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5 steps to successful career planning for MBA students

-By Lorraine Lucas | December 5, 2011

Submitted by Utkarsh Khandekar (BBA Sem-III)

Lorraine Lucas is Business Engagement Manager – Careers, Alumni & External Relations at Bradford University School of Management. She supports MBA students in career planning before, during and after their studies.

Step 1: Start your career planning before starting your MBA

It is never too early to start planning your post-MBA career. Many MBA students make the mistake of concentrating exclusively on their studies and not on thinking ahead about their long term goals. This means that when they graduate, they have no strategy in place to inform their next career move – which delays the benefits of doing an MBA.

Before starting your MBA, fully assess your current skills, expertise and personal qualities. Ask yourself where you want to be in three, five and ten years' time. What does the job/employer look like? What contacts do you already have that will help get you there? What gaps are there in your expertise and professional network? What barriers are there to you achieving your goals?

Julian Bartholet, Strategic Business Development Sales Manager at Bunzal Greenham Ltd, graduated from Bradford's Executive part-time MBA in 2010. He says: "I had a clear plan from the beginning of my MBA that I wanted to use my sales expertise to make the journey from middle management into the boardroom. This meant both getting an understanding of wider business functions through my studies and developing the personal and professional skills to talk confidently at board level and influence the strategy of an organisation. By the end of the first year, I had already dramatically changed as a professional in my existing role and by the time I graduated I had the confidence to go out and target senior roles at the companies I wanted to work for."

Step 2: Make the most of the careers advice, resources and events on offer at your business school

Once you have defined your goals, work with the careers service at your business school to set out a clear strategy for achieving them in the short, medium and long term. Also use your PDP (personal development) modules to focus on the specific skills you need to achieve your career goals in your discipline/sector taking into account your personal circumstances. It is up to you to shape your MBA experience to deliver the best results for you.

Your business schools services will also give you regular 'extra curricular' opportunities to interact with practitioners. Whenever you can, make sure you attend guest lectures, panel discussions, careers fairs and networking events – and use them as an opportunity to make contacts and gain new insights.

Step 3: Use your 'business school alumni network

Your business school's alumni network isn't just relevant to you when you graduate. It

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Sagar Sahebrao Bagade (MCM II Year)

is an invaluable resource to tap into before and whilst you are studying. Find and connect with alumni on LinkedIn, look at their career paths, ask them for help and advice. They will be able to give you unique insights into common mistakes to watch out for, how to sell yourself and when to time career moves. Learning from the experiences of those who have gone before is very useful and will save you a lot of time and energy.

Simon Kingsnorth, former first direct and HSBC director now managing director of Optimal HR, did his Executive part-time MBA at Bradford. He says: "I remain an active supporter of The Bradford School of Management and member of Bradford's international alumni network. The diversity of people and opinions was invaluable during my study and I have maintained contact with senior business professionals across the world as our careers and businesses have developed. This kind of network is invaluable in so many ways and a major benefit of studying an MBA at Bradford."

Step 4: Get yourself a mentor/role model

Once you have settled in to your studies and have a clear career plan, look for a mentor or role model who you aspire to be like. Your business school may be able to help put you in touch with someone from the alumni network or a business partner and set up a formal mentoring arrangement. Or you may want to choose someone with a high profile that advises up and coming business people who you can follow and learn from. Use your mentor as a sound board and take them on your career planning journey with you. Remember that both parties should get something out of mentoring – make sure that it is a two-way relationship.

Step 5: Get social

Employers look for candidates with the right social skills to gel with their teams – and their customers. This is particularly important if you are in a leadership role. The theory that the best ideas in the workplace are born around the water cooler is the same in a business school.

It is important to socialise with your classmates when you get chance – chat to them over lunch, arrange to go for a meal or throw a party, especially if you are an international student. By sharing ideas and immersing yourself in different cultures, you will gain insights into what it is to be a business leader above and beyond those you learn in the classroom. These relationships will also enhance the classroom experience and make it more interactive and productive.

Social media is also now an important part of your career planning journey. Victoria Tomlinson, chief executive of Northan Lights PR and

author of award winning e-book 'Why you can't ignore social media in business' says: "Get used to reading and commenting on blogs to keep up with the latest business thinking. Use LinkedIn to connect with people you come across during your MBA studies and get introduced to potential employers through your contacts. Set up a Twitter account and use it strategically to make a name for yourself as an expert on a particular subject. Stick to that subject in your tweets and share interesting articles and research – which others will then re-tweet. Find employers that you aspire to work for and follow them to keep up to date with what they're doing and things they're interested in."

