

*A Whole-of-Life Plan for
your Asset Management Career*

LEADERSHIP ASSETS

Empower your
Career
from the
Workshop
to the
Boardroom

Dr MONIQUE BEEDLES PhD

LEADERSHIP ASSETS

Empower your
Career
from the
Workshop
to the
Boardroom

Dr MONIQUE BEEDLES PhD

Published by Teak Yew Pty Ltd
Brisbane, Australia
Contact www.moniquebeedles.com

© 2021 Dr Monique Beedles

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher. All enquiries should be made to the author.

Author: Dr Monique Beedles
Title: *Leadership Assets - Empower your Career from the Workshop to the Boardroom*
ISBN: 9780987191717
Subjects: Leadership | Career Advancement | Asset Management
Book production: www.smartwomenpublish.com
Book editor: Desolie Page, AE
Illustrator: Debbie Wood



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

Disclaimer:

The material in this publication is of the nature of general comment only and does not represent professional advice. All material is provided for educational purposes only. We recommend to always seek the advice of a qualified professional before making any decision regarding personal and business needs. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the author and publisher disclaim all responsibility and liability to any person arising directly or indirectly from any person taking or not taking action based on the information in this publication.

In memory of

My Grandad

William Beedles

a mechanic who became a barrister, but
always fixed his own Kombi.

CONTENTS

About The Author	vii
Introduction.	1
To Lead	8
Chapter 1: A Whole-Of-Life Plan For Your Asset Management Career	13
Chapter 2: The Smarts You Need To Succeed	27
LEADERSHIP ASSETS	41
TECH SMARTS	43
Chapter 3: Curiosity.	45
Chapter 4: Proficiency	61
Chapter 5: Ingenuity	75
BIZ SMARTS.	89
Chapter 6: Mastery	91
Chapter 7: Tenacity	107
Chapter 8: Creativity	121
STREET SMARTS	137
Chapter 9: Humility.	139
Chapter 10: Empathy	153
Chapter 11: Integrity	167
Case Studies	181
Next Steps	203
Tables And Figures	209

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Monique Beedles is an internationally recognised thought leader, bestselling author, and leadership coach who has built a successful career in asset management.

With more than twenty years of experience as a board director, and advisor to senior leaders, Monique has written *Leadership Assets* especially for asset managers who want to realise their leadership potential, and for leaders who want to empower their teams.

With a PhD in Strategy, a Master of Finance, and almost two decades running a successful advisory practice, Monique has defined her own success.

In *Leadership Assets*, she invites you to do the same.

INTRODUCTION

As a kid growing up, some of my earliest memories are of my Dad's workshop. We lived in a small town in rural New South Wales, where Dad sold and serviced motorbikes for the many farms in the area. Dad had built our house himself, on the back of the old town hall. New bikes were on show in the hall, and you walked through the workshop to get to our house.

The workshop was a wonderland of nuts and bolts, spanners and screws. The lingering smell of grease and oil hung in the air and all around were bikes pulled apart into myriad metal pieces, old and new. During those early years of my life, I more often saw machines in pieces, than in working order. I viewed them from the inside out. I understood that they were built by someone and therefore, could be fixed by someone.

Not far up the road, my Grandpop had what he called a 'shack'. It was his version of a workshop inside his house, just next to the kitchen, looking out over 500 acres of native bushland. Instead of motorbikes, Grandpop built electronics in his shack. Racks and shelves were lined with little containers filled with resistors, transistors, and LED lights of all kinds. The familiar smell was of melting solder and etching fluid. As kids we would work on projects with Grandpop, to build a bakelite box that made canary noises, or a toy car, with flashing lights. Grandpop had converted Gran's old foot-driven Singer sewing machine to electric power. Gran and Pop had also built their house

themselves and there were always wires hanging loose on some not quite finished home improvement.

My Grandad, who was my Mum's father, had a garden shed. It was at the end of a short footpath that led from the back door of the kitchen, just past the clothesline, under the boughs of the mulberry tree. Along with nuts and bolts, it had fishing rods and flies and the salty, musty smell of well-worn waders. Grandad spent many evenings and weekends working on his Kombi. The Kombi always needed work. So much so, that he had a pit dug into his driveway, so he could just park the Kombi there and jump underneath it. No need for a jack.

I grew up believing that building things and fixing things was just what Dads do. Later on, in high school, I had a classmate whose father was a medical specialist. One Monday she told me that their washing machine had broken down over the weekend and that they'd called in a repairman. 'Why didn't your Dad just fix it?' I naively asked. 'My Dad doesn't fix washing machines,' she said. Until then, I didn't know that 'repairman' was a job.

It's perhaps no surprise then, that I feel at home in the world of asset management, with people who are passionate about building, fixing, and improving the world around us. But just as I'd never heard of a 'repairman', asset management wasn't a known career option when I was a kid. Over the past couple of decades asset management has matured as a professional discipline in its own right and this has opened up more well-defined career paths. However, many of these are still emerging, and as a multidisciplinary profession, there is no single career path for those working in asset management. Instead, everyone will have their own story of where they started out and what their ambitions are.

When he worked on his Kombi, my Grandad wore blue ‘Stubbies’ shorts and an old white singlet. It was a contrast to the black gown and white wig that he wore during the day, as a barrister, in Sydney. But Grandad hadn’t always been a barrister. He grew up on the Wirral Peninsula in Northern England. His father had come across the River Dee from Wales. Grandad served in the British Army in World War II and shortly after that emigrated to Australia to play his part in the enormous post-war recovery and ‘nation building’ efforts. The ship landed him in Port Kembla, and he started his Australian life working as a fitter and turner at the Steel Works.

At that time, workplace health and safety was not what it is today. My Grandad had the misfortune to witness a workplace fatality, when a steel beam fell and crushed one of his workmates. He was subsequently called to appear in court, as a witness to the incident. During his time in the courtroom, my Grandad observed that ‘these lawyers are no smarter than me’. This reflection prompted him to start studying law by night, as a *Student at Law* rather than at university, while continuing to work in his job by day.

His serendipitous experience, acute observations, definitive decision, and hard work, led to his later life as a singlet wearing, Kombi fixing, Macquarie Street barrister. Despite being able to afford a newer car, and to pay a repairman, Grandad continued to fix his own Kombi, for the simple joy of doing the work.

One of the most important things I learned from my Grandad is that your past doesn’t determine your future. You can always pursue your dreams, if you’re willing to put in the effort.

My own pathway in asset management has been far from conventional, but I think that as the 21st century rolls forward, there is no such

thing as a ‘conventional’ career path. We each have our own unique story, and we each have enormous value to contribute.

At high school I loved maths and science, especially chemistry. As a teenager, my career ambition was to be the CEO of a global pharmaceutical company....in Switzerland. I wanted to help people by curing cancer, HIV, and as many other diseases as I could. Like many teenagers, I had small dreams....

