

# Your career in *their* hands

A how-to guide for your career in professional services marketing

... according to the Heads of Marketing of today's leading firms



## Methodology

The findings in this report are based on a survey of 35 Heads of Marketing from professional services firms around Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore. Of the participants -

22 work in law, 7 accounting, 4 engineering, 1 management consulting and 1 business advisory

16 were from NSW, 10 Victoria, 4 Hong Kong, 3 New Zealand and 2 Singapore

15 were from global firms, 13 national and 7 regional

## Contents

■	Setting goals	Page 4
■	Sought after skills	Page 6
■	Building the perfect resume	Page 10
■	Winning interview tips	Page 14
■	Mastering essential PSM skill-sets	Page 19
■	Where in the world are you going?	Page 22
■	Useful resources	Page 23
■	Notes	Page 24

*“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”*

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French writer (1900 - 1944)

## Setting goals

Lots of people have never really sat down and figured out where they want their careers to take them. Where they want to go, how they want to get there, what areas they want to strengthen (or specialise in) and what they need to improve on. For most, this can seem a fairly overwhelming task and too hard to even contemplate, let alone begin.

But this doesn't have to be the case. It can be as simple as jotting down a few key points and cross-checking it every now and then. Having a plan of your career path and goals enables you to have a reasonably good idea of where you want to go and keep you on track to getting there.

You'll find this comes in handy when you make decisions on career opportunities that come your way. A good plan can set you on your path so that you are in the position to sometimes turn down an opportunity (and not just say yes because you think you have to) as you are well-informed enough to know it isn't right for you.

Having said that, goals do change so it's interesting to look back and see where you wanted to be five years ago and where you are now.

So right now, start thinking about where you want your career to take you and what is important to you. Try not to focus too hard on the specifics and perhaps consider the broader picture. Like, I want to one day be the Head of Marketing of a professional services firm, not I want to be the Marketing & Business Development Director for an international law firm – preferably X or Y firm - with a team covering a region, an assistant, with travel and practice groups focusing on...

While it's crucial you don't limit your goals in this process (the sky's the limit..!) it is just as important that you don't get too carried away with the specifics – this can box you in, leaving you blinkered from new possibilities and opportunities.

**Short-term goals** – i.e. *Where do you see yourself in 12 months -2 years? What do you enjoy doing? What do you want to build on?*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Long-term goals** – i.e. *Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years? What are you passionate about? What achievements are important to you? What lifestyle is important to you?*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Sought after skills

We asked the Heads of Marketing what skills they consider crucial for the future in professional services marketing.

Knowing the role and responsibilities of the professional services marketer of tomorrow (in the eyes of the professional services Heads of Marketing of today) is not only interesting but a great piece of knowledge to work with when considering your own career.

Client relationship and account management activities emerged as the areas considered the most vital for the future.

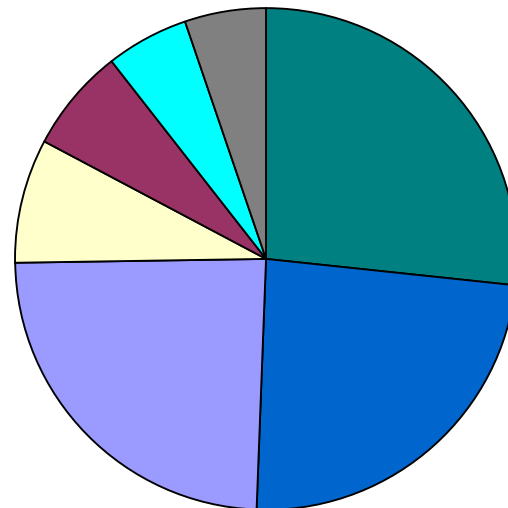
This was not surprising as previous Seldon Gill research found an increase in business development/CRM, as well as a continued need for strategic communications.

### Account Management & CRM

The focus for marketing teams has changed now to involve a greater emphasis on one-on-one client relationships, account management and CRM activities.

