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Phoenix

March 2025

1.) Career Success

Seibert, S., Akkermans, J., & Liu, C. H. (2024). Understanding contemporary career success: A critical review. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *11*(1), 509-534.

The issue of what career success means to people, and how to get it, is a topic that comes up frequently in career conversations. In this paper, Seibert and colleagues have reviewed the literature to try and understand the whole concept a little more clearly. They explain the difference between *objective career success,* which is based on salary, seniority and prestige, and *subjective career success*, which is a combination of an individual's perceptions of their own salary, seniority and prestige, together with their assessment of how much meaning and autonomy they have, how much they enjoy working with their colleagues and how much they feel they are learning at work. The factors that lead to career success (both objective and subjective) include general intelligence (which can have an impact on its own and through its link with additional training), a proactive personality, political nous, a wide network and career adaptability. Factors that seem less consistently important include strategic career planning, physical mobility and, perhaps rather surprisingly, even job performance.

2.) Why people change jobs

Hommelhoff, S., Keller, F., & Stemmler, M. (2025). Turnover reasons are more complex than "people quit bosses": An approach-avoidance perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 104099.

The authors of this paper had noted the widespread claim that *'people quit bosses, not jobs'* and wondered whether it was an accurate reflection of job change motivation, so in this paper, they examine the reasons that people give for leaving their jobs. On the back of a systematic literature review, a large scale online survey and transcripts from over 300 exit interviews, they conclude that actually, it's a bit more complicated. It seems that job changes are generally motivated by both avoidant-related and approach-orientated motivations – i.e. people leave jobs both because they want to leave their current job (avoidant) *and* because they want to work somewhere else (approach). Overall, stress due to overwork was shown to be the most common reason cited for leaving a job, followed by opportunities for career advancement elsewhere. The third most common reason was an issue with the boss (generally their direct line manager but sometimes more senior leaders), followed by leaving to get a salary increase and then personal reasons. Motivation for a job

change is generally complex and most people who actually change jobs generally have three or four key reasons for doing so.

3.) The benefits of theory-driven career practice

Yates, J. (2025) Career Development Theories in Practice: A thematic analysis of practitioner perceptions of the benefits of theoretically informed practice. *International Journal for Education and Vocational Guidance. (online first) 10.1007/s10775-025-09726-6*

I hope you will forgive me for including one of my own this time round but I do think it's a topic that might be of interest. I have always enjoyed career development theories, but wanted to find out how career professionals use theories in the practice and what value they add. I interviewed 30 self-confessed theory-loving career practitioners and asked them about their theoretically-driven practice. The practitioners explained that they used theories in all sorts of ways – with different kinds of clients, in groups and in one to ones, to inform their own understanding or questions, and to share explicitly with their clients. They felt that the theories added value in three different ways. First, using theories boosted their confidence: the practitioners felt more confident about their own practice when they knew it was underpinned by a theory, and also felt that other stakeholders including clients and academics, had more faith in their professional credibility when they knew it was theoretically-driven. Second, they felt that theories helped them to a deeper understanding of their clients and more light-bulb moments for the clients themselves. Finally, they felt that the theories led to more effective practice – allowing for deeper connections with their clients more quickly and improving the quality of the conversations. If any of you want to know more about this – or want me to run a session for you and your colleagues on this topic – do please let me know – it would be a pleasure to share some tips and techniques with you.

4.) A shared language

Benjamin, B. A. (2024). Toward shared language in career counselling: introducing a brief qualitative exercise. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *52*(3), 442-455.

Writing exercises have been shown to have a really positive impact on career guidance outcomes but they aren't always very widely used in practice in part because they are can be quite time consuming and in part because practitioners can feel a bit unsure about how to interpret the written text. The author of this paper – a careers adviser himself - was inspired by two incidents with clients, where it became very clear that '*working with people'* can mean completely different things to different people. As career practitioners we are generally pretty adept at getting clients to unpick what they specifically mean by various terms, but it is not always easy - particular with more abstract or vague concepts such as '*meaningful*' or '*interesting'* work.

In this article, the author describes a 'Work Aspects Exercise' and presents some compelling evidence of its value. The exercise is a piece of prework that clients have to complete before their careers appointment, and it involves asking clients to consider eight 'work aspects' (including success, working with people, interesting work) and identify the four that were most important to them. They then need to write one or two sentences, to explain what each of the four work aspects actually means to them. Clients' definitions of these aspects of work can differ quite widely: definitions of *working with people* included referring to a work team as a "second family", making for a "fun workplace", and "intensive teamwork"; their definitions of *fulfilling work* included "receiving recognition for achievement" and "helping others". The author explains that the exercise helps the clients to deepen their own understanding of their definitions, but more crucially, gives the career counsellor a useful starting point, helping to ensure that they are using a common language within their career conversations.