When you have these kinds of ambitions, who do you turn to for advice? Nobody in my family had ever been to university. Neither of my parents finished high school. I didn’t know any global CEOs and I’d never been to Switzerland.

With no source of credible advice, it seemed logical to me that to run a pharmaceutical company, I would need to study pharmacy. And so, out of high school that’s what I did. It was always my intent to go on to honours and a PhD as a precursor to a career in industrial pharmacy. At some stage I would need to add an MBA, as I pursued a management track in the pharmaceutical industry. I also kept up my study of German at night school, because I figured I would need that in Switzerland.

I followed this path relentlessly, until the first year of my PhD studies in pharmaceutical sciences, where I went to the USA to present a paper at a top international conference. I was 21. At this conference I met many of the leading professors in my field, who talked about the younger generation who would follow in their footsteps—and had their eyes directly on me. I already knew that I didn’t want to be a professor, or to pursue an academic career. I wanted to be out there in the world, making a difference.

I took a pause from my PhD and spent a year managing the sterile manufacturing facility in a large hospital pharmacy. I had also spent some time working in a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant, where I had learned, in a really practical way, about the impacts of machine design and reliability on operational performance. My German even came in handy with a particular German-built packing machine that, like the Kombi, was always breaking down.

I was then at a point where I had many options, but I needed to make a decision about the path I would take next. I could have given up on my PhD and gone straight on to an MBA. I had also spoken to the Dean of Engineering about a chemical engineering degree. He agreed to give me credit for 40% of the course, based on my previous studies. However, I still had my PhD scholarship and a deadline looming. These scholarships are highly sought after and not an easy thing to give away.

In exploring my options, I came to the decision to continue my PhD, but at a different university and in a different field. Business is multidisciplinary and those doing research in management come from many different backgrounds. There is no one undergraduate degree that feeds into postgraduate management studies. I embarked on my PhD in the School of Management in the focus area of Strategy, with the subject of my research in the global pharmaceutical industry. It brought together everything that I was interested in and meant I could draw on my background experience and learn deeply and richly to prepare me for the future I was seeking. I was told that it was like an MBA on steroids.

There will be many points in your career when you need to make a decision about which way to go next. You can take all the advice you like from people who are well meaning and want the best for you, but in the end, it's your own decision. There's no wrong choice,

just different choices. It's up to you to make the most of whichever path you choose.

While undertaking my doctoral research, I continued to work part time in the hospital pharmacy, mostly at night and on weekends. Encouraged by my boss, I also took on my first board position. By this time, I was 25. When I finished my PhD, I spent a few years working and travelling overseas and figuring out my next steps.

Ultimately, in 2004, I decided to establish my own consulting practice. It was while working on strategy in the mining sector that I first came across the concept of asset management. I was working with what was then known as the 'Plant' department of a major mining company and quickly figured out that the management of their assets was critical to the success of their business. Having delved deeply into competitive strategy through my PhD studies, I understood that for them, asset management, done well, was a competitive advantage.

This led me to learn more about asset management, to undertake further training and to get involved in the Asset Management Council. From there I focused my work, still at the strategic level, in organisations where asset management was essential to their strategy. The more I explored asset management, the more I understood that it was also central to the strategy of the companies in my doctoral research, although we hadn't used that term. In those pharmaceutical companies, the most important assets were their patents. These intangible assets were the product of their capital investment, the source of their revenues, and their key competitive advantage.

Since then, I have established a niche practice, working with boards, executive teams and senior leaders in asset management. I provide team and individual coaching and one of the greatest rewards of

my work is the “a-ha” moment, when those I’m working with have a breakthrough in their thinking that sets them on a path to success.

When I did well at school, my teachers encouraged me to become a teacher. Later, when I did well at university, the academics encouraged me to become an academic. In both cases, this was what success meant to them, but not to me.

People define success through their own perspectives, but their view of success shouldn’t define yours.

What does success mean to you?

I’m passionate about seeing asset management on every board’s agenda. I pursue this both by educating boards and senior leaders, and empowering asset management professionals to develop their leadership capabilities, to better engage with decision makers, and to become decision makers themselves.

My earlier book, *Asset Management for Directors* was written to give board directors and senior leaders an understanding of asset management. I’ve written this book, *Leadership Assets*, to give asset management professionals an understanding of leadership, to help you define your own success and to develop the smarts you need to reach your leadership potential.

I trust that it empowers you to confidently take your seat at the decision-making table.

Best wishes,
Monique.

TO LEAD

You make the decisions that matter.
The buck stops with you.
You want to do more than a job.
You want to create something that endures.
You want more than the corner office.
You want to be the cornerstone.
You understand that good ideas are nothing,
without decisive action.
You value integrity
and deliver on your promises.
You know that the decisions you make today
have consequences
for tomorrow.
You think ahead.

They don't make them
like they used to.
It's a throwaway society.

But you understand the joy
in caring for something of value.
You know that attention to detail
produces rewards.

The turn of a wheel
means everything,
to those who have honed their craft.
To plan for tomorrow,
is to value today.
To sustain that value,
creates the future.

Leaders connect people,
to bring ideas to the world.
Ideas that shape our human experience.
Leaders create connections,
to inspire change.
Great leaders
inspire the change
that shapes our world.

Leadership isn't easy.
You have tough days,
but you still show up tomorrow.
You have to carry your team,
no matter what pressure you're under.
You have to maintain your strength.
You need to look after you.
Resilience
means self-care.
'Once everything's back to normal'
- is a myth.

There's no going back.
There's a new kind of normal.
You need to make space for you
in your life,
to give you the strength to lead.

To lead takes Perspicacity:
Clarity of vision.
Penetrating discernment.
Insight
and Foresight.
An astronaut's view of the Earth.
An independent perspective.
Catalysis and Synthesis.
A fierce curiosity.
A deep understanding.
Question and
Listen.
A yearning for wisdom.
An ambitious future.
Learn and Grow.

You don't get to make the easy decisions.
They leave you with the curly ones.
There's no right answer,
but you do have to choose.
Vision brings clarity.
Purpose gives perspective.

Wise counsel
provides a clear road ahead.

To lead takes thick skin.
It will be lonely.
To lead takes courage.
You can't do it alone.
To lead takes judgment,
and you will be judged.
To lead takes wisdom,
and you will doubt yourself.
To lead is not an honour,
It's a responsibility.
To lead is to grow,
and to see yourself anew.

Monique Beedles 2012

CHAPTER 1

A WHOLE-OF-LIFE PLAN FOR YOUR ASSET MANAGEMENT CAREER

Asset management is a multi-disciplinary profession. There's no fixed pathway and no one place to start your asset management career. Many people are involved in asset management long before they realise it. You may be some way into your career already before you choose to pursue specialisation or professional recognition in asset management as a discipline.