With that, we thought it would be useful to review *what exactly is CRM and account management?*

Undoubtedly, having strong account management skills is a good thing. At the end of the day, a firm's clients are the ultimate source of its profit. Therefore they are relationships that need to be built and, more importantly, enhanced and maintained.



- CRM/Account Management
- Thought Leadership
- Integrated Communications
- Sales
- Media Relations
- CSR
- Other

### Responsibilities of a CRM professional (as consistently seen on job specs...)

- ☑ working on key initiatives to win new clients
- ☑ advising how best to develop a client relationship profitably
- ☑ implementing practice development projects to bring about change in behaviour, attitude and capability within the practice
- ☑ identifying opportunities to extend and deepen the relationship and cross sell services of the firm
- ☑ identifying changes in legislation
- ☑ analysing market developments and identifying emerging opportunities

There are numerous ideas and theories around what makes a good CRM professional. We have accumulated what we know – from talking with Heads of Marketing, reviewing job descriptions and listening to what professional services marketing teams want - to provide the following snapshot of skills and characteristics.

### Skills & characteristics of a CRM professional

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can-do attitude                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Degree in Commerce, Business or Marketing                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highly self motivated & self starter            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong BD /account management experience                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ability to build empathy and trust              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding of company finances                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team player                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ability to network   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robust - ability to bounce back when challenged | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of general corporate/industry activity               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highly flexible                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of domestic and global business trends               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outstanding influencing skills                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the corporate legal industry and B2B environments |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persuasive                                      |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic                                       |  |

### Tips & bits: What personality characteristics do you think are most important in people who work in your team?

- Passionate
- Friendly
- Driven
- Smart
- Lively mind
- Innovator
- Fresh outlook and thinking
- Strong organisational skills
- Ability to multi-task
- Good negotiation skills
- Being diplomatic
- Time management
- Eye for detail (i.e. lawyers are so critical of mistakes)

## Strategic Communications

Strategic communication activities still play a critical role within professional services and is an area (and skill-set) that is valued amongst the Heads of Marketing.

Where communication activities within a firm may have once been deemed a reactive tool – or an unnecessary cost – they are now highly proactive and cover a far wider spectrum than just newsletters and brochures.

The rise in technology means communication activities have moved from the standard press coverage, advertisement or print publication to a preference for online subscriptions and boards, blogs and alternate sites. Interactive media, customised websites and two-way communications means marketers have a variety of tools available to them on their desktop.

### Key accountabilities of a Communications Specialist

- ☑ Building reputations to win work
- ☑ Coordinating proactive communications
- ☑ Media relations
- ☑ Industry surveys, awards and thought-leadership
- ☑ Public & media relations strategy
- ☑ Identifying key publicity issues & messages
- ☑ Implementing tactics & mechanisms
- ☑ Speech writing
- ☑ Media training
- ☑ Internal communications
- ☑ Writing for a variety of mediums

### Skills & characteristics of a Communications Professional

- ☑ Influencing and persuasion
- ☑ Project management and time management
- ☑ Writing for business communications
- ☑ People management
- ☑ Creativity and lateral thinking
- ☑ Strategic marketing (marketing plans)
- ☑ Brand management
- ☑ Excellent written & verbal communication skills
- ☑ End to end project management experience
- ☑ Ability to manage internal/external expectations
- ☑ High level of computer literacy

Strategic communications is critical to a firm's success as it impacts reputation, drives differentiation and strengthens the brand.

## Tips & bits: Susan Acreman of Wolf-Ollins, the international brand consultancy in London, talks brand.

*"It feels that there's quite a lot of misunderstanding about the role of branding within professional services which can create a degree of cynicism about its value. Often, due to the fact that people tend to associate brands with fizzy drinks & washing powder, they think that it's all about the 'logo' and colours – fluffy stuff that's nice to have but not crucial to business success. While visual identity is important this is only part of the picture when we look at brand. Being very clear about the commercial drivers & objectives of a brand development process is crucial. In a market where the services of the top firms are increasingly similar, the role of a brand will become even more important in attracting the right clients & the right talent and keeping them loyal to the business.*

