

12 Key Questions About Career Development

A strategic basis for decision-making for professionals, specialists and leaders

From an unclear problem to a direction that can be assessed, explained and pursued.

Thomas Svensson

Strategic Career Advisor

Why Career Strategy?

Career development is often treated as a series of separate tasks: Find a direction. Develop your skills. Explain your experience. Use your network. Seek new opportunities. Each task may be relevant, but the right course of action depends on the situation you are in and the problem you actually have to solve.

The 12 questions have been developed for professionals, specialists and leaders who have to make decisions about their professional direction and development. They examine different parts of the same interconnected process: What limits your opportunities? Which direction is worth prioritising? What professional value do you create? What does a realistic transition require? And how do you translate the assessment into action?

The material does not provide a single standard answer. It offers a coherent basis for examining the situation more precisely, distinguishing between plausible explanations and choosing a relevant next step.

The material is built around three principles

Analysis

Understand the situation, the problem, and the key uncertainties before choosing a course of action.

Direction

Prioritise the move that best connects your professional foundation, your contribution and the work context.

Execution

Examine key assumptions in practice and let the decision influence what you do and do not do.

How to Use This Material

You can read the questions together as a progression through four parts or start with the question that best corresponds to your current situation. Each question can stand alone, but the connection between them is important. For example, an unclear direction can make your positioning unclear, while a clear direction can still be difficult to implement if the distance to the desired opportunity is too great.

You do not have to work on all questions at once. Start with the question that is most relevant to your current situation. When the situation changes, another question may become more relevant.

The purpose is not to remove all uncertainty. The purpose is to create a sufficiently precise basis for you to make a better decision and choose a next step that is consistent with the direction you want to pursue.

Professional Background

Thomas Svensson holds a master's degree in Psychology of Language and has more than 10 years of experience advising professionals, specialists and leaders on their careers.

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What makes a career decision strategic?

[Read this question online →](#)

A career decision is not necessarily a career strategy

You make ongoing decisions that affect your career. You say yes to a task, develop a skill, apply for a new role, take on greater responsibility or choose to stay where you are.

The decisions can have a major impact without necessarily being strategic.

A decision becomes strategic when it is part of a clear connection between your current situation, the professional direction you want to move towards, and what you choose to spend time, attention and resources on.

The key question is not simply:

What should I do?

Instead, ask:

What direction should the decision support, and what is that choice based on?

Career strategy is not about determining your entire future. It should give you a sufficiently precise basis for prioritising and choosing the next appropriate step.

A strategy connects decisions that are otherwise dealt with separately

Career development is often divided into separate tasks. You may be considering whether you should change jobs, develop a skill, take on management responsibilities, change your positioning or use your network more actively.

Every decision can be relevant. But its importance depends on the context in which it is made.

A course or qualification can strengthen your professional foundation, but also lead to further activity without changing your real opportunities. An attractive position can provide new tasks or greater responsibility, but at the same time take you further away from the type of work you want. A job change can solve a problem with the current workplace without solving the problem that is most important for your future career.

A strategic assessment therefore looks beyond the individual opportunity. It examines the role of the decision in your future development.

This does not mean that all choices must follow a fixed plan. But they must be assessed against something more precise than their immediate appeal.

Strategy requires prioritisation

You may have several options, each of which seems relevant. However, different directions may require different experiences, relationships and professional commitments.

If you try to pursue them all at the same time, your efforts can become too dispersed. You spend time and energy without building a strong enough foundation in any of them.

A strategy therefore requires some options to take precedence over others.

The prioritisation does not have to be permanent. New information can change the assessment. However, without a preliminary prioritisation, it will be difficult to decide which options you should investigate, what you should spend time and resources on, and what you should decide not to pursue.

Strategy therefore lies both in what you decide to do and in what you deliberately avoid spending time and attention on.

The decision must rest on a sufficiently clear basis

A strategic decision does not require complete certainty. Career choices are often made without all the possibilities and consequences being foreseeable.

But there is a difference between accepting uncertainty and making a decision on an unclear basis.

You must be able to distinguish between what you know, what you assume, and what you still need to investigate. For example, a direction can be based on an assumption that you will thrive with different responsibilities, that your experience has value in a new context, or that certain parts of your expertise will be more in demand.

The assumptions may be reasonable without being sufficiently investigated.

The strategic task is not to eliminate all uncertainty. It is to identify the uncertainties that can change the decision and create a better basis for assessing them.

The strategy must therefore be clear enough to guide your priorities, while remaining open to adjustment if new information weakens its key assumptions.

An opportunity must be assessed on what it makes possible

An opportunity does not have a fixed strategic value. Its significance depends on what it is intended to enable.

A position can be a relevant next step because it strengthens your professional foundation or gives you experience of a form of responsibility you will need later. The same position can be a detour if it primarily repeats what you already know, without strengthening your future opportunities.

Therefore, you should not only ask if an option is attractive.

You need to ask:

What should this option enable and how does it support the direction I have chosen?

The assessment must also include what the decision requires and what you choose not to do at the same time. A strategic decision is not only based on the expected benefit, but on an overall assessment of the option's function, requirements and consequences.

A strategy only matters in practice when it affects what you do

You can have a thorough analysis of your situation and a well-founded idea of your future direction without having a working career strategy.

The strategy only has practical significance when it affects:

- which opportunities you explore
- which skills you develop and what experience you gain
- which relationships you prioritise
- how you communicate your professional direction
- which activities you choose not to pursue
- what you do next

Action is not simply the final step after analysis. It can also give you better information about whether your assessment holds.

The next step does not have to be extensive. But it must either support the chosen direction or give you a better basis for assessing whether it holds up in practice.

A career strategy is therefore not a detailed plan for your entire future. It is a coherent basis for decisions about which direction you want to prioritise, what the choice is based on, and how it will affect what you do afterwards.

What is my underlying career problem?

[Read this question online →](#)

The problem you are experiencing is not necessarily the problem you need to solve

A career problem often becomes apparent when something is not working. You receive no response to your applications, feel dissatisfied with your work, cannot choose between several options or find it difficult to explain your experience.

The problem is real, but the cause is not necessarily the most obvious. A lack of response may look like a problem with your CV, but may instead reflect an unclear direction or a weak connection between your experience and the roles you are applying for. Dissatisfaction may look like a need to move into a different field, but it may be linked to the role, the way the work is organised, the leadership or the organisation itself. Difficulties in explaining your profile may look like a communication problem, even if you have not yet clarified what professional value you create.

The key question is not simply:

What does not work?

