

Embarking on a career in a global minerals industry

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As the industry develops more of a global focus, the opportunities that are available to professionals grow in number and scope. Today's buoyant minerals market is employee-driven; opportunities are plentiful and rewards are generous.

In a time where there is an abundance of choice, a highly personalised level of job-search criteria can be specified when planning a career, which is a satisfying experience for the professional. The major challenge that exists in parallel to this is finding an employer that has the access to experienced personnel who can assist with continual technical and professional development. The secret is working with all the different aspects to create a balance within the role that suits the individual.

There are three main components that can really assist with ensuring that a career reflects the individual's ideals, preferences and goals. Firstly, job-seekers need to be aware of their priorities. Secondly, it is essential to have the courage to take risks. Another crucial element is having access to mentors for guidance and role models when formulating career goals and picturing their future.

Priorities change and evolve. Professionals need to think long term when making career choices, but also react to the inevitable and sometimes unexpected changes in their own priorities. Making powerful choices, involves being in touch with what is important now and continually

reassessing where one's life and career are heading.

The minerals industry has unique circumstances when it comes to lifestyle choices. There are choices to be made about location; living remotely, flying in and out from the city on a roster or a city-based role with either travel or a less hands-on approach. Individuals need to consider the level of impact that immediate and extended family have on their decisions. A desire to travel and see the world is another area that can often be a priority to new professionals, making it essential to build it in as part of the career plan or manage it around career commitments. This type of consideration may be seen as less important than the financial or developmental aspects of a role, however to really enjoy a career in mining, these aspects can be a valuable contribution to decisions about priorities.

It is also important to consider the social and ethical considerations in the workplace. It is sometimes difficult to ensure that the company's objectives and the individual's beliefs align, but this is an element that can really impact on job satisfaction. Areas such as environment, safety, community impact and workplace relations are all areas that should be seriously considered and researched when choosing an employer. The industry is made up of individuals and the collective ethical stance will impact the industry's development into the future. It is important that

each individual considers their standpoint and the contribution they are making to the overall industry direction.

Having the courage to go outside the norm will challenge but also reward the brave with the life they choose. Acting on priorities that are not mainstream ideas can be overwhelming, but the results can be surprising. An amazing number of opportunities open up to those who can show that they are flexible and adaptable. A mining career in today's global industry can take you anywhere, if the individual can trust themselves to map out the unique yet personalised career plan they will enjoy the benefits.

Identifying mentors who are effective in the way they live life and manage their career and enlisting in their advice is the best way to gather advice for your career. It is ideal to select people who having aligning priorities and an inspirational approach to decision making, irrespective of their exact job title or direction. Networks and communication channels can be invaluable in assisting with career mapping and subsequent changes in plans.

Embarking on a career in mining is a very exciting prospect. The networks in mining are invaluable irrespective of where a career leads. Making the most of opportunities and picking the path that presents the individual with appropriate challenges and satisfaction is the pathway to really enjoying this unique industry. ■