*You have a brand. The way you manage it will affect your future. At its most basic, brand is about enabling choice by creating a clear point of differentiation between one firm and another. We do this by understanding the 'big idea' of what you stand for as a business: the idea that captures not just what you do, but how you do it. In professional services, this 'how' is crucial because it is often the area that really separates one firm from another. The strongest brands in professional services have a deeply ingrained culture that is built on their 'big idea' (the vision and sense of purpose for the firm) and expressed through the behaviour of their people as well as their communications."*

## Thought Leadership

More than just marketing jargon or a buzzword, thought leadership is fast becoming part of the armoury of communications tools available to firms and marketing teams.

Thought-leadership is a proven, effective tool for firms to use to differentiate themselves and establish credibility and notoriety throughout their market – and is an area most Heads of Marketing recognise as an area for growth in professional services marketing.

## Tips & bits: What exactly is Thought Leadership?

**Thought Leadership** is when a firm actively promotes and discusses ideas that are relevant to their clients. It involves content and communications which display a firm's knowledge and expertise.

It is an excellent way to showcase new research, thinking, opinions and original perspectives. Also, it helps a firm become a recognised leader their field.

Successful thought leadership is -

- Relevant
- Timely
- Useful
- Original

Essential skill-sets are –

- Use & understanding of market research
- Excellent writing skills
- Knowledge of a variety of mediums (i.e. new media)
- Experience in publishing & content creation

## Building the perfect PSM resume

*“A good resume helps paint a picture of your personality”*

The aim of writing a resume is to provide a snapshot of your experience to a future employer; that is, to present enough appropriate information for them to take your application to the next level.

A good resume provides a quick and effective snapshot of you - getting this right is the first step to looking for your next role.

**Where a lot of people go wrong is creating a generic, blanket resume for a variety of roles.**

While there is no right or wrong when it comes to creating your perfect resume, one message continually emerged from the Heads of Marketing survey – they *want* to get an accurate sense of a your personality from your resume and one that expresses how and why you are suitable for the role.

Here is a snapshot to the perfect resume.

**Tips & bits:  
Treat your CV like a RFT! (request for tender)**

### Steps to a good resume –

#### Achievements

*“It is important for candidates to include achievements in each role in addition to responsibilities, as this shows that the candidate is attuned to taking responsibility, being accountable and measuring achievements.”*

Stating professional achievements topped the poll of information that influences a decision about a candidate. Often candidates focus only key responsibilities and forget the importance of demonstrating their successes.

Specific examples of activities implemented and an evaluation of their success is a good, concrete way for a future employer to see your capabilities. Your resume is a good chance to advertise yourself and your abilities – think of it as an executive summary on you. So, where possible, include the best bit - solid, legitimate achievements.

Some examples might be –

- Developed and implemented a business development strategy for the litigation practice, resulting in Firm X becoming the number one litigation firm in the state market (in terms of revenues).
- Completed a firm-wide rebrand which won X award for ...

Remember, always be truthful. Achievements that have been exaggerated can be quite transparent and easily picked up on during interviews, which can be detrimental to your success with that firm.

**Detail, not just bullet points –**

*“More information generally gives you a better overview of the person.”*

More can sometimes be more!

Many resumes we see are short, sharp and succinct. While this is an excellent, clear way of writing, this can hinder a future employer from grasping a complete picture of you.

According to most participants, the resume is a key part in the recruitment process and helps makes decisions on whether or not to progress with the person. For example, inclusion of academic qualifications is a good indicator of intellectual rigour; work history is an effective gauge of skills.

To many, a resume will tell those recruiting whether someone has the professional skills and experience to do the job (the interview is then usually more of an indicator for personality and cultural fit).

*“I like to see how they express themselves, what is important to them, how they understand what a potential employer is seeking.”*

This is not to say that pages and pages are the answer. As said by a couple of Heads of Marketing, you *still* need to remember who your audience is. Partners, for example, prefer 2-3 page documents that they can scan read.

A good resume needs to be a balance between providing a solid picture of you and your skills and being sharp enough to keep the interest of the reader.

