

# My Career

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## Career planners do the biz

**The Ladder**  
By VICTORIA GURVICH

**M**ANY workers do not stop to reflect on their career or future direction and let inertia get the better of them, preventing them from achieving their career goals, according to global recruitment, outsourcing and HR consulting firm Hudson.

Hudson's national practice leader for career management, Alan Simpson, says those who take the time to stop and consider their overall career satisfaction and direction can reap dividends in the future in terms of career advancement and success.

"If people regularly examine the health of their career, they are much more likely to achieve their goals and prevent being overlooked for the next promotion."

A common roadblock to career success, says Mr Simpson, is inertia or an unwillingness to start the job change process.

"If an employee has exhausted all career options at their current workplace, then it is well worth researching what other jobs are available across different sectors. The skills shortage is still critical in some industries."

A few examples in Victoria, he says, are a shortage of engineers in the power industry, strong demand for accounts payable staff, "a raft of jobs around superannuation", and

he says demand for accountants is "brisk". He says there is good demand for lawyers, and in the human resources area there is strong demand for occupational health and safety staff.

Mr Simpson says the biggest day of the year for job advertisements is just around the corner — January 21.

The general health of the job market has given many people an opportunity to focus on what they really want to do, says Russell Johnson, managing director of EPR Career Solutions, which, since it began in 1992, has helped more than 20,000 executives develop more satisfying careers.

"A lot more people are now looking at being in charge of their career — as opposed to having a job and an income. You don't have to settle for just a job any more," says Mr Johnson, and he advises thinking about your values and what you want to achieve.

He says a healthy way to do this is to consider your career as a business.

"What do you want to accomplish in your business? What are you aiming for?"

He suggests seeking ongoing learning and growth in work because such a role will help you develop your career.

"Most of us value learning and growth because it's like play — it's what we did when we were kids. We're learning and growing creatures... If you're doing what you really want to do, generally your career will go well."

As well as a vision, though, a strategy is needed, including a resume, preparing for interviews and getting access to the whole market — advertised and non-advertised jobs.

The vision can be difficult to work out (and can take years to develop and even longer to execute in some cases), but it's like a compass or a guiding star, Mr Johnson says.

"Most of us want to do something that's exciting and stimulating... A lot of us are sub-optimising because we end up with jobs that on the face of it seem pretty good and we think we should be happy. But don't be afraid to stretch a bit."

Most people, he says, need help to create their career plan and in understanding what they

### MYRESUME Michael Black

Michael Black, 40, is the chorus master with Opera Australia, a position he has held since January 2001. He started with the national opera company in 1997 as a casual répétiteur and was assistant chorus master from December 1997 until December 1999, after which he was acting chorus master until January 2001.

#### What does chorus master mean?

The chorus master musically prepares the 48 full-time singers who make up the chorus at Opera Australia for each opera that we perform. The job involves making sure that the language — Italian, French, German, English and sometimes Russian — is sung accurately and that the music is shaped, balanced and memorised. The chorus then move on to a director for acting and movement. I also manage the department and handle things like scheduling, hiring etc.

#### What are the main highlights of the job?

One of the great joys of this job is that I am involved in wonderful music and with wonderful performers each day. The variety of conductors, singers, operas and directors mean that every day and every week brings new challenges. Never is there a week that is the same as the previous week and even if you are not particularly enamoured with an opera, you know that the next one is just around the corner!

#### Does it involve much travel?

I travel to Melbourne (from Sydney), along with all 48 of the chorus, for two six-week tours each year. Since this is the only full-time opera company in Australia, I also travel overseas for approximately one month each year to visit other chorus masters and see what they are up to.

#### What have you done previously?

Like most musicians, I have struggled at one time or another to be continuously employed, so initially I did all sorts of things to pursue my dreams; I worked in a donut shop, for Pizza Hut, worked as a cashier for Myer, played piano in a piano bar. All this while lecturing and tutoring part-time at the Sydney Conservatorium and finishing my masters degree. Then came the offer for the position of assistant chorus master at Opera Australia.



#### As a child what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always just assumed that I would be involved in music somehow. However, I actually enrolled in law at Sydney University when I finished high school. That lasted all of a week and then I went to the conservatorium.

#### Have you always been interested in music?

Always. I began playing piano when I was five after listening to all my older brothers and sisters bash away at the piano week after week. Growing up, I played the organ at church, the trombone in the school band and got involved in all sorts of musical activities.