Traditionally, asset managers primarily had engineering or trade backgrounds. However, as asset management has professionalised over recent years, and as international standards have been adopted with the recognition that asset management requires a whole-of-organisation perspective, it's increasingly likely that asset management professionals come from broader disciplinary backgrounds, such as accounting, finance, economics, information technology or human resources.

A trans-disciplinary approach improves the reach and impact of asset management, but it also requires a broader skill set beyond the technical fundamentals. No matter where you might be starting, having a whole-of-life plan for your career allows you to develop these skills from an early stage and to be proactive in building the capability you'll need to succeed in your chosen path.

I've defined four stages of career development in asset management: Apprentice, Advisor, Advocate, Ambassador. Let's see what each of these stages looks like.

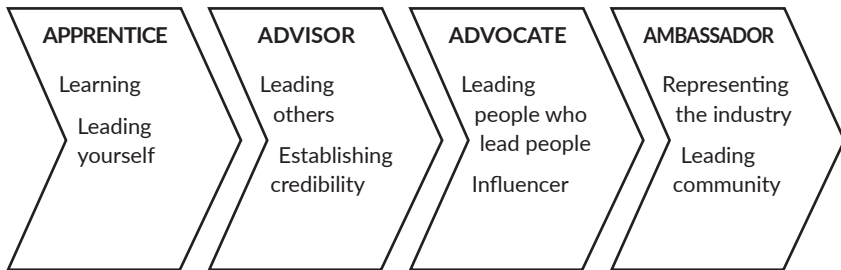


Figure 1: Four stages of career development

APPRENTICE

In the initial stages of your asset management journey, you'll be in the role of an Apprentice. This could be in a traditional trade through a formalised apprenticeship program. If so, you'll be working with an experienced tradesperson to learn the skills of your trade, while also undertaking formal training through a Vocational Education and Training provider. This combination of formal training and on-the-job learning enables you to develop both the theoretical and practical skills you'll need in your trade.

The Apprentice role is not just for trades though. If you're a new graduate fresh out of your undergraduate degree, you will probably take on a similar focus. Regardless of what field you've studied, it's likely you'll be part of a company graduate program, which generally run for one or two years. During this time, you'll be offered rotations in different parts of the organisation to help you gain exposure to the types of work you'll do in your professional role. You may also be involved in some in-house or industry-based training to ensure you have the baseline skills you'll need in your workplace.

You might also be an asset management apprentice if you've moved into asset management from a different professional background. You may be experienced in your technical area, but you're new to the discipline of asset management and to asset management roles. You'll likely have a lot of terminology to learn and there'll be language that has its own meaning in an asset management context. You might be in a new organisation, or in a newly established asset management team. You may have more experienced people to learn from and you may also undertake some asset management-specific training through an asset management professional body or specialist training provider.

From an asset management perspective, some of the key areas for learning at this stage are understanding risk, cost and performance and how they apply in your context. In an Apprentice role, you will focus mostly on technical risks that apply within your work, such as workplace health and safety and equipment failures. In terms of costs, you will most likely be focused on tracking operating costs, especially the costs of maintenance work. You'll be focused on your own performance and doing a good job within the scope of your role. You will need to work within assigned budgets and perform your work to expected timeframes.

Regardless of your specific role, being at the Apprentice stage is an exciting time as you accelerate along a steep learning curve. It's a time when you likely have nobody reporting directly to you. As you won't have any supervisory or managerial responsibilities, this is an ideal time to learn as much as you can, to try on different roles and to find what interests you. This is a time when you can afford to experiment, under close supervision, without being directly responsible for others. Make the most of this time to ask questions and seek advice from your more experienced colleagues.

It's never too early to find a mentor. Your period as an asset management apprentice creates opportunities to develop connections with more senior practitioners that will be valuable to you throughout your career. It's also a good time to get involved with the professional bodies in your industry or sector. Many such organisations will provide discounted rates for early career professionals as well as special events and mentoring or scholarship opportunities. Make the most of all these chances to build your networks, develop your skills and find your passion.

As an apprentice, you may be asking:

- What are the key skills I need to succeed in a career in asset management?
- Where should I start in planning my asset management career?
- Who should I look to for support?

In this initial stage, you are most likely to be primarily engaged in hands-on technical tasks. You are valued for your skills and your labour, in other words, *what you do*.

The key to successfully progressing through the Apprentice stage is to learn to lead yourself. Observing what others do is an important part of your learning at this stage. It's not enough, though. It's also important to observe what others say and how they behave.

Who are the leaders you admire?

What can you learn from them?

Have you seen examples of what not to do?

Even when you're just starting out, it's important to be looking ahead to the next stage of your journey and to be developing the skills you need for the role of an Advisor.

ADVISOR

As you move on from your apprenticeship and have a few years' experience, you may be offered your first opportunity to lead others. You may become a supervisor or lead a small team in your own trade or profession. It could also mean guiding a new apprentice or graduate in their early days within your organisation. Typically, in this stage you may have up to about 10 people within your spectrum of influence, either as a leader or an advisor.

With more experience, you may be a manager or a project manager, leading other experienced people who may each be specialists in their own areas. For example, as a maintenance manager, you may lead a group of complementary tradespeople, such as mechanics, electricians, or boilermakers. As a project manager you may oversee a range of specialists to deliver a specific outcome and be responsible for managing time and budgets. You are now in a situation where you don't necessarily share the same skill set as the people you lead. Your role is less about technical prowess and more about managing people.

At this stage you have well-developed technical skills, and you know your stuff. You're familiar with the established body of knowledge in your field and you will be called on by others for that expertise. If you don't have people reporting directly to you, you may be a consultant, advising clients external to your own company, or a technical specialist, advising internal stakeholders in your area of expertise.

As an advisor you're valued for your knowledge and expertise, that is, *what you know*.

At this stage you may want to seek professional recognition for this knowledge through asset management certification, such as the global certification programs accredited by World Partners in Asset Management, or through professional recognition within your specific field, such as engineering or accounting.

Some of the focus areas for development during this time are firstly around assurance. In a leadership role, you're no longer responsible just for your own work, but also for the work of others. This means you need to be able to demonstrate that you have systems and processes in place that provide assurance of the quality of work of your team. This includes being able to demonstrate that risks within your scope of responsibility will be identified, managed and escalated appropriately.

As an advisor, you'll need to move beyond a purely technical focus and beyond consideration of costs alone, to consider how the work of your team delivers value to your stakeholders. You may have some budget responsibility: you'll need to make decisions about how the resources allocated to you are best used.

As a leader, you'll need to consider alignment. How do you ensure that the work of your team aligns with your organisation's overall direction? How do you demonstrate that you are meeting specific objectives? Your role as a team leader or manager is firstly to understand how these objectives translate into your work context, and then to provide both the direction and motivation to your own team to work toward achieving them.