So, the amount of detail for your resume should be guided by the following:

- whether it is tailored to the specific role;
- any gaps in the professional working history are acknowledged; and
- providing brief, but relevant education, professional awards and achievements.

**Discussions on a personal level –**

*“I like personal summaries written by the person, give me a reason to employ you off your CV, not many people do that!”*

**This idea of tailoring a resume for a particular role was further highlighted throughout the survey.**

If we were to stress one point, it would be to take the time and consider the role you are applying for. It can be quite obvious when a resume has been created for a mass application sitting and you may leave out key skills or achievements of yours that reflect the essentials of the job description.

**Personal interests and activities**

While extra-curricular activities may seem irrelevant to a role and its responsibilities, the majority of those surveyed saw real value in including this in a resume.

*“Work is only one aspect to a candidate, this helps see a more well-rounded individual.”*

Including a range of interests can provide an indicator of a candidate’s people skills, how they fit into a team and even their cultural fit. Interests – however obscure you might think they are – can help show your future employer other motivations and is a good practical example of what drives you – so be proud (of course within reason...!).

*“Involvement in NFP and volunteer work can be an indicator of self-motivation, mentoring capabilities and cultural fit with the firm.”*

Interestingly – but perhaps unsurprisingly – not-for-profit (NFP) and voluntary work rated highly on the Heads of Marketings’ priority list for activities outside work.

Often you will find this philanthropic mindset might demonstrate an alignment with your future firm’s values, as well as showing empathy and a can-do attitude – a willingness to be involved in the greater good!

**Avoid clichés!**

Time and time again, the Heads of Marketing said avoid using clichés.

What words do you respond to negatively on a resume?

- “All corporate clichés.”*
- “People person.”*
- “Jargon and puffery!”*
- “Any jargon - I'm into plain language.”*
- “Over the top descriptions of achievements and qualifications.”*
- “Anything that attempts to deflect attention from results or achievements.”*
- “Those that 'oversell' the candidate and make their achievements less credible, particularly on CVs from junior candidates.”*
- “Superlatives & glowing adjectives that appear to exaggerate a candidate's achievements & responsibilities.”*
- “Sales bullsh\*t – It's transparent.”*
- “Buzz word bingo” and overuse of the word “strategy”. Tell me what you achieved without the fluff.”*
- “Over use of the word 'strategic' without substantive evidence of what 'strategic' work has been done & the expressed desire to 'be more strategic' & then at interview not be clear about what this actually means.”*
- “Any form of mistakes, catchphrases and clichés.”*
- “Too much cliché language - too much strategy (strategy is nothing without implementation).”*



**Career statement**

A lot can be said for a career statement or goal. Many resumes we see don't include these, but they are often a valued and appreciated component.

*"I find a career statement really useful. What do they aspire to and where do they see themselves heading in the next five years."*

Creating a career statement is a useful exercise - a lot like writing your career plan – even if you are not actively looking for a role. It is an excellent change to sit down and really think about your career and goals and fine-tuning it into a succinct sentence or two.

### The power of the career statement

In this exercise, take some time to write down as many things that come to your mind (the questions are a simple prompter – feel free to think as 'out-there' as you wish).

Who do you see yourself as?

---

---

---

What do you want to be doing?

---

---

---

Where do you want to be doing this? Why?

---

---

---

Now, take a stab at jotting down your career statement.

---

---

---

## Winning Interview Techniques

While this is where the real work begins, you should be very proud to have reached this part of the recruitment process. Your resume has sparked an interest from the firm and your skills and experience have impressed.

It is important to never underestimate the power of preparation and there is certainly no reason why you can't be prepared and have answers and examples ready for the questions asked.

According to those who do the interviewing, the first client interview is crucial for making a good impression and is your chance to impress at an early stage.

### Prepare Prepare Prepare!

You can never prepare too much! Before any interview, you must sit down and make a concerted effort to think about your skills, experience, examples (like projects or activities initiated – from start to finish, specific achievements) and your role in previous positions.