Instead, ask:

What problem is limiting my options the most right now?

A career problem must be described in concrete terms

Career problems are often described with phrases such as "I am stuck", "I lack motivation" or "I have lost direction".

These phrases may describe the experience accurately, but they do not explain what is actually happening. Being stuck can mean that you cannot choose a direction, that you have chosen but do not get a response, or that you know what the next step is without getting it done. Lack of motivation can be due to monotonous tasks, limited influence, unreasonable demands, exhaustion or a decline in interest in the subject area itself.

A useful description is based on what you can observe: What happens, when does the problem occur, what have you already tried, what response have you received, and what consequences does it have?

The more specifically the problem is described, the easier it will be to investigate the possible explanations.

Several problems can be real without being equally decisive

Once the problem has been described in concrete terms, you can examine whether it recurs. A single rejection, difficult period or failed conversation rarely tells enough. If the problem recurs in several contexts, there is more reason to investigate what is behind it.

Several explanations may be plausible at the same time. You may lack a clear direction, have difficulty communicating your relevance and have difficulty being considered for the opportunities you are looking for. But the problems are not necessarily equally important in determining what should happen next.

The next step depends on which problem is most important now. Otherwise, you can work systematically on a solution without it solving the most important problem. The next step can either change the situation or provide better information about whether your assessment holds.

You do not have to find a definitive explanation for your entire career. You need to understand the problem precisely enough to choose the next relevant step.

The constraint may lie in different places

What matters is identifying what currently makes it most difficult to move forward. You may lack a clear direction, be unsure of the value you create, or find it difficult to explain why your experience is relevant to the direction you are pursuing.

A direction can also make professional sense without you yet having the experience or relationships that make the next step realistic. In other cases, you know too little about the role, the organisation or the problems you want to work with, because your assumptions have not yet been examined in practice.

A better formulation does not solve an unclear direction, and relevant experience will have limited significance if others cannot see what it can be used for. The next step depends on what specifically stands in the way of moving forward.

The current constraint may change

What stands in the way now will not necessarily remain the same. When one constraint is addressed, another may become more important.

At first, the problem may be that you lack a clear direction. Once the direction is clearer, you may discover that your professional value is difficult to explain. When it is clearer what your experience can be used for, the response may show that you lack experience, relevant relationships or a more realistic next step.

This does not mean that the first assessment was wrong. When the problem that was most significant at the time is addressed, the next constraint may become clearer.

A solution must also be able to work in practice

The most obvious solution from a professional point of view is not always the one you can realistically implement. Your finances, your health, your family and the need for stability can have an impact on what opportunities are actually available.

If you lack experience in a new industry, further study may be one route. But if it requires time or finances that you do not have available, the experience may need to be built up through a smaller step, a project or a related role.

This does not make the solution any less ambitious. It means that the path must fit both the problem and the situation you are in.

You do not need to have the complete answer

Some assumptions can only be assessed when they are examined in practice.

If the problem seems to lie in your positioning, the response to a clearer formulation can show whether your assessment holds. If you are considering a new direction, conversations with people who know the work can make it clearer whether your ideas about the tasks and requirements match reality.

The response can confirm your assessment, but also show that the problem lies elsewhere. A single reaction rarely tells enough. If the same pattern is repeated, there may be reason to reconsider both your understanding of the problem and what you intended to do.

Your understanding of the problem must be precise enough for you to choose the next step, while remaining open to revision as you gain new information.

How do I position my expertise and experience clearly?

[Read this question online →](#)

Positioning is about what others understand

You can have strong expertise and relevant experience without being clearly positioned. This applies to specialists with deep knowledge, professionals with a broad or complex profile, and leaders with experience from different roles and organisations.

The problem may be that others find it difficult to see which roles, tasks or problems your background makes you relevant to.

Positioning is therefore not about describing everything you know and can do. It should make the most important connection between your expertise, experience and professional direction understandable to others.

The key question is:

What should others understand, remember and connect you with?

Positioning begins with direction

Many people start by changing the CV or LinkedIn profile. They add skills, rewrite the headline and try to make the wording more precise. But if the professional direction is unclear, so will the communication.

Positioning requires a choice of which roles, tasks and problems you want to be relevant to. This makes it possible to prioritise the parts of your expertise and experience that support the direction. Other options may still be viable, but they must receive less emphasis in the way you present yourself in that context.

A better wording can make the direction clearer to others. It cannot make the choice for you.

Expertise does not speak for itself

You may have a precise understanding of your field of expertise and still find it difficult to explain what your knowledge and experience enable you to solve. This is especially true when the work is based on complex issues, specialised methods or experience that is built across several roles and organisations.

Communication can easily become abstract when theories and methods are described without any connection to the problems they can be used to investigate. The same happens when systems, processes and responsibilities are mentioned without it being clear what the work changed or made possible.

Clear positioning does not require that the expertise be made simpler than it is. But its application and professional significance must be understandable to people who do not share your professional background. Complexity does not exempt you from clarity.

What you communicate is not necessarily what others understand

You know the connection between your expertise, experience and the choices you have made. An employer, customer, business partner or network contact only meets the part of the context that your communication makes clear.

Accurate information does not necessarily create a clear impression. You can describe your experience accurately and still leave the recipient in doubt about what you should be associated with in particular. What matters is not only what you say, but the understanding your communication creates.

You are positioned even when you do not do so consciously. If the communication points in several directions or lacks a clear prioritisation, the recipient will still form an impression. You simply have less influence over what that impression will be.

Positioning must have a real basis

Clear positioning must be based on the expertise and experience you actually have. It should highlight your relevance, but not construct a stronger context than your background provides.

Precise wording can make your contribution easier to understand. It cannot replace the experience, documentation or professional insight that should make the positioning credible.

Positioning requires prioritisation

When a profile is difficult to understand, it may seem natural to add more skills, experience and explanation. But more information does not necessarily make the connection clearer.

Something must be central, something must support and document it, and some information must receive less emphasis. The prioritisation must follow the direction and professional context you want to be relevant to, not how prominent individual experiences have been in the past.

This does not mean that the rest of your background loses importance. But when you position yourself towards one direction, other opportunities must receive less emphasis. A broad profile is only a strength if others can see where your contribution is relevant.

Your positioning must work in different contexts

Your expertise and overall direction must be recognisable, regardless of whether you communicate with an employer, customer, business partner or network contact. But that does not mean that you have to emphasise the same points to everyone.

What is important in one context may be less important in another. The emphasis should reflect what the recipient needs to understand, without your direction becoming unclear.