It may be the time when you begin to ask:

- How can I establish my credibility as a leader?
- How do I support my team to create value within our organisation?
- What capabilities do I need to develop to take the next steps in my asset management career?

Many people come to a point during this stage where they decide to pursue a people leadership pathway, with a view to moving into senior leadership and executive roles. Others may decide to specialise in a particular technical niche and may become leading experts in that area. Choosing one of these paths will take you on the journey to becoming an Advocate.

ADVOCATE

Once you have some leadership experience, you may move into a role where you now lead other leaders. You may have multiple managers, each with their own teams, reporting to you. In these senior leadership or executive roles, you may be leading dozens or several hundred people within your spectrum of influence.

You may also be in an Advocate role if you are a leading technical specialist in your field, even if you don't have as many people reporting to you directly. This role may also apply if you are a senior consultant or an independent professional in your own practice.

At the Advocate level, you are valued for your ideas and opinions: *what you think*, not just what you know.

Of course, nobody will know what you think if you don't share your ideas. This means that what you say becomes important. While this could be in the traditional manner of giving confidential advice to clients or internal stakeholders, it could also mean contributing your expertise more widely, through presenting at industry events, publishing papers and articles in relevant journals, or contributing in a leading role within your professional body or industry organisation.

At the Advocate level, you expand on solving known technical problems to leading innovation. It's time to go beyond the established body of knowledge and add your own ideas to create impact. It's no longer just about costs or a narrow view of value, but the wider and the more long-term effect you make through your work. Developing the skills to identify and measure that impact will help you to gain influence with a wider range of stakeholders.

As an advocate, your technical skills are not enough. You'll be expected to navigate increasingly complex social and political landscapes. You'll need to be savvy about how you engage with people outside your immediate group of colleagues. A strategic approach to developing your networks will strengthen your influence with a broader audience.

While Advocate is a term sometimes used in an adversarial setting, like a lawyer defending an accused criminal, advocacy is not just about defending yourself or others. More broadly it's about promoting your ideas and gaining support for proposals that can be seen in a very positive and beneficial sense. As a senior person you may be advocating for yourself, for your team, for your company, for your profession or for your industry, within the many contexts in which you operate.

It takes more than data to influence decision making. Maintaining a robust technical basis for your ideas is important, but the ‘rational’ argument is rarely enough. Learning the art of persuasion to expand your influence is an important capability at this level.

Some of the questions you may be asking yourself now are:

- How do I engage stakeholders across different disciplines?
- How do I improve my influence and impact?
- How do I get buy-in for innovative ideas?

Many people in technical fields will choose not to go down the path of leading people—it’s not for everybody. If you do have the desire and the capability to be a leader of leaders, it can be a very rewarding journey. But it requires preparation and a commitment to continue to learn and grow throughout that journey. You will need humility, empathy, and integrity, some of the essential Leadership Assets that I’ll talk about in this book.

AMBASSADOR

As an Ambassador, you may be a CEO, a non-executive director, or an elected representative in local, state or federal government. You may be in a senior role in a government organisation and a member of cross-sector committees, international bodies, or whole-of-government initiatives. You are leading thousands of people through your spectrum of influence.

As an ambassador, you are no longer working solely within your own organisation and with its stakeholders. Instead, you are active across organisations, and often across geographies and across industries.

Being an ambassador can place significant demands on your time and energy. Wide engagement may require evening and weekend events, extensive travel and dealing with the media. There's an old saying that 'You can't please all of the people, all of the time'. Ask any politician and they'll understand that at any given time about half of the people will disagree with them. That's a reality we need to accept when we step into a public leadership role.

Again, Ambassadorship is not for everyone, but there's a sense of reward in influencing the agenda on a wider stage. To succeed at this level, you'll need thick skin, a strong sense of purpose and robust personal integrity. You'll move from solely influencing others to being a person others want to influence.

At this stage, you're valued for your networks and your influence: *who you know* and *who knows you*.

Board roles will often highlight networks as one of the key criteria and may be seen as more important than knowledge or experience.

An ambassador is visible and leads by example. Leading by example is incredibly powerful. It's also challenging because others will look to you for consistency. For your own peace of mind, you want to maintain consistency between your own beliefs and the behaviours you repeatedly display. Inconsistency can be a barrier to credibility, as others observe the patterns of your behaviour. Developing routines and rituals is a way to embed consistency into your daily life and your work

environment. These also contribute to developing desired cultures in your community. We'll discuss these further later in the book.

As visible leaders, you need to be committed to the vision and values of the organisation and communities you lead. If you're not committed to the objectives of the organisations you lead, how can you expect commitment from others?

You also need to be committed to your own health and wellbeing. When the going is tough and the stakes are high, it's easy to neglect your own self-care. One of my most important learnings from my time at Harvard Business School was that resilience is self-care. To consistently perform at a high level in high-stakes, high-pressure environments requires us to look after ourselves, so that we can better serve others.

A significant role for ambassadors is nurturing relationships. This goes beyond 'managing stakeholders' in a formal sense and relies on a proactive and personable approach to engaging with people and their needs. Ambassadors are conduits for collaboration: an important part of your role will be to bring people together and to provide opportunities for safe and open collaboration between potentially disparate groups who are working towards a common purpose.

At the Ambassador level you may be asking:

- How do I lead our community through uncertainty?
- How do I convey a clear message in complex situations?
- How do I maintain my own wellbeing when juggling multiple, demanding roles?

The challenges and rewards of an asset management career are lifelong. Wherever you are on your journey, there’s always more to explore, as well as abundant opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Career Stage	Apprentice	Advisor	Advocate	Ambassador
Focus	Leading yourself	Leading your team	Leading your organisation	Leading your community
Spectrum of Influence	1 person	~10 people	100s of people	1000s of people
What you're valued for	What you do - your skills	What you know - your knowledge	What you think - your ideas	Who you know - your influence

Table 1: Asset management career stages

A successful career in asset management means a lifelong commitment to learn and grow, recognising that many of the assets you are responsible for may have a lifecycle that extends beyond your own lifetime. In the next chapter we’ll explore the smarts you need to succeed on this journey.

CHAPTER 2

THE SMARTS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED

In the previous chapter, I mapped out a whole-of-life career plan for asset management professionals over four stages: Apprentice, Advisor, Advocate and Ambassador. At each of these stages, I mentioned some of the skills and capabilities required.

Just as we create whole-of-life plans for assets, a whole-of-life plan for our own careers provides a framework through which we can develop the necessary skills and capabilities needed throughout our careers. It's never too early to plan ahead and to focus your learning on your future ambitions.

I want to introduce three focus areas at each of the four stages I described in the previous chapter.