Interviews are a bit like exams - but not that scary because the topic is about you! Both interviews and exams need you to swot-up and really know your stuff. It can be very obvious in both situations where people haven't prepared.

Being thoroughly prepared for an interview also means that you will have a clear picture of your career in your head and will have plenty of examples to draw from. This goes a long way to appearing extremely organised and confident - and you won't be kicking yourself after the interview when you remember the perfect example to that tricky question.

Some questions we commonly see asked in interviews are -

Why are you looking to leave your current position?	What is it about your practice area that particularly interests you?	What do you enjoy most/least about the work you do?
What do you know about our firm/client base/this position?	Why in particular are you interested in this position?	What do you find most difficult/frustrating about your current position?
Describe a problem encountered in a project and how you resolved it	What are your strengths and weaknesses?	What motivates you?
What are your short/medium/long term goals?	What marketing initiatives have you developed/been actively involved in? And what was the result/response?	General questions in relation to the legal/ accounting/ marketing/current issues

As an exercise, try and answer some of the questions that are likely to come up in an interview -

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are some projects you were involved in? Were they successful?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are some of your proudest achievements?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The hardest question of all... your weaknesses! What are they? What steps are you taking to improve this? Note: Remember, try and keep them genuine!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## It's not all about you

As part of your interview preparation, it's vital that you do your homework about the firm – as well as the industry and the competitive environment they operate in.

*"The biggest mistake can be not knowing much about our firm – it isn't all about them!"*

Places to research the firm and market might include –

- The firm's website
- The Asia-Pacific Professional Services Marketing Association website ([www.apsma.com.au](http://www.apsma.com.au))
- Databases – like Factiva
- Trade journals
- Newspapers – i.e. *Australian Financial Review*

## Be yourself!

Lots of Heads of Marketing said that one of the biggest mistakes candidates can make at interview is not being themselves.

*"Don't try and be something or someone you are not. Just be yourself..."*

The interview is the firm's chance to see your personality first-hand and work out if you will fit into their current team.

While it is easier said than done, do try to relax. There is nothing wrong with taking a moment or two to consider your answers. Also, a bit of (appropriate of course) humour can sometimes go a long way – but be wary as every audience is different.

## Tips & bits: Issues/Questions that you could raise in an interview

- Professional Development i.e. training courses (internal and external)
- Split of work/where you would fit in the current structure of the department/organisation
- Whether you would work for a number of partners/areas of specialisations
- How has the vacancy arisen – expansion or replacement?
- Culture/reputation of the department/organisation
- Future plans of the department/organisation and how you could contribute to that
- What plans are there for the growth of the division?
- How is the marketing division perceived by the professionals in the firm?

## What are the biggest mistakes people make at interview?

We asked the Heads of Marketing to list some of the biggest mistakes they have seen people make in interview -

- *"Inadequate research of company or industry."*
- *"Don't ask any insightful questions. This is really important, particularly at Partner interviews."*
- *"Dress inappropriately."*
- *"Not being relaxed and not showing their personality."*
- *"To talk about 'we' in general terms.. I really want to know how the behaviour / actions / performance of the individual contributed to achieving an outcome."*
- *"Lack of knowledge about the firm they are applying to. Lack of questions. Talk too much. Don't listen to questions. It is as much their interview as mine!"*
- *"Not being themselves. If we hire the wrong person it is as bad for them as it is for us."*
- *"Being arrogant; making it all about themselves; not doing any research/background; being far too introverted; not being friendly; not being interested enough; not considering the questions before providing thoughtful responses."*
- *"Not listening to questions / not asking questions and not having done any homework on the role and the firm / talking too much and not seeking confirmation as to whether they have answered the interviewers questions."*
- *"Not being upbeat and engaging."*
- *"An arrogant demeanour, attempting to "spin" their way out of answering a question."*
- *"Asking about salary in the first interview."*
- *"Speaking negatively about a current/former employer - this industry is too small for that."*
- *"Calling interviewers by the wrong name, mobile phones ringing, being late, dirty shoes, only addressing one person in the room (who they think is the most important in the room), bad handshake."*



## What's the most impressive/memorable thing a candidate has done in an interview? ...And did they get the job?

(as said by the Heads of Marketing...)