The core must be stable. Priorities may vary.

Others must be able to act on what they understand

Your own assessment is not enough to determine whether the positioning works. Relevant people must be able to understand and remember the essentials of your expertise, experience and direction.

The understanding must be concrete enough for them to see when it makes sense to contact, choose, recommend or introduce you. If they only remember that you have worked with many different things, the positioning is still too unclear.

Positioning works when others not only understand what you can do, but also know in which contexts your contribution is relevant.

How do I choose the right career direction?

[Read this question online →](#)

Many options do not automatically create clarity

You may lack a clear career direction because you do not see any obvious opportunities. But the ambiguity can also arise because several directions seem possible. Your experience can be used in different roles, fields or work contexts, without one of them clearly standing out.

When no direction seems obvious, it can be difficult to see where to start. When several seem relevant, the question instead becomes which one deserves your time, energy and attention.

The problem is therefore not necessarily that you lack options, but that you lack a sufficiently strong basis for choosing between them.

A career direction is more than an opportunity you can imagine. It is a professional direction you are willing to prioritise and be assessed against.

The key question is not simply:

What could I do?

Instead, ask:

Overall, which direction is strong enough for me to prioritise it?

A possible direction is not necessarily a strong direction

A career direction can be interesting without having a sufficiently strong professional or realistic basis. You can see yourself in a role without the connection to your experience being clear or without having a sufficient basis for assessing the direction.

A strong direction must build credibly on your expertise and experience. It must also connect your possible contribution to a real need in the professional context you want to move into.

Interest can be a reason to investigate an opportunity more closely. What matters is whether the direction is strong enough overall for you to prioritise it and take the first steps in that direction.

The direction should also fit the way you want to work

It is natural to start with your skills. But a career direction is not just about what tasks you can solve. It is also about the way of working, the responsibility and the everyday life you want to move towards.

Two roles can be based on related skills and at the same time involve very different working lives. Depth of expertise and individual responsibility place different demands on you than coordination, stakeholder management and achieving results through others. A permanent internal role offers different conditions from advisory work or collaboration across organisations.

Therefore, you should not only ask:

Can I solve the tasks?

You should also ask:

Do I want the way of working and the responsibility that comes with it?

A direction can suit your skills and still lead to a working life you do not want. It is easy to overlook if the assessment is primarily based on title, industry or the idea of the next career step.

A new direction requires prioritisation and trade-offs

A new career direction may require you to build experience, skills, and relationships, accept a lower salary or seniority for a period of time, or take an interim step that does not look like the long-term goal. At the same time, other opportunities will receive less attention.

The point is not to find a direction at no cost, but to understand what the choice requires and whether you are willing and able to carry it out.

The advantages of a new direction are easily compared to the disadvantages of the current situation. This creates a distorted basis for the decision. A more accurate assessment considers the benefits, costs and trade-offs of the options you are considering.

An attractive direction can prove difficult to implement if the requirements only become clear after you have chosen it.

Several directions spread the effort

It may seem sensible to keep several directions open because you retain the options and avoid choosing too early. But if the directions require different experiences, relationships and actions, the efforts are easily spread out.

You can be very active without creating corresponding momentum. None of the directions receives enough attention for you to examine it properly, build a stronger foundation, and see how it stands up to real-world scrutiny.

Prioritising one direction does not mean that other options are closed permanently. It means that one direction is allowed to steer your efforts long enough for you to assess and develop it seriously.

The direction must be examined in practice

A career direction cannot be assessed through reflection alone. Before spending significant time and resources on a new direction, the most important assumptions should be examined in the context in which the direction must work.

Specific roles and requirements can show what the work actually entails. Conversations with people who know the field can clarify routes into the field and possible interim steps. Smaller tasks or responsibilities can also provide experience with parts of the work before you make a more comprehensive decision.

A direction may look coherent in your own analysis and be assessed differently by people who know the work and the professional context. The purpose is not to get others to choose for you, but to replace key assumptions with better information.

Examining the direction in practice does not remove uncertainty. It makes the basis for the decision less dependent on assumptions.

More analysis is not always a better basis for decision-making

More information can improve a decision. But at some point, further research simply adds more options and considerations without making the choice clearer.

You can continue researching new roles, industries and qualifications, or talking to more people. This can be relevant if it clarifies a significant uncertainty. But it can also postpone the time when you need to prioritise a direction.

Uncertainty cannot be eliminated through analysis alone. A well-informed decision does not require that all questions are answered, but that the most important uncertainties have been examined and that the basis is strong enough to prioritise a direction and take the next step.

What do I need to change in my career, and how extensive should the change be?

[Read this question online →](#)

The change must fit the problem you want to solve

Doubts about your career direction may arise when your work no longer functions as you need it to. The tasks may have changed, the development opportunities have become limited, or your expertise may be used in a way that you no longer find relevant. At the same time, other roles, workplaces or industries may appear more attractive.

This may point to a meaningful career change. But the problem may also lie in the specific workplace, the role, the way of working or the context in which your expertise is used.

The first question is therefore not:

What else could I do?

Instead, ask:

What needs to change in order for the problem I am experiencing to actually be solved?

Moving into a different field is the most extensive option. It is not necessarily the most precise solution.

The problem may lie in several places

When your work no longer functions as you need it to, the dissatisfaction can bring together several different problems in one experience. The problem may lie in the workplace or management, in the role and tasks, in the way of working or in the professional issues you work with.

The distinction affects what needs to change. If you remain interested in your area of expertise, but the organisation or conditions do not work, a new workplace may be sufficient. If you want to continue to use your expertise, but no longer want the same tasks or the same responsibilities, a different role may be a more precise solution.

A more comprehensive shift becomes relevant when the problem cannot be traced solely to the specific workplace, role or the way in which your expertise is applied. Before you choose a new direction, you must therefore distinguish between what you want to leave and what you can continue to build on.

The change should not be greater than the problem requires

A career change does not have to mean that you leave your professional field and start over. The change can consist of a new workplace, a different role in the same field or a new context where your existing knowledge and experience are used in a different way.

If the workplace or management is the problem, it may be sufficient to change organisation. If you want to continue to use your expertise, but are looking for other tasks, different responsibilities or a different way of working, a change of role may be the more appropriate move. A new industry or professional context

may be relevant when you want to apply what you already know to other problems or under different conditions.

A more fundamental shift will only be necessary when the central tasks and professional issues are no longer part of the direction you want. What matters is not how big a change you can imagine, but how extensive it needs to be to solve the problem you actually have.