So, come with a career plan in mind and talk to the careers team as soon as possible to help shape it and put it into action from the very start. If you have any questions before hand, post them here – along with ideas and suggestions for other prospective students.

Foolish Monkeys

By Vinay Vilas Kshirsagar (BBA Sem-III)

Before several centuries, there was a very large, dense and dark forest. A group of monkeys arrived at the forest. It was winter season, and the monkeys struggled hard to survive the freezing cold nights. They were hunting for fire to get warm.

One night, they saw a firefly and considered it a dab of fire. All the monkeys in the group shouted 'Fire, Fire, Fire, Yeah we got fire!' A couple of monkeys tried to catch the firefly and it escaped. They were sad as they could not catch the fire. They were talking to themselves that they couldn't live in the cold if they didn't get the fire.

The next night, again they saw many fireflies. After several attempts, the monkeys caught a few fireflies. They put the fireflies in a hole dug in the land and tried to blow the flies. They blew the flies very hard without knowing the fact that they were flies! An owl was watching the activities of the monkeys. The owl reached the monkeys and told them, 'Hey those are not fire! They are flies. You won't be able to make fire from it!'

The monkeys laughed at the owl. One monkey replied the owl, 'Hey old owl you don't know anything about how to make fire. Don't disturb us!'

The Owl warned the monkeys again and asked them to stop their foolish act. 'Monkeys, you cannot make fire from the flies! Please hear my words.'

The monkeys tried to make fire from the flies. The Owl told them again to stop their foolish act. 'You are struggling so much, go take your shelter in a nearby cave. You can save yourself from the freezing cold! You won't get fire!'

One monkey shouted at the owl and the owl left the place.

The monkeys were simply doing the foolish activity for several hours and it was almost midnight. They were very tired and realized that the words of the owl were correct and they were trying to blow a fly.

They sheltered themselves at the cave and escaped from the cold.

Sindbad The Sailor

By Roshni Totwani (MBA Sem-III)

Once there lived a young man. His name was Sindbad. He was a good merchant. He sailed around the world and sold his goods. On each voyage he had some wonderful and thrilling adventures.

On one of the voyages he went to China by a ship with dates from Arabia. When he was returning home, he was caught in a storm and his ship was swallowed by the waves. But to his luck, he saw a broken wood from the wrecked ship near him. He held on to the wood and got fainted. When he woke up he was in a strange land. On all sides of him, there were huge white colored rocks, smooth and shiny. He wondered and went near the stones. He examined and found that they were the eggs of giant eagles.

Suddenly a huge eagle landed near him. He was only the size of its toes. He was frightened and wondered how he could he escape from the huge bird. Just then some more birds also alighted near the eggs. He saw some birds flying away. So arrangements for his next voyage, he found

an idea to escape. He slowly went near a bird and tied himself to the toes of a bird by a rope. Soon the huge bird carried him away. After sometime later it landed in a valley. It was the valley of diamonds. He quickly released himself from the bird. He saw diamonds and other precious stones all around. Just then a piece of meat fell beside him. Soon a huge bird picked the meat with its beak. Sindbad then remembered the story of the valley. People used to throw meat pieces in to the valley.

The precious stones got stuck on them. Then the birds carried the meat to their nest. The people frightened the birds by beating drums. The people collected the diamonds from its nest and became rich.

Sindbad packed up as many diamonds as he could. Then he waited for another eagle. As soon as it landed he tied himself to its toes. Then the bird flew its nest. Soon he freed himself. The people were frightened to see him in the birds nest. Sindbad told what had happened to him.

When they heard the story of his adventure they brought him to their chief. He was honoured by the chief. Sindbad boarded a ship passing by. He went to Arabia and made

JOKES

Teacher asked the students to tell the

most common word used by students in classroom. Suddenly a student got up and said "Can't Sir"! Brilliant! You are right, the teacher said! **Teacher:** Why are you late? **Student:** Because of the sign on the road. **Teacher:** What type of sign? **Student:** The sign that says, "School Ahead, Go Slow!"

Nice Life Thought: "If you cant forget some things in life, make sure you dont give yourself time to remember them...!!"

Tongue twister-

Red lorry, yellow lorry

Thoughts on attitude

In life, we all have an unspeakable secret, an irreversible regret, an unkept promise, an unheard request, an irreplaceable loss, an unreachable dream and an unforgettable first love. Still life is being about happy anyhow because everything in life can be summed up in 4 words "life must goes on".