- They told me how much, and how little they knew about the firm - then told me how they would learn more about what was important. Yes they were hired.
- Those who are comfortable in themselves and not afraid to ask questions – Yes, they got the job.
- We recently recruited a Business Development Manager for a new market that our firm is seeking to enter. At the interview, the responsible partner indicated that he was struggling to identify the right clients. The individual sent in a marketing plan post interview with some suggestions - and yes, they were recruited.
- Follow-up / thank you for the interview emails are a bit passé. But a follow-up email that captures the essence of the role and shows me in practical terms how they will make a contribution to my team - and all in the space of under 10 lines - is impressive.
- They anticipated what type of questions they would be asked and presented examples of their work – they most certainly got the job.
- I am into open, honest discussions - warts and all.
- Being personable, affable and demonstrate ability.
- Building rapport & demonstrating their professionalism by asking the right questions & listening and clarifying answers. Providing appropriate follow up after interview. Yes they got the job.
- Candidates who ask relevant and challenging questions - and show they know the magnitude of the job - the good bits and the less good bits!
- The most impressive candidates, no matter what their level of experience, have a degree of confidence and authenticity that sees you selling the job to them. How people do that perhaps can't be taught.
- It is always best if someone comes in expecting an honest, two-way conversation, expecting to answer but also ask direct questions in an appropriate manner. Humour too is always good. I expect all of this on the job and so I am always well disposed to anyone who brings all this to an interview.
- Asking interesting questions, being interested and engaged, follow-up email.
- Yes they got the job - they came to the second interview with a plan for their first month in the job. I was impressed with their questions at the first interview (asking the right things) but then turning up to show me (at second interview) how they could get fast traction. It was really clever and in at least 50+ interviews, I have only seen it once.
- A memorable moment was when the candidate created a poster from legally blonde and put a cut-out of their face on it... the candidate did not get the job!

## Mastering essential PSM skill-sets

Strong communication skills – with a focus on influencing – were consistently mentioned by the Heads of Marketing as crucial skills to have.

While these skills are essential when dealing with clients and external people, it is also vital you develop these communication skills when dealing with your colleagues or other internal staff. Grasping this is the key to better communication within the workplace.

We spoke to Executive Coach Sam Galea about just this.

### Dialogue Skills: Mastering the workplace conversations we dread

#### **Sam Galea of Coachability talks dialogue -**

*Dialogue: an exchange of ideas, opinions, information, experiences or assumptions on a particular issue.*

Consider the long list of companies that have lost zillions in shareholder funds because of plummeting values or, even worse, consider those that have gone belly-up altogether - mostly because of stupid mistakes, dishonest action or both.

Very often these destructive corporate events are portrayed as the result of a bad leader acting in isolation or a few senior people conspiring for their own benefit. However on almost every occasion these negative events also require the acquiescence of many others who may notice inefficiencies or irregularities but who choose to remain silent.

The positive mirror-image of this is also true. The high standards of truly great organisations are not maintained exclusively by a CEO or the senior executive group. A high performing organisation absolutely requires the verbal participation of employees who are prepared to voice ideas and opinions assertively when warranted. But unfortunately in many workplaces this confidence to speak up has been replaced by a destructive silence.

What causes this culture of silence? The answer is - a lack of dialogue skills. Where the level of skilling is low so is confidence. In addition most people are naturally uncomfortable about raising bad news and many view with absolute dread any conversation that has a potential for conflict. For example conversations such as giving negative feedback, confronting a colleague, putting a strong point of view to the boss or a client, voicing an opinion when outnumbered, confronting a bully, and pointing out flaws or raising product or service concerns. Lack of dialogue skills usually means that these conversations do not take place or they happen when it is too late.

This problem is common to all industry sectors however I maintain that strong dialogue skills are of greater importance within the professional services environment because the output of this industry is not based on discrete products or commodities and very often the conversation IS the product.