You can use your expertise in new ways

Your current role shows only one way to use your expertise and experience. The same professional foundation may have a different meaning if you work with new tasks, are given different responsibilities or move into a different organisation or industry.

If your current function no longer works, it does not necessarily mean that you should put your previous experience behind you. The problem may lie in the way the experience is used, or in the framework and tasks it is linked to.

A meaningful career change can involve using what you already know to address other problems or applying it in a new professional context. You do not have to start from scratch for the transition to lead to a significantly different working life.

A major career change must build on an existing foundation

The bigger the change, the more important it becomes to understand what you take with you. Your previous experience can be valuable in a new direction if it has given you professional insight, judgement or experience of problems and responsibilities that are also relevant in the new context.

It is not enough to describe a skill as transferable. It must be applicable to something that matters in the new role or work context.

The greater the distance between your current experience and the new direction, the more you will usually need to develop through learning, practical experience and contact with the new area. A new direction must therefore both build on something that still has value and relate realistically to what is still missing.

A major shift can be implemented gradually

A new direction does not have to be reached through one direct shift. If the distance to the desired role or context is great, an interim step can give you the experience, insight or access you still lack.

It can be a role where parts of your previous experience are still relevant, while at the same time you work with new tasks, get different responsibilities or become part of the professional environment you want to move into.

An interim step should not only bring you closer to a long-term goal. It should also provide a better basis for assessing whether the direction is working in practice. A gradual transition can therefore both strengthen your foundation and make it possible to adjust the direction before it requires more time and resources.

Both choices have consequences

A major change is often portrayed as the active or courageous choice, while staying can look like caution or stagnation. But the quality of the decision does not depend on the extent of the change.

A change may require you to give up security, seniority or professional position and spend time building experience and relationships in a new context. At the same time, it can come at a price if you continue in a role or direction that does not use your most important skills or lead towards the working life you want.

The assessment must therefore include the consequences of both choices. Staying is not necessarily passive, and changing is not necessarily courageous. What matters is which choice most precisely solves the problem and how extensive a change it actually requires.

Examine how extensive the change needs to be

Before you choose a comprehensive change, you can investigate whether the problem also exists in other roles, workplaces or contexts where your expertise is used differently.

If other frameworks, tasks or forms of responsibility change what you want to leave, the problem does not necessarily lie in your entire professional direction. If the same basic dissatisfaction is repeated across relevant alternatives, it speaks more strongly for a more comprehensive change.

The purpose is not to avoid a major shift. It is to ensure that the change targets the problem you are actually trying to solve.

How do I know if I am ready to become a leader?

[Read this question online →](#)

Leadership is not just the next career move

For many professionals and specialists, leadership may appear to be a natural next step. You may have been given more responsibility, experienced greater influence or been told that others see you as a potential leader. A higher salary and new development opportunities can also make the leadership path attractive.

However, several of these opportunities are also available in roles involving project or programme responsibility, consultancy, greater strategic responsibility or a more specialised role. It is possible to want a new career move without wanting the work of management.

The key question is not simply:

Can I secure a leadership role?

Instead, ask:

Do I want the work, the responsibility and the way of achieving results that the leadership role involves?

Being able to secure a leadership role is not the same as being ready for the responsibility it involves.

Leadership roles involve different forms of responsibility

Leadership covers different forms of work. Some roles involve clear people-management responsibility, while others focus primarily on professional or technical direction, projects, resources or cross-functional collaboration. In some roles, your own deliverables remain a major part of the work. In others, results are achieved primarily through priorities, decisions and the work of other people.

These differences affect both the working day and the responsibility involved. A technical or professional lead may remain closely involved in methods, quality and complex professional judgements. A people manager will typically spend more time on employee development, staffing, follow-up and collaboration issues.

Before assessing whether you are ready for leadership, you therefore need to understand the form of responsibility you are actually considering. Otherwise, you risk choosing a title rather than the work itself.

Leadership changes how you create value

In a role where you are primarily responsible for your own deliverables, you often create value through your knowledge, judgement and the work you perform yourself. In a leadership role, the emphasis shifts. Your experience may continue to be important, but the results depend to a greater extent on the direction, the priorities and the conditions you create for other people's work.

You will be responsible for results that you cannot fully produce or control yourself. This may require you to balance competing needs, allocate responsibilities and resources, follow up on deliverables, and make decisions that will not necessarily be popular.

As a leader, you cannot measure your value solely by what you produce. Leadership can provide greater organisational influence, but also less time for focused specialist work and the concrete deliverables that have so far been central to your work.

You must be able to take responsibility without taking over

In a leadership role, you are responsible for direction, quality and progress, even when you do not perform the tasks yourself. If a prioritisation turns out to be wrong, quality fails, or cooperation does not work, you must be able to react and follow up.

But you cannot solve every difficult situation by taking over the work yourself. You must be able to uphold the standards and at the same time give others responsibility for how the task is solved.

Leadership readiness therefore requires you to carry overall responsibility without continuing to be the primary problem solver.

Experience can precede the title

In projects, cross-disciplinary efforts or informal roles, you may already have carried some of the responsibilities that a leadership role requires. You may have set direction, prioritised between different considerations, coordinated the work of others or followed up on a result that depended on several people.

What matters is not what the task was called, but what responsibility you actually carried. What outcome were you responsible for achieving, what decisions did you make, how did you create progress through others, and what did you do when quality, priorities or collaboration did not work?

Experience does not automatically prepare you for leadership. But it provides a concrete basis for assessing how you operate when the result does not depend solely on your own efforts.

Your foundation must fit the specific leadership role

Experience with projects, coordination or informal responsibility may be relevant without being sufficient for every leadership role. For example, a role with people-management responsibility may require experience with employee development, difficult conversations and follow-up on the results of others, while a specialist leadership role may place greater demands on prioritisation, quality and direction within a specific area.

You must therefore assess what responsibilities your experience actually prepares you for. It is not just about what you have participated in, but about what decisions you made, what responsibility you carried, and how your contribution affected the work of others and the overall result.

When you apply for a leadership position, this connection must be clear. Extensive experience and strong personal results are not sufficient if it is not clear how you have set direction, prioritised or generated progress through others. If the specific role requires experience you do not yet have, a more limited level of responsibility may be the relevant next step.

How do I identify the value I actually create?

[Read this question online →](#)

Professional value is more than what you do

You can describe your tasks, responsibilities, skills and capabilities accurately without necessarily making the value of your work clear. Tasks show what you do, while skills and capabilities show what you are able to do. Neither, on its own, explains the difference your work makes to others.

