

CAREER CONFUSION

In today's highly skilled workforce and in an environment of minimal unemployment there lurks a hidden problem that is costing the Australian economy possibly billions of dollars annually in lost productivity and individual opportunity.

“Career Confusion” afflicts all sectors of the workforce and all levels of participation. The most common statements career counsellors hear today is “I don't know what to do next! I am unhappy in my current job! What can I do to change my career? Can someone help me to understand myself and my skills?” All this equates to a significant section of the workforce who are underperforming or do not understand how to maximise their career opportunities.

Round pegs in square holes is a well known expression that summarises the career confusion epidemic that has no regard for educational, social or professional status and more importantly to the Australian economy, remains unmeasured and ignored by educators, governments and peak employer bodies.

Career development has become an individual responsibility over the last decade with career planning and ongoing professional development critical to the holistic career health of each person. So who amongst us can confidently state that they know exactly where their career is going and that they are both satisfied and fully understand their career options. Not many would be my experience as a career counsellor since 1996.

Career confusion can affect any age group with numerous school leavers having no real career direction which they then carry into their adulthood as unsatisfied workers who will never reach their full emotional and financial potentials.

Career counsellors are an important link between people, their careers and a productive workforce. It is extremely satisfying for a career counsellor to work with a client through many twists and turns to ultimately witnessing them become aware to who they are, what they can offer and the exciting career opportunities that abound in this time of strong economic growth and skills shortages across most sectors.

To assist clients suffering from career confusion, career counsellors use a range of interviews and tests to identify each person's unique qualities and needs. A broad range of tests gives the best result that then enables the client to understand themselves in a way that they have probably never previously been aware of.

These techniques apply to all types of people, from any level, age group or workplace background.

ACMA uses a simple formula on each client to establish the foundation for their career transition:

$$\mathbf{S + C + P = N}$$

SKILLS	Mechanical
COMPETENCIES	Aircraft maintenance
PERSONALITY	Driver/Supporter
NEED	Jetstar recruiting aircraft (avionics) engineers

Need is very important because many people suffering from career confusion often have qualifications or experience in jobs that are in a contracting sector of the economy, or have selected a position that is totally unsuitable for their personality. In career counselling it is important to only point clients in a direction that has growth, opportunity and that matches their personal values.

The employment market has grown highly competitive and sophisticated. Inadequate preparation results in lost opportunities, frustration and rejection. People often settle for less with resultant loss in income, job satisfaction and career path.

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