Dialogue skills can be improved across the whole organisation, within a team or at an individual level by adopting an executive coaching program that usually concentrates on the following basic concepts:

**Creating Safety** - All relationships, whether outside or within the workplace, can be temporarily or permanently derailed simply because individuals do not feel safe to say what they are really thinking. One of the keys to good dialogue is learning how to build safety into a conversation and maintain it throughout.

**Questioning Reality** - Because thoughts are a reflection of our own views this means that multiple competing realities exist simultaneously and this often creates a communication blockage. It is possible to question your own and your conversation partner's reality without blame or recriminations thereby creating openness and making it possible to arrive at your goals.

**Making Dialogue Genuine** - Before having a tough conversation with anyone else have one with yourself because gaining absolute clarity regarding your own motivation will display itself in attitude and behaviour so when you go into that important dialogue your demeanor will physically manifest the picture your mind sends to it. If you have had the correct conversation with yourself that picture will be genuineness.

**Sharpen Listening** - Hearing and listening is not the same thing and a closer look at successful listening shows that it is not a natural process, it requires conscious effort and the process consists of discrete stages. Many people with perfect hearing have very imperfect listening due to any one or more of eight recognised poor listening behaviours.

**Never Delay Conversations You Dread** - Hand in hand with the courage to question reality comes the bravery to speedily confront your toughest professional issues. Very often the delay in having these dreaded conversations is caused by a lack of skill. There is a distinct process for having a challenging conversation and emerging with a successful outcome.

**Silence Is Good** - Silence during a conversation makes most of us uneasy which is why, when both parties feel this way, the conversation is usually full of words rather than meaning, simply to avoid silence. This type of conversation lacks any real substance and the goals of the conversation are often not met. The more emotional the subject then the more silence is required.

**Act Upon Your Instincts** - There will always be a situation where we simply just know that something is wrong and no amount of research or rational inquiry is going to alter the gut feeling that it will all fall apart unless you say something. That is fine as long as you first take the time to listen very carefully to your own individual internal voice. We need to listen to more than just the content; we need to listen also for emotion and intent.

**Be Accountable For The Emotional Results** - For any person in any type of leadership position it is almost impossible to pass even a trivial comment without some sort of emotional result, positive or negative. Because we have little control over the emotions of others we should instead focus on ourselves. Taking responsibility for the emotional results means that you must always take people WITH you rather than leaving them floundering in an emotional whirlpool.

Once the detail behind these concepts is learned, practised and modelled the overall payoff is an increase in organisational performance through a more articulate, more highly engaged workforce and reductions in conflict, all resulting in higher morale and improved staff retention.

And there is a bonus - the fact that you can carry these skills from the workplace into those tough conversations you need to have in your non-professional life.

## Tips & bits: Tips from the TOP!

We asked the Heads of Marketing what their advice would be to PSMs at an early stage in their careers?

- *"Get good broad based experience; always put your hand up for challenging new assignments so that you stretch yourself; find a mentor; value your own contribution and don't stay with a bad employer (it saps your confidence.)"*
- *"Think beyond professional services - the broader marketing principles also apply in this industry."*
- *"Learn the people stuff, particularly influencing skills and resilience, as well as the technical skills."*
- *"Be prepared to put in hard yards. Keep an open mind. Look for opportunities to get involved in as broad a range of programs with as much responsibility as possible - and continue to listen and learn and ask questions even when you succeed. Recognise that there is a learning curve which is consistent regardless of technological savvy, intuition or communications ability. Be friends with PAs! Do a special communications, writing and presentation skills course – invaluable."*
- *"Grab all the experience you can - it's not just about events!"*
- *"Be clear about what you want to achieve and speak up! Your career is your responsibility."*
- *"Work hard. Don't create too much work for your manager. Low maintenance, high output."*
- *"Listen; build internal networks; ask lots of questions; it's OK, in fact often better, to say you don't know something; find role models/coaches you can respect & rely on for guidance and support."*
- *"Stay focused on building your knowledge base in Prof Services. Its a great sector and only when people leave it do they realise what a great environment it is to learn and develop their careers."*
- *"To stay true to your skills & professional development & not be sidetracked by professional services environment."*
- *"Basically that there is now a good career path in this sector. Many younger PSMs are worried that they 'should be doing something else' and it's important to show them that this is an attractive area to work in with global opportunities."*
- *"Park the ego! Be comfortable in your own skin and confident enough to provide practical advice to people who are themselves world class consultants. Know that you cannot win every encounter. Build your own reputation by delivering results: More 'walk' and less 'talk' will allow word-of-mouth recommendation to build your internal reputation."*
- *"Look for opportunities to expand skill base whilst committing to mastering the skills of current role, don't jump around too much or you end up knowing a lot about a lot, but not enough to specialise and boost salary and promotion potential."*
- *"Time management, Multi-tasking, keeping abreast of trends in the marketplace i.e. SEO and SEM, Podcasts etc. Patience in learning, the basics are the foundation."*
- *"Have excellent brands on your CV; solid practice development experience; learn to write!"*