Focus Areas	Apprentice	Advisor	Advocate	Ambassador
Human	Performance	Alignment	Influence	Collaboration
Business	Cost	Value	Impact	Commitment
Technical	Risk	Assurance	Innovation	Consistency

Table 2: Focus areas at each career stage

These are areas of focus for your knowledge and skills development as you progress through your career. Even from the beginning, the capabilities you'll need span Technical, Business and Human spheres. Technical skills are necessary—but not sufficient—to progress into leadership roles.

Beyond knowledge and skills there are universal capabilities that are needed at every career stage. A mindful focus on nurturing

these from early on will stand you in good stead throughout your whole-of-life career.

Tech Smarts underpin the solutions that create value and are delivered through your Biz Smarts. Making anything happen also requires Street Smarts.

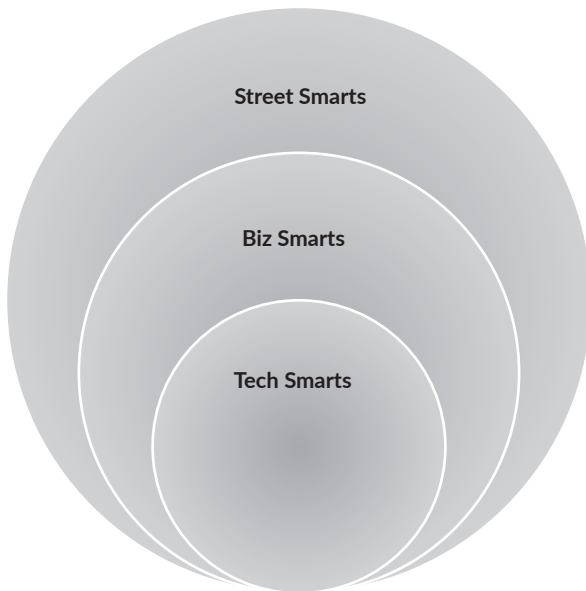


Figure 2: The smarts you need to succeed

These are the smarts you need to succeed!

Let's explore them further.

TECH SMARTS

Many asset managers I speak with feel frustrated that the decision makers in their company don't seem to understand the value of asset management.

They are struggling to get traction with executives or other leaders in the business and feel as though their work is not valued. This often means that they aren't being allocated the resources they need to implement effective asset management within their organisation.

While many executives may pay lip service to asset management, asset managers I speak with still feel in many cases that their CEO or their GM doesn't 'get it'.

When you have great technical expertise, it can be challenging to communicate concepts to people who don't have a similar technical background. Developing effective communication and engagement skills is essential to progression in your asset management career. We'll look at the importance of those skills a little further on.

Asset managers are excellent at identifying problems, analysing evidence and creating solutions.



To make an impact, you have to meet a need. There has to be a problem to solve, even if those affected by the problem don't realise it. It's routine for asset managers to use an initial diagnostic step to identify that need and define the problem. Effective identification of problems relies on *Curiosity*, which we'll explore further in Chapter 3.

When solving a technical problem, we also need to understand the nature of the problem, which requires us to gather and analyse evidence. Asset managers have many tools at their disposal to analyse evidence—evidence can be as diverse as performance data, condition monitoring reports or financial statements. As an asset manager you can sometimes feel like a regular Sherlock Holmes, searching for clues and making deductions. *Proficiency* in analysing evidence is essential for asset managers: we'll explore this in Chapter 4.

Applying your Tech Smarts enables you to create a functional solution to an identified problem by analysing the available evidence. This requires applying your inherent human ingenuity, which has been honed through your technical training. We'll look at the importance of *Ingenuity* in Chapter 5. Coming up with a working solution may in many cases be relatively straightforward. Commonly, the greater challenge is to sell these solutions to a wider audience.

I have a friend from Austria who grew up skiing and snowboarding. When he came to Australia he had never been surfing before, but he found it easy to pick up. The body movements, muscle groups and basic balance skills needed for surfing are very similar to those needed for snowboarding, and he had already developed those.

It's similar with developing your smarts. The good news is that the capabilities you already have—to identify problems, analyse evidence

and create solutions—can be applied beyond the technical domain to both the business and human contexts.

Your Tech Smarts will help you to develop your Biz Smarts and your Street Smarts.

The three core capabilities—to identify, analyse and create—are needed in each of these contexts.



You've developed these capabilities through your technical training and enhanced them through your ongoing experience. You've become a competent professional in your field. So you're already half-way there in developing those skills you need to become the person sought after and consulted for your technical expertise.

Applying these processes to developing your Biz Smarts and your Street Smarts will help you to influence decision makers. Beyond that, developing these smarts will help you to become a decision maker yourself and to progress into more senior leadership roles.

BIZ SMARTS

Even when you know that you have a fantastic technical solution, sometimes it's hard to gain the confidence to communicate that message. This can lead to considerable frustration, because you and your team have worked hard to create a solution that works really well, and you feel that your company won't get the full benefit from your effort if the solution is not implemented.

Developing your Biz Smarts will help you to feel more confident to pitch your ideas to decision makers. Building a convincing business case requires seeing your solution from the decision maker's perspective, rather than from the technical perspective alone.

In a business case, you need to identify a market, analyse business risks (not just technical risks), and create value for the organisation and its stakeholders.



Taking these steps will augment your existing competence in your technical speciality, and give you influence with a wider business audience. Although decisions are made on behalf of companies and organisations, they are made by real people. Decision makers are human beings.

No matter how fantastic your technical solution is, you're going to need to persuade someone else. Unfortunately it's likely they don't

have the same level of technical knowledge as you do. They probably won't recognise the intricacies of your technical case: how you've identified a problem, analysed the evidence and created a solution.

To build the business case you now need to identify a market for the solution you've created. You might already know what this is, but you may need to persuade others that the market is a viable one. If there's no market, there's no business case. You may have created a perfect technical solution, but if no one wants it, or is prepared to pay for it, there's no market for it. This principle applies not only in commercial markets, where you are selling a product to customers, but also to internal markets, where you are competing for funds or allocation of resources. *Mastery* to identify and understand potential markets is an essential business skill that we'll discuss in Chapter 6.

Once you know the market, you need to analyse the risks to the business in pursuing this market. You may have already identified the technical risks of your solution, but it's time to identify the business and strategic risks rather than solely the operational risks. To be viable, the value created needs to exceed the risks, or perceived risks, taken. It takes tenacity to carry on in the face of perceived risks. Rather than ignoring these risks, a robust approach to analysing and managing them is an essential leadership capability. We'll talk more about *Tenacity* in Chapter 7.

Ultimately, you need to be able to articulate how your solution creates value for the internal or external customer. Creativity isn't just for artists. Creative solutions that create value are essential to asset management and a key Leadership Asset. In Chapter 8 we'll talk more about what *Creativity* means in this context.

STREET SMARTS

Value is created through connections, not in isolation. You could have the world's most technologically advanced telephone, but if nobody else has a phone, who would you call?

