

I LOVE MY WORK...

Identifying your ideal work and creating a strategy to make it a daily reality is the way to finding the work you truly love. Career Analysts' Jo Mills explains.

When our work is energising, aligned with our values and career goals and is interesting to us, it makes sense that we enjoy it more. Research also tells us that when we are engaged, we are more productive. This means that not only do we actually enjoy work to a greater extent, but we also deliver extra discretionary effort to our employer, increasing our value and therefore our ability to boost our salaries, be offered opportunities and earn bonuses and incentives.

The tricky thing is how do you identify what you really want from your work so you can make it a daily reality?

Use and build your talents

We each have a mix of experience, talents and abilities that make us quite unique in the workplace. Start by thinking about a time at work where you felt real pride. It might be that you

resolved a customer scenario, supported a team member or lead a successful business project. Whether your example is macro or micro in scale and impact, what you did and how paints a picture of your unique offering. If you can bring these things regularly to your work you will feel that sense of satisfaction and contribution more often.

Tap into your passions

Spend some time reflecting on what you are naturally interested in. What part of the paper do you gravitate to read? Is it the people focussed articles? Gardening? Or do you go straight to the business section? If we can bring these natural interests to our work in some way then obviously we will gain more pleasure from our work. But don't be too literal in your interpretation – an interest in gardening doesn't necessarily mean you should be a gardener. It could mean that you add gardening

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businesses to your sales portfolio or spend more time working outdoors.

Identify the bigger picture

Think of your future career goal as not just a job title but as an ideal career made up of all the things that are important to you e.g. location, people, your contributions, skills and talents. Having a picture of where you want to end up helps you bring things into your work now that will help you there. Knowing your current or new job is a step in the right direction is a great motivator.

Manage the bits you don't like

Each job has elements that we really dislike doing. There are a few strategies

you can employ in these situations.

- Get rid of the task. Is it possible for it to be given to someone else in the team? They might actually enjoy it. Consider how technology could eliminate that task altogether (e.g. data entry).
- Get faster. There are always tasks that are part and parcel of your job and there is no way around it. However, you can get more efficient so it takes up less of your time.
- Change your perspective. Can you apply some of the strengths identified earlier to this task so that you enjoy it more? Does this task add value to other people and can

you see it in that light? Will this responsibility build your reputation and career for the future? Shift your attitude and the task may not weigh so heavily.

Finally, be active in managing your own career and apply some of the above in 2012. None of us has an infinite number of choices when it comes to career management but we all have some choices. The better you know yourself, the better those career choices will be.

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