#### Qualifications?

The AMEBoard Associate music of Australia diploma in performance. Bachelor of music education and a graduate diploma of accompaniment, both from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and a masters in musicology from the University of New South Wales.

#### Is it difficult to have a successful

#### career in music in Australia?

It depends what area of music one chooses. I've been lucky in that my training covered education, performance and musicology, so the chances of finding something I was quite good at in music were (greatly improved). I am lucky I found a job that requires all these areas.

#### How do you define success?

Success for me is finding something one is passionate about and good at and throwing yourself into it. This for me could be fatherhood, a relationship or employment. Success in employment for me is being passionate about what I am doing and helping those around me feel passionate about it also. Then work doesn't feel as though it is work but rather an extension of life in general.

#### What do you do to relax?

I work out at the gym four to five times a week. I walk 30 minutes to and from work. I spend as much time with my beautiful nine-year-old son as possible.



Wanted: a project manager of steel.

really want and in recognising its validity or otherwise.

"Looking at what's attainable and what's not — it can involve some hard choices."

Mr Johnson says EPR also works with clients who are lacking in confidence and helps them realise that a time of career transition, or returning to the workforce after a period away, is not as lonely or isolating as they may think.

"Don't sell yourself short... In this market there are opportunities beyond what we might imagine. Be a believer in your-

self and seek a way to get there." \*

### A steely disposition

Alfasi Steel Constructions is seeking a senior project manager and a remuneration package in excess of \$100,000 is on offer. The Alfasi Group is a dominant player in the construction and engineering of big steel-based projects in Australia and South-East Asia.

Alfasi provided 4500 tonnes of architectural cable-stayed roof for the MCG's northern

stand and is supplying and erecting structures at the Southern Cross (Spencer Street) Station. Previous projects have included Telstra Dome's retractable roof (pictured during the installation).

Alfasi is based in corporate offices in Dandenong but project managers spend much time on city sites, primarily concerned with the co-ordination and management of projects.

Applicants should have a positive attitude, excellent communication skills and project management experience on large building projects.

For more information contact Alfasi's human resources manager Anne Ridgeway on 0419 100 664 or email [anne@alfasi.com.au](mailto:anne@alfasi.com.au)

the organisation after the Games. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and have the ability to communicate messages clearly and accurately.

St John is also seeking front-line volunteers to give first aid and health-care professionals to volunteer for the Advanced Casualty Management Teams. Prospective volunteers must consent to a national police check.

For more information or to apply for a volunteer position, phone Jen Rogers, St John (Victoria) volunteer co-ordinator, on (03) 8588 8367 or email [jrogers@stjohnvic.com.au](mailto:jrogers@stjohnvic.com.au)

### MYTRAINING

**A**USTRALIA has long had a shortage of cooks and chefs, but William Angliss Institute of TAFE's new Angliss Culinary Academy will go some way towards tackling this.

"We had run out of kitchen space and couldn't fit in more students to cope with the demand," academy head Gordon Talty says.

When the academy opens next month, he says the institute will be able to enrol about 150 extra students a year.

Mr Talty says the vacant building at 315 King Street, Melbourne, will be transformed into a state-of-the-art facility comprising two training

unit kitchens, a demonstration kitchen and a specially equipped area for the provision of coffee/beverage training. The building was bought by the William Angliss Institute and construction will be funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The academy will allow the institute to cater for increased market demand for world-class training in the professional cookery and patisserie industries.

Mr Talty says the shortage of thousands of cooks and chefs in Australia can be attributed to factors such as unsociable working hours, often involving weekend,

night and split shifts.

But he says the industry is rewarding, as well as challenging.

Mr Talty also plans to look into what educators can do to better support the industry.

Enrolments have closed for the academy's February intake but are open for the April-May entry. Application forms are available from the William Angliss Institute information centre (555 La Trobe Street, Melbourne) or by phoning 9606 2111. Mr Talty says the academy also plans to run on-demand courses for qualified chefs in areas such as food costing and kitchen/people management.



Gordon Talty (centre) with chefs who will train the students at the new William Angliss TAFE facility.

### WORKWORDS



Success depends on previous preparation and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.

CONFUCIUS

### St John's volunteers

It's not too late to put your hand up to be involved in the Commonwealth Games. St John, the lead agency for the provision of first-aid services to the public at the Games, is seeking volunteers to work behind the scenes — in radio operations and logistics.

St John is looking for new volunteers now so they are ready for the Games in March. Training will be provided and it is hoped that the new recruits will continue volunteering for