Whether it's getting buy-in for a technical innovation or seeking your own job promotion, navigating the complexity of human networks and the prevailing political landscape requires Street Smarts. Beyond the technical solution and the business case, there is a human case, which is about creating meaning, not just financial value. It's important to understand who your stakeholders are and what is valuable to them. How does your work enhance that value?

To be Street Smart you first need to identify priorities. These are their priorities, not yours. You need to put yourself in their shoes when they ask, 'What's in it for me?' What imperatives are driving the decision maker? What are they rewarded for and how can you help them achieve their objectives? It takes humility to listen, to learn and to recognise the perspectives of others. We'll consider *Humility* more closely in Chapter 9.

When decisions are being made by a board or committee, there's more than one person you need to persuade. Considering the full range of perspectives around the table is a key to building a persuasive argument. Human connections are not random. Rather they can be analysed and cultivated to uncover and develop the human case.

Analysing the connections between you and key decision makers can help you to see the best path to take. What is important to them? Who influences them? Analysing connections is a key to becoming connected, rather than just consulted. Nurturing these connections

to build relationships requires *Empathy*, an important attribute in developing these essential connections. We'll look into *Empathy* in Chapter 10.



As Aristotle wrote, persuasion requires a combination of ethos, logos and pathos. Logic and reason are usually not enough to persuade people. You also need to win their hearts and minds. Building on your technical skills to become more confident and convincing is a step-by-step process of taking what you already have and applying it to new situations.

To be valued for the role you play at every stage of your career, you need to go beyond creating solutions. Your aim is to create value and ultimately, to create meaning for the communities you serve. Making meaning is what makes us human and that meaning can only be created in the context of connection with other human beings. It's a bit like an electrical circuit: electricity will only flow when the circuit is complete.

Alignment of values is essential to making meaning: the congruence between what you say and what you do will be observed by those you lead. Maintaining that congruence is the essence of *Integrity*, which we'll delve into in Chapter 11.

The Tech Smarts, Biz Smarts and Street Smarts I’ve outlined here are your Leadership Assets: you’ll need them at every stage of your career.

	IDENTIFY	ANALYSE	CREATE
STREET SMARTS	HUMILITY Identify priorities	EMPATHY Analyse connections	INTEGRITY Create meaning
BIZ SMARTS	MASTERY Identify markets	TENACITY Analyse risks	CREATIVITY Create value
TECH SMARTS	CURIOSITY Identify problems	PROFICIENCY Analyse evidence	INGENUITY Create solutions

Table 3: Leadership assets required at every stage

LEARNING SMARTS

There’s no need to wait till we are in a formal leadership role to work on developing these smarts. Rather, we start developing them before we’ve even begun our working lives. As students and lifelong learners, we continue to develop them throughout our careers and aim to continually improve our knowledge, skills and capabilities. This requires Learning Smarts, which are also essential to our leadership journey.

We develop our professional capabilities in three key ways:

- Formal training
- On-the-job learning
- Mentoring and coaching.

We often begin with formal training of some kind, whether it's university or vocational education and training through an apprenticeship or traineeship. Many of these options provide an initial exposure to on-the-job learning through industry placements and practical projects. When you start in a full-time role at the apprentice stage of your career, there'll be a period of rapid on-the-job learning. Learning this way continues throughout your life as you observe those around you.

Mentoring and coaching takes an individual approach to help you focus on your personal strengths and weaknesses, guide self-reflection and provide the perspective of an experienced person who has walked the path before you. This can augment formal training and on-the-job learning in a way that's tailored specifically for you.

Combining these three approaches provides you with the greatest depth of learning opportunities. Later, in Chapter 12, I'll present a series of *Case Studies* of asset management professionals at different stages of their career and how these three modes were effectively used in their own development.

Now, let's explore your *Leadership Assets*.

LEADERSHIP ASSETS

STREET
SMARTS



Humility



Empathy



Integrity

BIZ
SMARTS



Mastery



Tenacity



Creativity

TECH
SMARTS



Curiosity



Proficiency



Ingenuity

TECH SMARTS

CHAPTER 3

CURIOSITY



CURIOSITY



IDENTIFY PROBLEMS

For technically trained people, it can be easy to think that the main job is ‘solving problems’. In maintenance-related trades this quite often means ‘fixing things’. But before we can solve problems, we need to identify them.

Our natural human curiosity makes us well attuned to identifying problems: it’s something we can all do. However, being great at identifying problems can mean that we see problems all around us and we can become overwhelmed by the number of problems that need to be solved.

The challenge is to channel our curiosity to identifying the relevant problems and to prioritise their relative importance so that we can solve the problems that most need solving. The worst thing we can do is put all our time and energy into solving the wrong problem.

Early in your career, the main problems you will likely need to identify are those related to technical risks. You’ll be asked to find out ‘what’s wrong?’ or ‘what could go wrong?’ Running any kind of diagnostic process requires you to be curious about finding anything that doesn’t fit with what you have been trained to recognise as ‘normal’.

When I was studying pharmacy one of the questions we asked our lecturers was, ‘How will we know if a prescription is forged?’ Their

answer was, ‘You’ll just know!’ At the time that wasn’t a very helpful response, but it turned out to be true.

Late one evening at the hospital where I was working during my first year after graduation, I got a phone call from a man claiming to be a doctor and wanting me to issue injectable narcotics to a patient who was going to arrive at the hospital shortly. In a hospital, these drugs are issued routinely every day, so there was nothing unusual about the request itself. But every doctor knows there are strict protocols around the supply and use of these types of drugs and they wouldn’t expect a pharmacist to breach these.

My curiosity led me to ask the caller a series of questions and, to me, his answers didn’t add up. I wasn’t convinced that he really was a doctor. It’s not because I’d been taught what a person impersonating a doctor would say, but because through my training and my experience up till then, I knew what was ‘normal’—how doctors spoke, the language they used, their manner and behaviours. So when I saw something that didn’t fit that, my curiosity was piqued.

My curiosity led me to call the police who subsequently took the caller into custody. As I had rightly surmised, he was not a doctor. I later learned that he had a string of similar offences: I was not the first person he’d tried this on. Had I not been curious, the consequences could have been very serious. Our curiosity alerts us to anything out of the ordinary and helps us to identify where problems may lie.

As you progress through your career, the types of problems you need to identify will change. Early on, technical problems will be key. As you move into advisor and manager roles, business problems will become more important, as well as the problems your people are facing that you will need to deal with. As you lead a wider spectrum

of people at a more senior level, you'll need to identify problems between teams and between organisations, including cultural and political issues.

At every stage, curiosity will be essential.

IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

We're told that 'curiosity killed the cat' and that 'ignorance is bliss', but we shouldn't really believe either of these. In truth, ignorance is not bliss and curiosity is the cure.

