

Creating a Career GPS to Enhance Your Opportunities Ten Steps to Improve Your Value by Strengthening Your Planning

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ABSTRACT

Building a successful career in the life sciences field requires that you regularly measure and strengthen your professional value. But personal development is particularly challenging within this sector. The industry thrives on the promise of breakthrough drugs, but the lack of clarity about formulations and the variable cost structure of clinical trials means many seasoned professionals perform in outsourced or contract roles. In this lean, results-focused corporate culture, companies are unwilling or unable to offer career planning resources to the professionals who contribute to pharmaceutical and biotechnology success.

Yet the employment boom continues. Certain industry estimates project 30 percent growth through 2016, so hiring remains robust. Within this specialized workforce, a paradigm is shifting. Contract work has become the leading form of employment, the new normal.

Now more than ever, you need a detailed plan designed to help drive your career forward. We outline these steps in our paper -- ***Creating a Career GPS to Enhance Your Opportunities*** -- by providing 10 steps to improve your professional value progressively by strengthening your career strategy.

In this paper and presentation, we challenge life sciences professionals to take charge of their personal development and help them navigate toward sustained success. It will not happen accidentally!

Life sciences talent must respond to this trend by crafting a customized career strategy. Individuals need a guide, a sort of personal career global positioning system (GPS), to identify opportunity and structure their career progression effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Building a successful career in life sciences requires that you regularly measure and strengthen your professional value, but personal career development remains particularly challenging within this sector.

The industry thrives on the promise of breakthrough drugs, but the uncertainty of clinical outcomes and the variable cost structure of trials has led many companies to use contracted resources to mitigate risk. This trend means that many seasoned professionals perform in outsourced or contract roles. In this lean, results-focused culture, companies are unwilling or unable to offer career planning resources for contracted professionals who contribute to pharmaceutical and biotechnology success.

Yet the employment boom continues. Certain industry estimates project 30 percent growth through 2016*, so hiring remains robust. Contract work has become the leading form of employment, the new normal.

Life science talent must respond to this trend by crafting a customized career strategy. Individuals need a guide, a sort of personal career global positioning system (GPS), to identify opportunity and construct an effective career ladder.

Ockham Source is one of the leading experts in supporting the professionals who thrive in pharmaceutical and biotechnology fields. An industry pioneer and innovator, Ockham Source influenced many of the modern outsourcing and contracting solutions, including the Functional Service Provider (FSP) approach.

By collaborating with top biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, Ockham Source regularly sharpens and refines career development. We embrace new methods to represent and develop talented people and create the trends affecting our industry and our clients.

We have been helping life sciences professionals for more than three decades. Within this paper, we suggest 10 critical actions you can take to improve your value today.

At Ockham Source, we view this sector as a triangle. Each corner depends on the others: Pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms pay for drug development, professionals work in contract or permanent roles and firms such as Ockham Source find and place top talent.

Ockham Source wants to strengthen each corner of the triangle to promote commercial success as well as career fulfillment. To do both effectively, we must develop the talent base serving the industry. And the professionals in contract roles must invest time and planning to reach the right position or rung on your career development ladder. With a competitive landscape that pulls individuals from one assignment to the next, employees must embrace career development, create a plan and work at it. Otherwise, they risk being left behind in the rush toward the next blockbuster drug.

Creating a Career GPS to Enhance Your Opportunities, Continued

Individuals working in contract roles should consider the value of a personal career GPS. Review the trends unfolding around you and chart a course that will help you deliver results to your client, your employer and, of course, your career.

A career GPS system is designed to help you transcend daily challenges to focus on your client's most important needs. A deep understanding of the client's mission and challenges will enhance your contribution. Your value to the client -- and to your employer -- will rise accordingly.

It's easy to view the career GPS concept as some sort of child's secret spy decoder ring -- merely an interesting idea. However, it's a structural tool that must be enhanced by your observation, planning and discipline.

10 ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

At Ockham, we have identified 10 essential actions you can take to develop your personal career GPS for life sciences:

1. Create a three-year career plan. In this fast-moving industry, establish six-month assessment periods to measure aggregate skills. Many life sciences firms may not be able to provide two or three-year planning. By dividing your career into shorter spans, you can assess your progress efficiently.
2. Achieve as much as possible in your current assignment. Exceed expectations.
3. Develop a political antenna to help you understand the leadership culture. Who makes key decisions? How do those individuals lead or manage?
4. Engage your client and your employer to seek future potential management or leadership development opportunities.
5. Set goals for compensation and skills development; discuss them with your manager.
6. Pursue a distinctive achievement such as contributing to the submission of a specialty drug application.
7. Develop a sharper awareness regarding your company and its competitive environment. What is the most important trend? Are significant shifts occurring? How can I support corporate change most effectively?
8. Keep your eyes wide open to unexpected personal development pathways.
9. Find new ways to deliver value; promote metrics to prove your value. As a statistical programmer, for example, set goals for tables and data sets delivered.
10. Increase your industry knowledge through professional associations, courses and additional learning opportunities.

Your career GPS is a planning tool created to generate a measurable benefit: a clear vision of performance goals, metrics and self-assessment. This competitive sector is now supported largely by talented contractors. It's also an industry in which an individual can make an enormous impact. The personalized career GPS system will help set your course toward success.

We welcome a chance to help. Contact me at 919.653.6085 (office) or 919.414.2692 (mobile). Or email bdonovan@ockham.com. Let's start working on your personal career GPS.

REFERENCES

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