By Dipal Chandanbawne (MBA Sem-III)

John and James were best friends. They fought for many reasons, but never gave up their friendship. They went in search of a job and visited many places to earn some money. They passed through various places, villages, towns, forests, and beaches. They supported each other throughout their journey. One day, they reached a desert. They had a very little food and water. John said that they should save the food and water for later use. However, James disagreed. He wanted to drink water, as he was very thirsty. They quarrelled with each other for water. John slapped James, and they walked in silence. James wrote on the sand, "My best friend slapped me!" Finally, they reached an oasis. They were very

happy, and had a lot of fun in the water. While they both were bathing, James was a bit careless and began to drown. John rushed to him and saved him. James hugged his friend and thanked him. They had a little nap and decided to leave the place. When they were about to leave, James carved something on the rock. It was "My best friend saved my life!" He said to John, "When you slapped me, I recorded it on sand. The wind would have blown it away by now. However, when you saved my life, I recorded it on rock. It will remain there forever." We have to forget the bad things and cherish the good things done to us.

Gold Coins and a Selfish Man

By Anushree Dinesh Bhandekar (BCCA Sem-III)

Sam was a greedy and selfish man. He always desired to have lots and lots of money and never hesitated to cheat others to make money. Also, he never wished to share anything with others. He paid very low wages to his servants. However, one day, he learned a lesson that changed his life forever. It so happened that one day, a small bag that belonged to Sam was missing. The bag had 50 gold coins in it. Sam searched high and low for the bag, but could not find it. Sam's friends and neighbours also joined in the search, but all their efforts were in vain.

After a couple of days, the ten year old daughter of a man working for Sam found the bag. She told her father about it. Her father identified the bag as the one that was missing, and immediately decided to take it to his master. He gave the bag back to his master Sam, and asked him to check whether the bag had 50 gold coins. Sam was exultant to get the coins back, but he decided to play a trick. He shouted at his worker, "there were 75 gold coins in this bag but you gave me only 50! Where are the other coins? You have stolen them!"

The worker was shocked to hear this and pleaded his innocence. Selfish and greedy, Sam did not accept the worker's story, and decided to take the issue to court. The judge heard both the sides. He questioned the daughter and the worker about the number of coins they had found in the bag, and they assured it was only 50. He cross-examined Sam and Sam replied, "Yes my lord, I had 75 gold coins in my bag, and they gave me only 50. Hence, it is quite obvious that they have stolen 25 coins!" The judge then asked, "Are you sure that your bag had 75 coins?" Sam nodded vigorously.

The judge then made his judgment "Since Sam lost a bag of 75 gold coins and the bag found by the girl had only 50 coins, it is obvious that the bag that was found does not belong to Sam. It was lost by someone else. If anyone finds a bag of 75 gold coins, I will declare that it belongs to Sam. As there are no complaints about the loss of 50 coins, I order the girl and his father to take those 50 coins as a token of appreciation for their honesty!" Honesty will always be rewarded and greed punished!

THE 4 WIVES

By Hemlata Kushwah (BCCA Sem-III)

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to delicacies. He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends. However, the merchant is always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She is a very considerate person, always patient and in fact is the merchant's confidante. Whenever the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times. Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her. One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his luxurious life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!" replied the 4th wife and she walked away without another word. The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the

merchant's heart. The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!" The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!" replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was devastated. Then a voice called out : "I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The merchant looked up and there was his first wife. She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from malnutrition. Greatly grieved, the merchant said, "I should have taken much better care of you while I could have!" Actually, we all have 4 wives in our lives:a. The 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it'll leave us when we die.b. Our 3rd wife? Our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, they all go to others.c. The 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been there for us when we're alive, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave. The 1st wife is in fact our soul, often neglected in our pursuit of material, wealth and sensual pleasure. Guess what? It is actually the only thing that follows us wherever we go. Perhaps it's a good idea to cultivate and

than your mind. Control of fear is basically control of your mind and imagination and removal of false beliefs anchored in the mind.

Attachment and dependence on external objects: When we feel the intense dependency on something we are inevitably afraid of losing it. What we feel that we must have, is what we fear losing. Rather than directly facing the fact that everything in life is subject to change, we desperately try to hold on to objects and situations. Feeling of separateness: Whatever we see as separate from ourselves, inevitably becomes a source of fear. This separation, this duality creates discomfort, disharmony and at times even a feeling of loneliness and isolation. Disbelief in God and cosmic order: If we don't believe that there is a ruler of the world who is running the world according to some cosmic order and divine laws, we are bound to be fearful. Such an attitude is bound to keep you in a state of constant insecurity and fear. With disbelief in God, you lose a firm base to hold

FEAR TO FEAR

By Sadananad Songanjir (MBA Sem-III)

Fear is one of the greatest enemies which robs us of all our joy, contentment and peace. Fear is really anticipation of loss or harm to one's sense of "I-ness" or ego. This loss or harm may be physical but more often it is psychological.