We're all born curious. Curiosity is the desire to learn, and it's as natural as the desire to eat. Just as a baby will cry until they're fed, so they will reach out to touch that colourful object or take a bite of that scrap they found on the floor. They just want to learn more about it.

Curiosity is essential to our survival as it alerts us to dangers and potential threats. If we're not curious about a roar from the trees, it may be too late once the lion has pounced. The flipside of this essential curiosity is the anxiety that comes from being ever alert to threats. At its extreme it can lead to paranoia and a crippling fear of trying anything new.

Ignorance is not bliss. Instead, knowledge is power. Rather than being afraid of the unknown, or defensive in the face of potential threats, a mindset of curiosity helps us to learn and to grow through the ever-changing uncertainties of life.

Dr Todd Kashdan, a professor of psychology, has done extensive research on curiosity. In his book *Curious?* he highlights five of the demonstrated 'big benefits' of being highly curious.^[1]

Those with higher levels of curiosity show:

- improved health, including longer lives
- higher overall intelligence
- a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their lives
- healthier social relationships
- greater fulfilment and ultimate happiness.

While we're all born curious, our curiosity can decline if we don't nurture and encourage it. Since it's innate, we don't need to 'develop' curiosity. Rather, we need to avoid stifling it.

We know that three-year-olds love to ask 'why?' They'll ask it over and over again, never satisfied with an adult's perfunctory answer, driven by a compelling desire simply to know more. Sometimes the questions are impossible to answer, or too complex to explain to a three-year-old.

When my daughter was about this age, we were driving in the car and it was very quiet. Suddenly from the back seat she asked, 'Mummy, why don't Saturn's rings fall down?' I had no idea how to answer that. I've studied physics, but I'm not an astronomer and the reasons behind this are no doubt very complex. It's an interesting question, but outside my expertise.

Not wanting to stifle her curiosity, I had to admit that I didn't know that answer, but that we could try to find out—later, when I wasn't driving! Shutting down a question with a false answer or a guess won't

encourage curiosity. Neither will killing it off with a response like ‘That’s a stupid question’, or ‘Why would you want to know that?’

There are no stupid questions.

When three-year-olds ask ‘why?’ they are following a natural instinct. One that’s essential to their survival and growth. After repeatedly being told to ‘be quiet’ or ‘stop bugging me’, they give up asking.

The same thing can happen in the workplace if we don’t have a safe space to ask questions. Sometimes we’re afraid that asking a ‘stupid question’ will make us look incompetent. Instead, we should view questions as an indicator of a person’s desire to learn—a desire that we should nurture and encourage.

If we’re socialised to accept the status quo and ‘not ask too many questions’, our curiosity can be stifled as we move through life. To progress in your career, you need to actively nurture your curiosity and ensure it isn’t suppressed. You need to develop a habit of always asking more, always probing deeper. A good question to ask yourself is, ‘What else do I need to know?’

If your questions are being shut down or fobbed-off, look further. It may be that the real problem that needs solving hasn’t been properly identified. In today’s world, information is widely available and rapidly accessible. There’s always someone you can ask.

We know that if we don’t exercise, our muscles will atrophy. Likewise, nurturing your curiosity needs to become a habit. If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it. Asking questions and gathering information need to be part of your daily work. It’s the way that you identify problems and it’s an essential pre-requisite to solving them.

WHAT DOES A GOOD PROBLEM LOOK LIKE?

Not all problems are created equal. Some problems are big, some are small. Some are more important, and some are less important. Before we put a lot of time, effort and money into creating a solution for a problem, we need to ensure that the problem is worth solving.

I was once brought in to advise on a project to automate the time sheet adjustments for workers on the night shift on the two nights each year when the clocks are adjusted for daylight savings time, once forwards, then once backwards. Workers would be paid either too much or not enough, depending on which way the clock moved. The current system required a manual process to make the necessary adjustments to pay workers correctly.

The issue affected approximately six people, for two hours each year. By the time we finished the meeting, I calculated that the cost of the time for those present at the meeting was greater than the cost the company would incur by paying all six workers for an extra two hours each year. Pursuing this project for weeks, or months, engaging a software firm and making changes that would have knock-on effects into the whole time-keeping system would add significantly to the costs, which would far exceed the current administrative costs for the manual correction to be made. Was this problem really worth solving?

We can use standard risk assessment tools to prioritise both the importance and urgency of problems. This is useful in maintenance scheduling—understanding when critical breakdowns need immediate attention and when more minor defects can be scheduled for an opportune time.

These tools, however, rely on the problem being well defined and the parameters clearly specified. We need to understand the problem if we are going to prioritise action on the many problems that arise every day.

When we set out to define a problem, we need to channel our curiosity. What do we need to know to understand the problem well? It's very tempting to race ahead, developing a solution to what we think the problem is, before we have fully understood it.

A good problem should have three key characteristics:

- Specific
- Observable
- Open.

A good problem is specific

An ambition for 'world peace' is admirable, but not easy to action. It's too big and too nebulous to apply a workable process that will create a meaningful solution. A good problem is like a pin on a map: you know exactly where it goes.

Under the umbrella of a larger problem are smaller problems that we can define more specifically. For example, the problem might be 'climate change', but a better way to define a problem related to climate change could be to ask, 'How can we achieve net zero carbon emissions on our site in the next three years?' This may be just one in a series of climate change-related problems that you might choose to address.

A good problem is observable

If we did achieve world peace, how would we know?

Is climate change completely solvable, or just manageable? How will we know?

The whole field of radiology exists to ‘show’ us what would otherwise not be visible. An X-ray illuminates the problem in a way that looking at a person’s skin can’t. It’s easier to solve a problem you can see.

When this problem is solved:

What will you see?

What will you hear?

What will you feel?

How will you know?

A good problem is open: it doesn't pre-empt the solution

Sometimes you see problem statements like ‘How can we develop an app to improve community engagement?’

This statement pre-empts the solution. It pre-defines that an app is the solution to the problem. However, there may be many other ways to improve community engagement.

What do you mean by engagement? How is that measured? How will you know it has improved?

A more specific problem statement that doesn’t pre-empt the solution might be ‘How can we increase the number of people who use our public parks each week?’

Before you move onto the process of solving a problem, run a quick check to ensure it is specific, observable and open.

CURIOSITY EMPOWERS YOUR CAREER

Albert Einstein is reported to have said, ‘I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious’.

Be curious about which problems are important

We need to be curious about which problems are important to our team, to our business, and to our careers. As much as we might like to, we can’t solve all the problems at once. To empower your career, your curiosity needs to be channelled. It’s easy to get carried away by things that are interesting (to you), but not relevant (to others). That doesn’t mean though, that we should confine ourselves to the specific domain of our expertise. In fact, we can learn a lot by looking outside our domain to other companies, other countries and other industries.