## SeldonGill INTERNATIONAL

### Where in the world are you going?

Apart from Australia-wide, below are the cities we frequently recruit in. Consider where you might want to live and work -

- Auckland
- Dubai
- Europe
- Hong Kong
- London
- New York
- Singapore
- Wellington

The international market for labour has freed up immensely in the last decade. Experienced, skilled professional services marketers are sought after overseas and firms are willing to pay for their expertise.

Seldon Gill is committed to helping people make the move overseas - and here to Australia or New Zealand - so we have set up Seldon Gill International.

**Lauren Marchant** is Seldon Gill International's dedicated consultant.

Lauren began her career in marketing before moving into recruitment more than four years ago. Having returned from London, where she was based for 5 years, Lauren has placed marketing directors and managers into accounting, management consulting and law firms in the UK and Europe, and now focuses on career opportunities in Australia, Asia, Europe, New Zealand, the UK and USA.

Lauren is renowned for representing the best interests of her clients and candidates with international transfers. She encourages sensible negotiation and offers a realistic assessment and advice to her candidates so they are well-versed when they begin their role.

If you are interested to find out where your career can take you, please call Lauren Marchant on +61 3 8611 8104 or email [lauren.marchant@seldongill.com](mailto:lauren.marchant@seldongill.com)

For more information on living overseas, please visit [www.seldongill.com](http://www.seldongill.com).

## Useful resources

### ■ House Communications

A full service marketing communications consultancy specialising in professional services, academic institutions and industry associations.

The House Communications website has a good article library.

[www.house-communications.com](http://www.house-communications.com)

### ■ Coachability

Executive coaching

[www.coachability.com.au](http://www.coachability.com.au)

### ■ Asia-Pacific Professional Services Marketing Association

[www.apsma.com.au](http://www.apsma.com.au)

### ■ The Professional Marketing Forum

[www.pmforum.co.uk](http://www.pmforum.co.uk)

### ■ Legal Marketing Association

[www.legalmarketing.org](http://www.legalmarketing.org)

#### Our Offices

##### Melbourne

Level 14, 50 Market Street  
Melbourne Australia 3000  
Ph: +61 3 8611 8100  
Fax: +61 3 8611 8180

##### Sydney

Level 31 ABN AMRO Tower  
88 Phillip Street  
Sydney 2000  
Ph: +61 2 8211 0445  
Fax: +61 2 8211 0555

[www.seldongill.com](http://www.seldongill.com)











## In conclusion, Heads of Marketing

- Love people that have initiative
- Hate people that move around from job to job frequently
- Love people that are flexible
- Hate people that are unprepared
- Love people that ask questions
- Hate people that overuse the word 'strategic'
- Love people who take time to tailor their resume
- Hate people who use jargon words and clichés
- Love people who stay in roles for 2-3 years
- Hate people who do not do their homework before an interview
- Love people that are actively involved in activities outside work
- Hate people that are high maintenance
- Love people who have a career statement
- Hate people who criticise previous employers
- Love people who are upbeat and engaging