Our worries and fears about the future prevent us from experiencing the joy and happiness which exist here right now. Anxiety, nervousness, worry and phobia are not exactly fears but they are similar to fear in nature. Enlightened persons have proved after facing all sorts of situations that existence of fear is in mind only. It has no concrete existence anywhere other onto in times of crises and adversities.

Feeling of self-inadequacy: Many people do not have confidence in their calibre and capability and consider themselves as worthless persons. They develop an inferiority complex and always remain self-conscious and shaky before others. The constant feeling of inadequacy lowers their confidence more and more and thus creates a vicious circle of increasing fear for them. Know the things you fear: Lay your fears out before you, bring them into light and see them as they really are. They will disappear like a mist in front of the Sun.

Do the things you fear: To overcome the fear you will have to take the risk which you have been avoiding all through and finally do the very thing you are afraid of. And you have to continue to do this exercise till such time when the fear totally disappears. Do remember that avoiding fearsome situations is not the solution to remain free from the tyranny of fears.

Don't identify yourself with the dangers: Observe your dangers from a distance like a spectator. See them coming to you and gradually passing away. Don't think constantly about the things you fear: If your thoughts are on something pleasant rather than your fears, you can't be disturbed, no matter what the fear is. There are many more dangers in life than the ones you are fearing, so be rational about your fears.

18 ways to improve your body language

By Utsav Unnikrishnan Chembath (MCM Sem-III)

1. Don't cross your arms or legs – You have probably already heard you shouldn't cross your arms as it might make you seem defensive or guarded. This goes for your legs too. Keep your arms and legs open.

2. Have eye contact, but don't stare – If there are several people you are talking to, give them all some eye contact to create a better connection and see if they are listening. Keeping too much eye-contact might creep people out. Giving no eye-contact might make you seem insecure. If you are not used to keeping eye-contact it might feel a little hard or scary in the beginning but keep working on it and you'll get used to it.

3. Don't be afraid to take up some space – Taking up space by for example sitting or standing with your legs apart a bit signals self-confidence and that you are comfortable in your own skin.

4. Relax your shoulders – When you feel tense it's easily winds up as tension in your shoulders. They might move up and forward a bit. Try to relax. Try to loosen up by shaking the shoulders a bit and move them back slightly.

5. Nod when they are talking – nod once in a while to signal that you are listening. But don't overdo it and peck like Woody Woodpecker.

6. Don't slouch, sit up straight – but in a relaxed way, not in a too tense manner.

7. Lean, but not too much – If you want to show that you are interested in what someone is saying, lean toward the person talking. If you want to show that you're confident in yourself and relaxed lean back a bit. But don't lean in too much or you might seem needy and desperate for some approval. Or lean back too much or you might seem arrogant and distant.

8. Smile and laugh – lighten up, don't take yourself too seriously. Relax a bit, smile and laugh when someone says something funny. People will be a lot more inclined to listen to you if you seem to be a positive person. But don't be the first to laugh at your own jokes, it makes you seem nervous and needy. Smile when you are introduced to someone but don't keep a smile plastered on your face, you'll seem insincere.

9. Don't touch your face – it might make you seem nervous and can be distracting for the listeners or the people in the conversation.

10. Keep your head up – Don't keep your eyes on the ground, it might make you seem insecure and a bit lost. Keep your head up straight and your eyes towards the horizon.

11. Slow down a bit – this goes for many things. Walking slower not only makes you seem more calm and confident, it will also make you feel less stressed. If someone addresses you, don't snap you're neck in their direction, turn it a bit more slowly instead. **12. Don't fidget** – try to avoid, phase out or transform fidgety movement and nervous ticks such as shaking your leg or tapping your fingers against the table rapidly. You'll seem nervous and fidgeting can be a distracting when you try to get something across. Declutter your movements if you are all over the place. Try to relax, slow down and focus your movements.

13. Use your hands more confidently – instead of fidgeting with your hands and scratching your face use them to communicate what you are trying to say. Use your hands to describe something or to add weight to a point you are trying to make. But don't use them to much or it might become distracting. And don't let your hands flail around, use them with

some control. **14. Lower your drink** – don't hold your drink in front of your chest. In fact, don't hold anything in front of your heart as it will make you seem guarded and distant. Lower it and hold it beside your leg instead.