I worked on my PhD in the late 1990s. There was email and there was internet, but certainly not the same rapid access to information that there is now. Some very recent research papers were available online, but most of what I needed was still in hard copy. To access research not held by my university’s library required a request to another library, quite often overseas. A paper, photocopied from the original, would arrive in my in-tray in a big yellow envelope, usually about six to eight weeks later. I had plenty of time to be curious about what it might say. In that time, I pondered the question more deeply, found other relevant research, and asked more questions.

Curiosity drives innovation

Curiosity drives innovation, which is an imperative in today's economy. *New York Times* writer Ben Greenman highlighted what he calls 'productive frustration' as something the internet has quashed. Today we have access to so much information at our fingertips that we can satisfy our curiosity to know a specific fact in mere seconds. There's no time to wonder or to explore.

For my doctoral research I also had to analyse company annual reports, which I couldn't just download from their website, as we can today. As none of the companies I was researching were based in Australia, I needed to go overseas to access the British Library, the London Business School and other sources where these documents were kept. It made my research an adventure, not just an academic exercise, and it kept me curious.

Productive frustration, Greenman writes, allows questions to 'ripen, via deferral, into genuine interests'^[2]. Just as we don't want 'spoilers' to tell us whodunnit when we're reading a mystery novel, instant answers deny us the 'pleasurable frustration of not knowing'.^[2]

Productive curiosity goes both deep and wide to avoid taking the first readily available answer and instead, to ask more penetrating questions. Curiosity drives innovation, yet many company cultures stifle these very questions, while espousing the need to innovate. Professor Todd Kashdan studied workers in 16 countries and found that

...while 65% said that curiosity was essential to discover new ideas, virtually the same percentage felt unable to ask questions

on the job. The contradictions continued: while 84% reported that their employers encouraged curiosity, 60% said they had also encountered barriers to it at work.^[3]

We know from experience that bureaucracy can be the enemy of curiosity. Many of us have metaphorically banged our heads against a brick wall trying to ask a simple question of a large organisation, only to be passed from one department to another by a seemingly endless stream of people who can't help us.

Be curious about how the bureaucracy works

Rather than give up in frustration, be curious about how the bureaucracy works. Understanding this complexity will help you to navigate it effectively and progress your career. Bureaucracy is a rule-based system. Pablo Picasso reportedly said that you need to 'learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist'. Ignoring the rules isn't the solution to the frustrations of bureaucracy: knowing the rules inside out allows you to use them to your advantage, without getting on the wrong side of the law.

Legendary Formula One designer Adrian Newey understood this well. Every year he relished poring over the new racing design regulations to work out what they actually said, as opposed to what their intent was. Given that his objective was to maximise the performance of the car, within the regulations, he would then ask himself, 'How can I use these regulations to try something that hasn't been done before?'^[4]

Confirmation is a step in the process of gaining a PhD. This is usually about a year into the process, when you've reviewed the literature and spent time establishing your research question. There are documents to submit and presentations to give. Once your candidacy

is confirmed, you can then move on with your research. When it came time for my PhD confirmation, I was very confident that it would go smoothly. I gave my presentation and was able to answer all the questions thrown at me from the pool of professors asking them. I submitted my documents paying careful attention to ensure that I'd met each and every requirement, including the instruction, printed in bold, which read **Do not provide a literature review**.

I was, unsurprisingly, devastated when my confirmation was denied, with the feedback saying that they would like me to **provide a literature review**. I didn't hide my anger and utter frustration and ended up in a teary mess in the pro vice chancellor's office, unable to understand why I was being penalised for exactly following their own explicit instructions. I was told by one of the staff in the office that it 'would make my research more robust'. My reply was that 'No. It would just make the paperwork more onerous'.

My supervisor advised me to take a legalistic approach and to 'throw their own rule book back at them'. After recomposing myself, I wrote a polite and precise letter to the powers that be, citing the university's written regulations and requirements that I had clearly followed. My candidacy was confirmed, and I progressed with my PhD. Being curious about how the bureaucracy works, rather than giving up in despair, helped me to move forward.

Be curious about other people's journeys

A catchphrase of advocates for women in leadership is that 'You can't be what you can't see'. Regardless of your demographic, role models can have a powerful impact. It's a lot easier to pursue a career path when you can see others that have journeyed the same way.

From role models and mentors we can learn both what's possible and what the potential challenges are likely to be.

I took on my first board role at the age of 25 and in a relatively short time I was a vice chair in a large organisation. As part of their succession plan, I was preparing to become the chairman. I had already completed the Australian Institute of Company Director's renowned Company Director's Course and as part of my preparation also completed their Chairman's Course. It gave some guidance from an experienced chair on such things as managing board dynamics and running meetings.

Added to this formal training and my experience as a vice chair observing the current chair in action, I also sought out some experienced chairs outside my own organisation, to ask their advice on the things I needed to be prepared for as a new chair. Being curious about other people's journeys helped to demystify the process and allowed me to take the next step with confidence.

I now mentor others who are taking the next steps in their careers, whether that be board roles, executive promotions or establishing their own enterprises. Being curious about other people's journeys helps me to guide mentees towards insights that empower them to confidently take that next step.

Being curious means identifying problems, but this doesn't apply only to the technical aspects of your work. You can apply the same curiosity to your own career journey, and you might be surprised where it could take you.

What are you curious about?

REFERENCES

- [1] Kashdan, Todd. *Curious? Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009.
- [2] Leslie, Ian. *Curious: the desire to know and why your future depends on it*. London: Quercus, 2014.
- [3] Kashdan, T. *Companies value curiosity, but stifle it anyway*. Harvard Business Review, 21 October 2015.
- [4] Newey, Adrian. *How to build a car*. London: Harper Collins, 2017.

WORK WITH MONIQUE

Monique is passionate about empowering leaders in asset management with the skills and resources they need to define their own success.



Monique offers individual coaching and mentoring for asset management professionals who want to take their careers to the next level. Working together over a 12-month period allows you to set goals and to develop and implement a plan to achieve them, with one-on-one support and guidance from Monique.

Monique also provides training and group coaching for asset management teams. These programs enable your team to lift its leadership capacity, to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and to improve your influence both inside and outside your organisation. The 12-month programs include training workshops, group coaching for your team and one-on-one mentoring for the team leader.

**To find out more about working with Monique,
visit moniquebeedles.com
or email connect@moniquebeedles.com**



DR MONIQUE BEEDLES

Dr Monique Beedles is an internationally recognised thought leader in asset management, and the author of *Asset Management for Directors*. She works with individuals, teams and companies all over the globe to help them become leaders in asset management.

With a PhD in Strategy, a Masters of Finance and twenty years of board experience, Monique has the technical skill and business savvy to guide you, your team and your organisation on a transformative journey of growth.

www.moniquebeedles.com | e: connect@moniquebeedles.com | t: +61 7 30411334