

## How to cope with the “Back to School Blues” at work?

The children are safely back at school after their summer of freedom, leaving behind few ‘grown ups’ who feel rested and relaxed! And the challenge now is to try and squeeze in some real work before Christmas arrives by smoothly ‘shifting gear’ to move forward in your own career.

Michelle Lucas our resident Executive Coach suggests there are 7 key questions to ask yourself which will help ensure you get off to a flying start

- **When was the last time you reviewed your career goals?** Many people only do this when they are looking for their next opportunity – however changing organisations can often change the shape of your job too. Now is a good time to take stock of your aspirations for your life and career and to ensure your current role offers a clear pathway towards them.
- **What do you want to achieve next?** If you have an annual appraisal, it’s the company that sets your targets. However, these tend to reflect what the business wants from you which may be quite different to what you want from the business! Be proactive, assess what opportunities exist in your current organisation or a different one and then start to create targets that mean something to you.
- **Are you utilising your skills fully?** In the current market a sense of security can seem more important than personal development. However, if you are not utilising all your skills, you may eventually lose some of them. Consider how you could “stretch” your existing role to use more of your skill set. Job cuts and recruitment freezes can mean you’re more likely to be able to provide additional value than when the market is buoyant ! So talk to your manager about expanding your skills elsewhere internally.
- **How can you keep ahead in your market?** A recession can breed negative thinking – but one day it will end! Be positive and think ahead to the market shift that will occur when things upturn and what will have changed? New or different skills may be needed – so now’s the time to focus on your development in preparation for this.
- **Are you leveraging your relationships?** New opportunities come mostly through informal networks. A downturn can mean there are fewer reasons to talk to your internal and external business contacts but in reality there’s every excuse for you to keep in touch with people. Refreshing your network will help you hear about changes in the market, people’s future business plans (which you might be able to help with) and new challenges arising from fresh leads.
- **Are you getting the support you need?** Whether you are happy in your existing role or “chomping at the bit” for new challenges – it’s rare that you will perform at your best without the help of others. So when you are networking, consider who might benefit from supporting you. When budgets are tight it’s a sensible strategy to work with a mentor or to shadow a more experienced person rather than ask to go on a training course.
- **Are you “feeding” all of you?** We all have different priorities in life – for some our career is a fundamental part of who we are, for others work is simply a means to paying our bills. Whatever balance is right for you; there will be a proportion of your life that is invested in non-work issues. Whilst planning our life outside of work can feel quite alien – individuals who are most fulfilled are those that actively work on how to feed their “soul” as well as their bank balance!

Going “back to school” can trigger feelings of dread or excitement. As an adult choosing to make the time to reflect and plan can give you focus, help you shed your lethargy and ensure that you don’t just “turn up” for work but “shine out” amongst your peers.

For more information about greenfields visit [www.coachU4success.co.uk](http://www.coachU4success.co.uk) or call Michelle for a free consultation on 07717 122 950

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