

ACHIEVING THE SUCCESS YOU WANT IN YOUR ACCOUNTANCY CAREER

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Welcome to this short guide on achieving the success you want in your accountancy career.

I created this guide based on my experience of 25 years working in accounting, where I successfully climbed the career ladder from 15 year old Payments Clerk to Finance Director.

Contrary to what you might think, I wasn't a brilliant accountant. There were plenty of others around me who were.

I wasn't on any career fast track programme. I don't have any special qualities or traits. I was in my own view just average.

My belief is that like me you can achieve the success your accountancy career. But I'm not going to pretend that it will be easy. I'm not going to pretend that it will all be plain sailing. I'm not going to pretend that there will be setbacks, disappointments and frustrations along the way.

In this guide I will set out some of the building blocks to achieving success in your accountancy career. Reading this guide will give you better insights. Taking action on what I share will move you forward.

Remember no one ever achieved success in any profession by just reading. Application of what they learned is what made the difference.

I hope you will find the guide helpful. If anything is unclear to you please feel free to email me.

If you have any feedback, ideas or insights that would help make this guide even better, please do email them to me. I really do want to make this guide as valuable as possible.

To your career success

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You are an ambitious accountant. You have worked hard to get your qualifications. You work hard so success will follow, right?

The realities of achieving career success in accountancy

1. Desire is not enough
2. Qualifications are not enough
3. Hard work is just expected in any profession.

Don't take my word for it though

I ran a survey of people who had reached a senior level in accountancy.

63% of those in the survey said it was becoming more difficult to reach a senior level in accountancy.

Some of the reasons for it becoming more difficult included:

1. Greater competition as the number of accountants grows
2. Changing nature of the role and what it covers
3. Changing expectations of the contribution expected from a senior finance professional.

Add to this the fact that:

1. There's a lot of consolidation of industries
2. The employment model is changing
3. Complexity is getting greater.

And you see that **the external barriers to achieving success in your career are significant.**

Of course it's not just external barriers that impact in your career.

Internal barriers might be an even bigger issue in your career.

These include barriers like:

1. Self confidence
2. Behaviours
3. Attitude
4. Skills

Barriers can either stop you or in your tracks or just be hurdles to be overcome.

This might surprise you. Over the years I've noticed several things:

1. It's not almost the smartest who achieve the most career success.
2. There are things that you can influence and things that you can't in terms of your career
3. What and how you think about your career makes a difference
4. There's no guarantees
5. You have to take personal responsibility for your career.

Achieving success in your career starts with getting clarity. Have you ever considered what you want from your career? Have you ever really considered what success means to you?

If you have great. If you are like many you probably have never ever considered this.

Clarity helps in so many ways. With career planning. With decisions about job moves. With decisions about CPD. With decisions about risks and sacrifices.

Action: Take a bit of time to get clarity about what career success means to you. Write it down and keep refining until you get it down to a few sentences.

Achieving success in your career requires personal ownership. Yes your boss and organisation can help. Ultimately it's your career.

How would you rate your personal ownership right now on a scale of 1 to 5 (where the higher the score the greater your level of personal ownership of your career?)

1

2

3

4

5

Achieving success in your career requires you to invest in developing yourself. There's a saying that what got you here won't get you there.

In other words to move forward from the level you are currently at will require new skills, behaviours and attitudes.

It requires investment in terms of both time and money.

What best describes you level of investment in developing yourself at present?

None

Minimal

Moderate

High

Very High

Achieving career success requires you to broaden your experience. Everyone needs to do the core stuff well.

At the same time you have to broaden your experience. To take on roles and responsibilities that may well be unfamiliar or even scary.

Over the last 12 months have you broadened your experience?

Yes

No

Achieving career success requires you to contribute to organisational success. Yes you want to be successful. What you want to be focusing on is a win-win.

To do that you need to be contributing to the success of the organisation. Not just completing tasks.

Contributions that help you stand out include:

1. Increasing sales
2. Reducing costs
3. Improving processes
4. Improving customer, client or service user experience
5. Eliminating waste.

How would you rate your level of contribution to organisational success over the last 12 months on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is minimal and 5 is significant)?

1

2

3

4

5

Achieving career success requires you to build an excellent reputation. Most don't think much about reputation. Do you?

You build an excellent reputation in your professional field by:

1. Doing what you promise
2. Having a strong customer or client focus
3. Going out of your way to help others
4. Seeing the bigger picture
5. Providing insight.

How would you rate your reputation at work and in your professional field?

Poor

Average

Good

Excellent

Achieving career success requires you to be T shaped. This is a term I became familiar with over 20 years ago.

In essence it means you have to have depth in terms of your professional field (the vertical part of the T).

You have to have breadth in other areas (the horizontal part of the T) including:

- Leadership and management skills
- Business and commercial skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Technology

How T shaped are you at the present? Rate yourself 1 to 5 where 1 is minimal and 5 is completely.

1

2

3

4

5

Achieving career success requires you to be in the right frame of mind. To believe in yourself. To value what you offer. To recognise that you can make a difference.

What best describes your frame of mind when it comes to your career?

Pessimistic

Mostly
Pessimistic

Neutral

Mostly
Optimistic

Optimistic

Achieving career success requires you to be strategic. It's a marathon not a sprint. You have to think long term. You have to make decisions with the medium to long term in mind.

Are you strategic when it comes to your career at present?

Yes

No

Achieving career success requires you to get competent at marketing you. If you are going to move up the career ladder you are going to have to be able to market you.

This includes getting awareness and interest in you and what you have to offer. It's about getting the invitation to interview or the invitation to take the lead on a significant projects. It's about building your network.

How would you score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 in terms of confidence and competence when it comes to marketing you, where 1 is poor and 5 is outstanding?

Confidence in marketing yourself

Competence in marketing yourself

Achieving career success requires you to get competent at selling yourself.

To recruiters, to your network and to hiring managers.

To go from being the candidate who is interviewed to the candidate who gets the job offer.

How would you score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 in terms of confidence and competence when it comes to selling yourself, where 1 is poor and 5 is outstanding?

Confidence in selling yourself

Competence in selling yourself

What needs attention for you to start achieving more success in your accountancy career?

Review your responses to the success contributors above and write down 3 things that you need to work on to start achieving more career success.

1
2
3

Need some help in moving forward in your accountancy career?

Some will be ready to take the next step in their career. Others won't and that's fine.

If you are looking for some help to move forward in your career, I want to invite you to book an online consultation with me.

During your consultation, we will:

- Review your career to date
- Discuss your career aspirations
- Determine the barriers and challenges to you moving forward in your career
- Work out a plan to get you moving forward towards your career aspirations.

If we both believe working together is the right thing for you, we will discuss how that might work and the level of investment.

Those who are likely to benefit most from this consultation are:

1. Qualified accountants with at least 5 years' experience
2. Working in the UK
3. Getting good reviews at work
4. Serious about their career
5. Want to increase their chances of success.

To book a consultation with me drop me an email duncan@goalsandachievements.co.uk