Professional value lies in what the work makes possible. It can be a better decision, a problem that becomes easier to handle, a risk that is reduced, or a change that can actually be implemented.

The key question is not simply:

What do I do?

Instead, ask:

What will be different because I do the work?

If you cannot answer that question clearly, it becomes difficult both to assess your own relevance and to make it understandable to others.

Value lies in the difference the work makes

Work does not create professional value simply because it is thorough, demanding or performed with high quality. The value arises when the work changes something that is important to an organisation, a customer, a manager, a colleague or a user.

An analysis can reduce uncertainty and improve a decision. A changed process can reduce errors or make quality more stable. Advisory work can make a complex situation understandable and give the recipient a better basis for action.

The impact does not always have to be great or immediately visible. But you must be able to explain what your work changed, who the change affected and why it was relevant. It is this connection that turns work into professional value.

Track the impact of your work

To understand the value of a specific experience, it is not enough to state what the result was. You must be able to see the connection between the problem that had to be handled, the responsibility you took and what was different as a result of the work.

A change may have occurred after your work without being created solely by it. Therefore, examine which part of the change your responsibilities, assessments or actions actually contributed to.

The connection does not have to be simple or solely due to your efforts. But it does need to be clear enough that you can explain how your work contributed to the change you attribute value to.

Results do not always have to be numbers

Figures can be accurate documentation when the work has led to higher turnover, lower costs, shorter lead times or other measurable changes. But not all professional value can or should be described financially.

Your work may have improved a basis for decision-making, made a complex situation understandable, stabilised a process or reduced a risk. The value may also lie in what did not happen: An error was avoided, a conflict did not escalate, or the project did not lose direction.

When the impact cannot be measured precisely, it must be described concretely. It is not enough to write that you made a difference or created value. You must be able to explain which situation changed and why the change was significant.

Define your own contribution precisely

Results are rarely created by one person alone. They often depend on the work of several people, previous decisions and circumstances you have not had control over. This makes it necessary to distinguish between the overall result and your specific contribution to it.

You may have developed the foundation that made a better decision possible, created the structure that kept an effort on track, or identified a risk that was subsequently managed. In other situations, your contribution may have been to prioritise, coordinate or create a framework for others to deliver.

You must therefore be able to explain what responsibilities you had, what you specifically did, and how your contribution affected the overall result. Credibility does not require that you reduce your contribution. It requires that you define it precisely. The more importance you attach to your contribution, the clearer you must be able to show what the assessment is based on.

Look for the pattern in your contributions

A single success may be shaped by particular circumstances. When similar contributions are repeated across different tasks and situations, they provide a stronger basis for understanding what value you can create again.

Therefore, look for what repeats itself. Do you often get involved when a complex problem needs to be structured, a decision needs a stronger basis, or an effort has lost direction? Is your recurring contribution to provide clarity, connect different interests, or turn something complex into something others can use?

What others repeatedly use you for can make your professional value clearer. But the pattern should not automatically determine your future direction. It must be assessed in relation to whether the contribution is still relevant, can be documented and is something you want to build on.

The same experience does not have the same value everywhere

A contribution may be central in one role and less important in another. The value depends on what problems need to be solved, what results are expected and who the work should have an impact on.

The ability to create a precise basis for decision-making can be crucial in an analytical role. In an advisory context, it can be just as important to connect the analysis to the recipient's situation and the action to follow. In a leadership role, the value may lie to a greater extent in creating direction and results through others.

Your professional value therefore cannot be assessed independently of the direction you are considering. What matters is not only what you have previously contributed, but whether the contribution solves a problem that is important in the new context.

Which skills and capabilities can I realistically transfer to a new role?

[Read this question online →](#)

Transferable skills and capabilities are not automatically relevant

When you consider a new role or a career change, you do not necessarily start from scratch. Your previous experience may contain knowledge, ways of working, skills and capabilities that also have value in another professional context.

But a skill or capability does not become relevant in a new role just because it can be described in the same words. Analysis, communication, project management, advisory work and collaboration are part of many different types of work. At the same time, the tasks, responsibilities and requirements for experience can be very different.

Transferability cannot therefore be assessed from the labels alone. It depends on the underlying experience and the work in which the skills will be used.

The same skill can describe very different types of work

Two people may both have analytical experience without having performed the same kinds of work. One may have analysed financial data in a defined process. The other may have investigated unclear organisational problems where the information was inadequate and different interests had to be addressed.

The difference lies in the problems they have worked on, the responsibilities they have had and what their work has made possible.

When you assess whether the experience can be used in a new role, you must therefore look at what you have specifically used the skill for and whether that use is significant in the new context.

The need in the new role comes before your list of skills

When you are considering a new role, it may seem natural to start with what you already know. But your experience only becomes relevant when it can be linked to the problems, responsibilities and results that characterise the work in the new context.

You must therefore investigate what the role actually requires. What problems need to be solved? What is difficult about the work? What results are expected?

Once you understand what the job requires, you can assess which parts of your experience actually support the role and which are less important.

Others should be able to see the connection

You may have experience that is relevant to a new role, but it is not clear to the person who is to assess you. If you come from a different industry, organisation or way of working, there may be doubts as to whether your experience can be used in the new context.

You must therefore make the connection between your previous work and the new role understandable. This requires you to show what related problems you have already dealt with, how complex the work was, what responsibilities you had, what assessments you made and what the work made possible.

At the same time, you must be precise about what does not come automatically. Something may require adaptation, new knowledge or experience from the specific context. The greater the difference between your previous work and the new role, the clearer it should be what you can already use and what you still lack.

Some aspects of your experience transfer more easily than others

Some of what you have learned through your work can be used in several professional contexts. Other experience depends more closely on the field, industry or organisation you know.

Methods and ways of working, such as analysis, advisory work or project management, can often be used in a new role. However, their value still depends on whether you have the subject-matter knowledge and understanding of the context that the work requires. You may therefore have experience with methods and tasks that are also part of the new role, and at the same time lack industry knowledge, technical insight or experience with the decisions and interests that characterise the work.

You must therefore distinguish between what you can use relatively directly and what requires new knowledge or practical experience. This makes it possible to assess the distance to the new role more accurately without underestimating what you can already use.

The combination of your experience can create distinctive value

Your relevance in a new role does not have to be traced to one particular skill. It can lie in the way several parts of your experience work together.

Depth of expertise can, for example, become more important when it is combined with the ability to make complex knowledge understandable and useful to others. The combination can enable you to understand a problem, assess its importance and contribute to action being taken on it.

