re-assess as needed
- More responsibility requires better time-management
  - Use your calendar effectively: Work on high-impact tasks vs. being busy
    - Schedule your to-do list
    - Time-Block your most important task each day/week
  - Habit Stacking: Link something you need to do with something you want to do / or already do

# Key Takeaways

- Understand what you want and hold on to the WHY behind it
- Build your reputation as a strong performer
- Grow your skillsets and document your successes
- Practice the right mindset
- Get comfortable being uncomfortable
- Use your Support Network
- Break plans into actionable steps
- Use schedules to stay on track, versus to-do lists
- Take care of yourself along the way

**And Finally:**

**Have Fun  
Try new things  
Remember that life is  
meant to be lived**

**You are winning any time you  
are learning, growing, and  
helping others along the way**



**Thank you**

Kate Osterland

[kate@oakridgescs.com](mailto:kate@oakridgescs.com)

[Linkedin.com/in/KateOsterland](https://www.linkedin.com/in/KateOsterland)