



CRF HRD COMMUNITY EVENT

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF INTENTIONALITY

On 22nd June 2023, CRF hosted a HR Director roundtable discussion and workshop on leveraging the power of intentionality. Led by Christine Brown-Quinn, the 'Female Capitalist' and former Managing Director in International Finance, this session focused on how to create a more intentional approach to work and life. During the session, Christine provided an overview of what intentionality means in relation to career strategy and why it matters, and also outlined practical advice in how to apply intentionality. Participants also reflected on and discussed their own career strategy and direction. This summary shares key insights from the discussion.



INTENTIONALITY: DEFINITION AND BENEFITS

Intentionality means positioning yourself in the right place for the right opportunities. Rather than requiring everything to be planned out, it is more a process of thinking 'where is the best place that I want to be, given where I want to go.' When defining intentionality, it can also be helpful to consider its opposites, such as aimlessness, thoughtlessness, and avoidance.

Intentionality is beneficial as:

- It gives us the ability to reach and shape our career ambitions.
- It enables us to 'enjoy the journey' as we are more focused and not constantly pulled into many different tasks.
- It allows us to feel more in control. Through being intentional, we are doing more of the things we want, and therefore improving our own confidence, wellbeing and mental health.
- It is good for organisations as well as the individual, as it helps us to consider our individual impact on our organisation. If you are not thinking about your own strategy and what you want to do, you are not being the best asset for your organisation.

However, people often avoid thinking about their broader intentions due to a fear of failure. It is all too common to hide behind our busyness, due to a fear of what will happen if we focus on what we really want.



INTENTIONALITY AND CAREER STRATEGY AND DIRECTION

Being intentional does not necessarily mean knowing exactly what your career will look like, but it does mean knowing the direction that you want to go in and the areas that you want to explore. Without this directional career strategy, you may become stuck in a rut and miss opportunities to learn or grow.

Participants discussed their own career strategies and direction, with key takeaways summarised below:

- There are currently four generations in the workplace, meaning that the idea of a 'career' may mean different things to different people. For example, people are now more likely to think about career 'purpose,' rather than career ladders.
- People are living longer, meaning that they are more likely to have multiple roles. When changing roles, the goal should be finding a role where you can execute your values and create the impact you want, rather than a specific job title. The following questions can be a helpful guide for this: what will I get out of the role? How do I want to be treated? What type of team do I want to work for?
- Intentionality and career strategy are interrelated with different life stages. For example, having children or caring responsibilities will influence the decisions you make around your career at specific points in time.
- Being intentional is also about the relationships you build, such as the people you choose as mentors and the projects you decide to work on.



PRACTICAL STEPS TO ENCOURAGE INTENTIONALITY

Christine outlined mindsets, behaviours and activities that can help us to apply intentionality to our careers and lives:

Mindset

- A **growth mindset** ('I'm open to learning') rather than a fixed mindset ('I can't go any further') is the foundation to being intentional.
- A **curiosity mindset** builds on a growth mindset. This involves being curious about what's happening in your environment and industry and making connections between disparate areas (which HR is often well-placed to do). This curiosity sparks imagination and supports being a self-directed, intentional learner.



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- An **intentional learner** mindset focuses on stepping out of your comfort zone and challenging yourself. A mindset that aims to figure things out is more valuable than finite knowledge.

Behaviours

Christine outlined five core behaviours that can support intentionality:

1. Do what you love. Where do you get energy from? Acknowledging that there will always be tough days in any job, are you doing what you enjoy and where you are at your best?
2. Be visible. Bearing in mind the direction that you want to go, who will need to see you, and what will they need to see? Consider visibility as a tool – if people can see you, they can help you achieve the impact that you want.
3. Seek actionable feedback, carefully considering who you want to receive feedback from. Feedback outside of formal structures may be even more valuable, as often colleagues feel more able to have honest conversations.
4. Seek champions. In light of what you want to do, who do you want on your side? Often, when people become more senior, their line manager holds less power over their career and it becomes even more critical to look more broadly for people who can offer support.
5. Jump in the deep end. Do your due diligence, but remember that you have to take risks; without these, there are no returns.

Being intentional is also a continual process that requires repeated reflection and realignment, especially when the environment changes.

Activities

1. Choose what you want to be busy with and make time for. For example, consider: a) whether you need to be in that meeting; b) whether you can delegate to someone else; and c) whether that meeting needs to happen at all. Remember that there may also be meetings that aren't in your diary but should be.
2. Get the most out of meetings by spending five minutes before each to prepare. Consider what you spoke about last time and what you want to get out of this meeting. Avoid back to back calls where possible to give yourself time for reflection.
3. Make the most out of meeting in person by being really intentional about forging personal relationships.

FURTHER RESOURCES

CRF. 2020. **Talent – Careers, Development and Succession in a Changing Landscape**. Research Report. <https://www.crforum.co.uk/research-and-resources/talent-careers-development-and-succession-in-a-changing-landscape>

crf SAVE THE DATE



The next in person HRD Community event will take place on **1st November 2023** and will focus on labour market trends with the ONS. An online event will also occur in the interim, with the date and topic to follow.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact CRF Director, **John Whelan**.

These community event summary notes were prepared by **Jo Nayler**, Senior Research Executive at CRF.