If you simply list the individual skills and capabilities, this value becomes difficult to see. You must therefore be able to explain what the combination of your experience enables you to do, what problems it can be used to solve, and what difference your contribution can make in the new role.

Transferability must be examined in practice

Your own analysis can show a possible connection between your experience and a new role. But it cannot determine on its own how the experience is assessed in the context in which it is to be used.

Specific positions and conversations with people who know the work can make it clearer which parts of your experience are important in the work and what raises doubts. A smaller assignment can also show how your expertise works in practice and what you still lack.

A single assessment does not provide a definitive answer. However, if the same doubts recur across relevant conversations and trials, you should investigate whether the connection needs to be explained more clearly, better documented, or strengthened through more direct experience.

How does AI affect my job and career opportunities?

[Read this question online →](#)

AI is not just changing technology. It is changing the value of work

The debate about AI and the labour market is often about whether AI will take over entire job functions. But a job consists of different tasks that are not necessarily affected in the same way.

AI can change how certain tasks are completed, how much time they require, and what organisations expect from the work. Some contributions may become less important, while others may become more important or need to be used in a different way.

It is not possible to predict exactly how AI will affect entire professions or the demand for particular kinds of work. But you can investigate how it changes the tasks and the expertise on which your own work is based.

The key question is therefore not only whether AI can do parts of your work. It is how technology changes the value of what you have contributed so far, and where your professional value may lie in the future.

The job title is not enough to assess the impact

A job title can cover very different tasks and types of responsibilities. Two people with the same title can therefore be affected differently by AI, depending on what their work actually consists of and how it is organised.

For example, one specialist may spend most of their time collecting and structuring information, while another with the same title primarily assesses complex issues and advises on decisions. AI can have an impact on both, but not necessarily on the same parts of the work or in the same way.

Therefore, you cannot assess the impact based on the job title alone. The assessment must begin with the specific tasks, the responsibilities you have, and the function your work has in the overall work process.

What will be easier, faster or more accessible?

AI can make certain tasks easier or faster to perform without them disappearing. A first draft, summary or initial analysis may still be necessary, but may require less time or be prepared by more people.

This can change what the organisation expects from the work. When the production itself becomes easier, the requirements for scope, quality and speed can increase. At the same time, the professional value of the work can shift from producing the first result to assessing, adapting and applying it.

The impact depends on the specific task. Work that follows recognisable patterns and leads to relatively standardised results may change differently from work that requires an understanding of the specific context, weighing up different considerations, professional judgement of the result and responsibility for how it is used.

The decisive factor is therefore not only whether the task still exists. You must investigate how AI changes the way the task is solved, what is expected of your contribution, and what expertise the work still requires.

How does professional value shift?

When AI makes parts of the work easier, the importance of your contribution may change. What previously required a large part of your time and expertise is not necessarily what the organisation will place the greatest emphasis on in the future.

The value may lie to a greater extent in determining whether the result is relevant, what assumptions it is based on, and what consequences it may have. It can also lie in connecting the result to the specific situation and ensuring that it can be used as a basis for a decision or action.

AI can also support these parts of the work. Therefore, you cannot assume that certain tasks, skills or capabilities retain their importance just because they require professional judgement or understanding of the context.

Instead, you must examine where your expertise and experience continue to make a relevant difference in the overall work process, and how your contribution should develop when technology changes both production and expectations for the result.

AI skills are not in themselves a career strategy

The ability to use AI can become a necessary part of many types of work. But the importance depends on what tasks the technology is used for and whether it makes you better able to solve problems that are important in your field of expertise.

Tools are changing, and functions that today require special skills may later become a regular part of the work process. Mastering a particular tool is therefore not in itself a professional contribution or an independent career direction. What matters is what technology enables you to understand, improve or implement.

For many, the relevant development will be to connect AI with the expertise they already have. A lawyer, communication specialist or manager does not necessarily have to become a technology specialist, but must be able to assess how AI changes work and how the technology can be used in a relevant way within their existing field.

A major shift towards AI as a new professional field may be relevant, but it requires an independent professional and strategic justification. The visibility and rapid development of technology is not in itself a sufficient basis for changing career direction.

Human capabilities are not automatically valuable

Creativity, relationships and professional judgement are often highlighted as human capabilities that become more important when AI can solve more tasks. But a capability does not become professionally valuable simply because it is difficult to automate.

Value continues to depend on what the capability makes possible. Creativity matters when it leads to relevant solutions. Understanding people and interests can improve collaboration or make change possible. Professional judgement creates value when it improves a decision, makes consequences clear or reduces the risk of error.

At the same time, AI can support parts of this work and change how these capabilities are used. Therefore, you should not present human capabilities merely as an alternative to technology, but explore how your expertise together with AI can solve relevant problems and create professional value.

AI also creates new problems and new responsibilities

When AI becomes part of the work, new questions arise about quality, professional standards, use and responsibility. Organisations must decide which results can be used, how workflows should change and who is accountable for decisions and consequences.

This can change the combination of expertise, an understanding of technology and organisational insight that is needed. You do not necessarily need to develop the technology to create value. Instead, your contribution can be to understand the problems and the context in which the technology is to be used.

These emerging needs do not automatically translate into career opportunities. You must investigate whether your existing expertise can be used to assess quality, adapt the application or deal with the consequences and forms of responsibility that arise when AI becomes part of the work.

Should you develop your work or change direction?

AI does not require everyone to make the same changes. For some, it will be sufficient to apply the technology to the existing tasks and adapt how you work to new requirements. For others, it may be necessary to change which tasks dominate or take responsibility for other parts of the work process.

A major change in your professional direction only becomes relevant if significant parts of your previous contribution lose importance and you do not see a credible way to develop your expertise within or near your current field of expertise. Conversely, individual courses or new tools are not necessarily sufficient if the need for what you have contributed so far changes fundamentally.

What matters is choosing a change that reflects the actual impact of AI on your work. You need to assess whether you primarily need to change your working method, develop your professional contribution, take on different responsibilities, or explore a new direction.

You do not need to be able to predict the entire development. But you need to understand it precisely enough to choose how your expertise can continue to create relevant professional value.

How do I assess whether a career opportunity is realistic?

[Read this question online →](#)

An interesting opportunity is not automatically realistic

A career opportunity can be both attractive and professionally relevant without being realistic on the terms you imagine.

Realism depends on whether there is a credible path from your current starting point to the opportunity. What you still lack must be manageable within a reasonable timeframe, and the path must be workable within the time, finances and capacity you actually have.