15. Realise where your spine ends – many people (including me until recently) might sit or stand with a straight back in a good posture. However, they might think that the spine ends where the neck begins and therefore crane the neck forward in a Montgomery Burns-pose. Your spine ends in the back of your head. Keep your whole spine straight and aligned for better posture.

16. Don't stand too close – one of the things we learned from Seinfeld is that everybody gets weirded out by a close-talker. Let people have their personal space, don't invade it.

17. Mirror – Often when you get along with a person, when the two of you get a good connection, you will start to mirror each other unconsciously. That means that you mirror the other person's body language a bit. To make the connection better you can try a bit of proactive mirroring. If he leans forward, you might lean forward. If she holds her hands on her thighs, you might do the same. But don't react instantly and don't mirror every change in body language. Then weirdness will ensue.

18. Keep a good attitude – last but not least, keep a positive, open and relaxed attitude. How you feel will come through in your body language and can make a major difference.

WAYS TO GO GREEN AND SAVE OUR MOTHER EARTH!

By Suraj Madhukar Shende (MCM Sem-III)

1. Save energy to save money. – Set your thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter and a few degrees higher in the summer to save on heating and cooling costs. – Install compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) when your older incandescent bulbs burn out. – unplug appliances when you're not using them. Or, use a "smart" power strip that senses when appliances are off and cuts "phantom" or "vampire" energy use. – Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible. As much as 85 percent of the energy used to machine-wash clothes goes to heating the water. – Use a drying rack or clothesline to save the energy otherwise used during machine drying.

2. Save water to save money. – Take shorter showers to reduce water use. This will lower your water and heating bills too. – Install a low-flow showerhead. They don't cost much, and the water and energy savings can quickly pay back your investment. – Make sure you have a faucet aerator on each faucet. These inexpensive appliances conserve heat and water, while keeping water pressure high. – Plant drought-tolerant native plants in your garden. Many plants need minimal watering. Find out which occur naturally in your area.

3. Less gas = more money (and better health!).

– Walk or bike to work. This saves on gas and parking costs while improving your cardiovascular health and reducing your risk of obesity. – Consider telecommuting if you live far from your work. Or move closer. Even if this means paying more rent, it could save you money in the long term. – Lobby your local government to increase spending on sidewalks and bike lanes. With little cost, these improvements can pay huge dividends in bettering your health and reducing traffic.

4. Eat smart. – If you eat meat, add one meatless meal a week. Meat costs a lot at the store and it's even more expensive when you consider the related environmental and health costs. – Buy locally raised, humane, and organic meat, eggs, and dairy whenever you can. Purchasing from I

ocal farmers keeps money in the local economy. – Watch videos about why local food and sustainable seafood are so great. – Whatever your diet, eat low on the food chain. This is especially true for seafood.

5. Skip the bottled water. – Use a water filter to purify tap water instead of buying bottled water. Not only is bottled water expensive, but it generates large amounts of container waste. – Bring a reusable water bottle, preferably aluminum rather than plastic, with you when traveling or at work. – Check out this short article for the latest on bottled water trends.

6. Think before you buy. – Go online to find new or gently used secondhand products. Whether you've just moved or are looking to redecorate, consider a service like craigslist or FreeSharing to track down furniture, appliances, and other items cheaply or for free. – Check out garage sales, thrift stores, and consignment shops for clothing and other everyday items. – When making purchases, make sure you know what's "Good Stuff" and what isn't. – Watch a video about what happens when you buy things. Your purchases have a real impact, for better or worse.

7. Borrow instead of buying. – Borrow from libraries instead of buying personal books and movies. This saves money, not to mention the ink and paper that goes into printing new books. – Share power tools and other appliances. Get to know your neighbors while cutting down on the number of things cluttering your closet or garage.

8. Buy smart. – Buy in bulk. Purchasing food from bulk bins can save money and packaging. – Wear clothes that don't need to be dry-cleaned. This saves money and cuts down on toxic chemical use. – Invest in high-quality, long-lasting products. You might pay more now, but you'll be happy when you don't have to replace items as frequently (and this means less waste!).

9. Keep electronics out of the trash. – Keep your cell phones, computers, and other electronics as long as possible. – Donate or recycle them responsibly when the time comes. E-waste contains mercury and other toxics and is a growing environmental problem. – Recycle your cell phone.

10. Make your own cleaning supplies. – The big secret: you can make very effective, non-toxic cleaning products whenever you need them. All you need are a few simple ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, lemon, and soap. – Making your own cleaning products saves money, time, and packaging – not to mention your indoor air quality.