An opportunity can therefore be realistic as a long-term goal without being realistic as your next step. What matters is whether you can see a feasible path forward and begin with a step that brings you closer to the goal.

Realism is not the same as thinking small

Realism does not mean that you have to choose the safe, the familiar or the least ambitious.

A substantial career move can be realistic if the demands and distance to the goal can be managed. Conversely, an opportunity that seems obvious at first glance may be unrealistic if it requires more experience, better access to the relevant professional environment, or more resources than you initially expected.

Realism is therefore not an argument for lowering your ambition. It is a requirement to understand what the ambition requires.

Possible, relevant and realistic are three different assessments

The fact that an opportunity exists, or that others have made a similar shift, shows that it is possible. It does not tell you whether it is relevant or realistic for you.

Relevance depends on whether your expertise and experience can be used to solve problems and create value in the new context. Realism also depends on your starting point, the actual requirements and the conditions under which the transition is to be carried out.

An opportunity can therefore be possible without being relevant and relevant without being realistic now. Before you prioritise it, you need to understand its professional relevance, the path to it, and what it will require of you.

A realistic match depends on what matters most in the role

A realistic match does not require you to meet all the requirements for a role or opportunity. Some requirements are essential to the work, while others are desirable or can be learned along the way.

The key is whether your expertise and experience provide a credible basis for solving the most important problems, taking the necessary responsibility and creating the expected results. You may therefore lack some skills or capabilities and still have a relevant overall match. Conversely, you can meet many formal requirements without having the experience that matters most for the role.

Your own assessment is not sufficient. The person considering you for the opportunity will also assess your experience in relation to other candidates, possible solutions and the uncertainty that comes with the choice. The greater the distance to your previous work, the clearer it should be what you are building on and why it provides a sufficient basis for choosing you.

The gaps must be manageable

You may have a relevant professional starting point without yet being ready to take the desired step. The opportunity may require a particular qualification, authorisation, language skills, industry knowledge or experience of a particular type of responsibility that you cannot yet document.

Different gaps need to be addressed in different ways. New knowledge may come through targeted learning, while practical experience may require a project, a more limited level of responsibility or a related role. Formal requirements must be met, while limited knowledge of or contact with the field may require you to build relationships in the relevant professional environment.

Realism depends on whether the crucial differences can be handled within a reasonable timeframe and on terms that can work for you. The point is not to make the distance look smaller, but to understand what is actually missing and what is actually needed to bring you closer to the opportunity.

The opportunity must work within your actual circumstances

A career opportunity can be professionally realistic and still be difficult to pursue within your current circumstances. It may require lower income for a period of time, a longer commute, greater flexibility or time and energy to gain the experience and relationships you need.

The opportunity can also affect other parts of your life. An international position can have an impact on a partner's career and the family's everyday life. A leadership role can provide greater responsibility while reducing flexibility. Self-employment can offer freedom, but also greater financial insecurity.

Therefore, you must not only assess whether you can make the transition, but also what it requires and what you must deprioritise along the way. If the plan requires time, finances or capacity that you do not have available, it is not realistic within your current circumstances. This does not necessarily mean that the goal must be abandoned, but the path or timeframe may be different.

The next step does not have to be the goal

If the distance between your current starting point and the desired opportunity is still too great, you do not necessarily need to change the goal. You need to find the next step that narrows the crucial distance.

It can be a related role, a more limited level of responsibility, a relevant project or experience from the context you want to move into. The step should give you the experience, documentation, access or insight that makes the goal more realistic or gives you a better basis for assessing it.

A short-term choice can also solve a current need for income or stability without being your long-term goal. What matters is whether the step works within your current circumstances and maintains or strengthens the path towards the desired direction.

What looks like a sideways move can therefore be strategically relevant. Conversely, an attractive opportunity can be a detour if it neither brings you closer to the goal nor gives you better information about whether it is still worth pursuing.

Realism must be examined in practice

Your own analysis can show that an option seems realistic. But it cannot alone determine whether your assumptions about the work, the requirements and the opportunities to enter the field hold.

Specific roles, conversations with people who know the area, and smaller tasks can provide a better basis for the assessment. They can show which requirements are actually decisive, how your experience is assessed, and whether you have underestimated the distance to the opportunity.

A single reaction rarely tells enough. If the same pattern is repeated across relevant conversations and trials, it should affect your assessment. It can confirm that the foundation is strong enough for you to take the next step, or show that you need to strengthen your foundation first, choose an interim step, or adjust the goal itself.

How do I explain a career change credibly?

[Read this question online →](#)

A career change requires more than an explanation of why you are changing direction

A career change may be desired or necessary. You may seek different responsibilities and development opportunities, but the change may also be necessary because your position is ending, or because changes in the labour market are reducing the need for your previous work.

The reason explains what prompted the change. It does not in itself explain the career move. An employer, manager, customer or business partner must also be able to understand the direction you are pursuing, what you are building on and what value you can create.

The key question is not simply:

Why do I have to or want to change?

Instead, ask:

Why does it make sense to use my experience in the role or context I am looking for?

A career change becomes credible when others can understand the connection between your previous experience, the new direction and what you can contribute.

Explain the shift, not your whole story

When explaining a career change, it can be tempting to tell the whole process: what no longer worked, what you considered, and how you arrived at the decision.

The story can be true and still be too extensive. The recipient rarely needs to know all your considerations. The information you choose should make the shift and your relevance understandable.

You should not omit circumstances that are important to understanding the change. But they should only be given space if they help the recipient understand your direction and what you can contribute.

You do not have to explain your entire career. You have to explain the part of it that makes the next step credible.

Do not diminish the value of your previous experience

When explaining a career change, it can be tempting to distance yourself from the previous job. You might highlight the limitations or what no longer worked to make the new direction more understandable.

But if you make your previous experience less valuable, it will also be more difficult to explain what you will bring with you into the new role. Your previous career does not have to have been wrong for a new direction to be right.

You may have developed expertise, experience and judgement in a context in which you no longer want or have the opportunity to continue. The explanation must therefore show which parts of your experience are still important and how they can be used in the direction you are looking for.

Motivation does not, in itself, make the change credible

Motivation matters. It can explain why you are looking for a new direction and what you are willing to do to make the change.

But interest, commitment and a desire for new challenges do not in themselves document your relevance. Claims about passion, ambition or being a quick learner cannot compensate for a professional basis that is still unclear. The person making the decision needs to understand why your experience makes sense in the new role and what you can contribute.

A necessary career change does not have to be presented as a long-held ambition either. You should not invent a motivation that was never there. You must be able to explain why the new direction makes professional sense now.

Motivation explains why you are seeking the change. Your experience and actions make it credible.

A credible shift shows both continuity and change

A career change can involve a new industry, function or way of working without requiring you to start entirely from scratch. The most convincing part of the explanation is often the connection between what you already have experience with and what you are looking for.

You can continue to work with related problems, use the same professional judgement or create value in a new way. At the same time, the differences must be clear. Some of your previous experience can be used directly, some of it requires adaptation, and some aspects will be genuinely new.

The explanation must therefore show both what continues and what changes. If you lack industry knowledge, direct experience or responsibility at the desired level, it should not be hidden. It must be clear what you can already contribute and what you still need to learn or experience.

Your actions must support the explanation

A credible explanation requires a real basis. It is not enough to describe why the new direction makes sense if nothing in your experience or actions supports the connection.

A project, a more limited level of responsibility or practical experience from the new context can give you insight and documentation that makes the shift easier to understand. The actions do not have to show that you can already fill the entire role. But they must reduce the gap between what you say you can contribute and what you actually have experience with.

The explanation becomes stronger when you can show what you have already done to examine the direction and strengthen your foundation for the next step.

The same argument can be emphasised differently

Different recipients need to understand different parts of your career change. An employer will typically assess whether your experience is relevant to the work and what the transition will continue to require. A client will primarily need to understand what problem you can solve and what value your contribution can create.

Therefore, the explanation should not be changed so that it points in different directions. You do not change the basic argument. You highlight the part of it that is most important in the specific context.

The short explanation must hold up in the fuller version

You should be able to explain your career change briefly. Not because your entire professional career can be reduced to a few sentences, but because the central connection must be clear.

The brief explanation should show what you are building on, the direction you are pursuing, and what you can contribute there. If something is still new, it should also be stated without taking up more space than necessary.

The longer version can elaborate on the experience, your actions and the basis that makes the change credible. But if the connection only becomes understandable through a long explanation, the most important part of the explanation is not yet clear enough.

A brief explanation should not contain the whole story. It should make the most important thing in the transition understandable.

How do I use my network strategically in my career?

[Read this question online →](#)

Your network is part of your professional foundation

The importance of your network often becomes clearest when you are facing a job change, looking for clients or need new opportunities. But professional relationships are important throughout your career, not just when you urgently need something.

Through ongoing contact, you can gain insight into other people's experiences, fields and organisations. It can broaden your understanding of your own work, make developments clearer and give you perspectives you will not find in your immediate professional environment.

A strategic network is therefore not just about who can help you in a particular situation. It consists of professional relationships that over time can provide better information, challenge your understanding and make it easier to identify relevant opportunities.

Your network can challenge your assumptions

Your assessment of a new role, industry or opportunity is naturally based on the work contexts you are already familiar with. This can make it difficult to see which problems matter in practice, which requirements are most important and how the work is carried out in practice.

People with practical experience in the field can give you a different perspective. Their experience can make it clearer what you have understood correctly, which assumptions need a stronger basis, and where your own experience can be important.

Conversations with people who know the field should therefore not only confirm your existing assumptions. They should also be able to change your understanding and influence what you subsequently choose to investigate or do.

Your network is not responsible for your career

Your network can strengthen your understanding, but it cannot take over responsibility for your direction and your next step.

A broad request for general advice gives the person you contact a difficult task. The person must first understand your background, narrow down your options and find out what you really need before the request can be answered in a useful way.

The clearer the purpose of the enquiry, the easier it will be for others to provide relevant help. It must be understandable why you are contacting this particular person, what you want a perspective on, and what kind of help you are looking for.

The network can share experiences, challenge your assessment and point out matters you should investigate further. A precise and focused enquiry makes it easier for the other person to understand how they can help you move forward.

Make your contribution clear, not just your need

A precise enquiry is not sufficient if it is still unclear what you can contribute. The contact may understand that you are looking for a job, new clients, a collaboration or insight into a new direction without being able to see where your experience is relevant.

Your professional profile does not, in itself, make it clear where your contribution is needed. Others need to be able to understand what problems you can help solve, what responsibilities you can take and what difference your contribution can make.

When your contribution is clear, it becomes easier for others to recognise the people, organisations and professional contexts where your experience can create value. This makes it easier for them to share relevant knowledge, point out a connection or help you move forward.

A professional purpose is not manipulation

You may contact someone because you are seeking information, a perspective or specific help. This does not make the approach manipulative when you are open about why you are making contact.

What matters is that the purpose is clear, the request reasonable, and the other person is free to say no. The problem arises when the real purpose is concealed, or the contact is based on an unspoken expectation of a favour in return.

A professional relationship can create value for both parties without becoming a transaction or a ledger of favours. The value does not have to arise at the same time or consist of a direct favour in return.

The other person's time should not be taken for granted

Professional contact does not always have to have a specific result as a goal. A professional conversation can have value because it strengthens the relationship, provides new perspectives or creates a better understanding of the other person's work.

On the other hand, when you contact someone with a specific question or request for help, the scope of the contact should be proportionate to what you are asking for. A precise question can often be addressed in a short message or email, while a longer meeting makes sense when the topic requires a broader conversation.

A coffee meeting does not necessarily create more value because it lasts longer. Respect for the other also means that you do not ask for more time than the purpose requires.

The more you ask for, the clearer the basis should be

There is a difference between asking for a perspective and asking for an introduction, recommendation, or referral. When someone introduces or recommends you to others, they are also putting their own professional credibility at stake.

The more you ask of the other person, the clearer it should be the direction you are pursuing, what you can contribute, and why the connection is relevant.

The value of a response depends on how you use it

General questions often produce friendly but general answers. More precise questions make it easier for the other person to point out what raises doubts or lacks a stronger basis.

Any individual assessment reflects that person's own experience and perspective and should therefore not determine your direction. If the same doubt is repeated across relevant conversations, it is not a final verdict either, but a signal that a central assumption should be examined further.

A networking conversation does not create momentum in itself. It becomes strategically important when what you learn affects what you subsequently investigate, decide or do.

Take the Questions Further

The 12 questions are designed to strengthen assessments and decisions about career direction and professional development.

You can return to them when your situation changes, or use them as a starting point for a conversation with people who can challenge your understanding and offer different perspectives.

The 12 Questions Online

Read each question on the CareerStrategy website.

[Explore the 12 Key Questions →](#)



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