

Reflecting and moving forward – corporate career lessons

“If given the power to time travel I would certainly wish to have done things differently”, is a thought most people would have had, at least once in their lives. As a corporate executive for more than two decades, I have had many such moments. When your first job happens to be at one of the best workplaces, you tend to get into the comfort zone too quickly. We were also in that era where job switching at such a rapid pace was not a common thing and loyalty to an organisation was an aspect of merit vis-à-vis the scenario today where ‘change’ is the buzzword. Whilst I am not against changing jobs, I strongly advocate evaluating job opportunities based on skill development as a more pragmatic approach.

Reflecting on my career, here are some key learnings that I wish to share with anyone who is in the advent of building their corporate career.

1. Do not get attached to your organisation and be open to change.

- Choosing a new department/unit shift and exploring different functions can help deepen knowledge. Getting attached to peers and line managers can blindside you to new opportunities and exposures.
- opting for job shifts across cities, if the organisation is spread across geographies, can provide cultural experiences that can make one more adaptable to different situations.
- setting eyes on lateral growth opportunities, besides upward growth, will enhance knowledge and boost confidence.

2. Networking can be a true catalyst in one’s career.

- Stepping outside the zone of internal units, connecting with stakeholders for a coffee break, walk-the-talk sessions, and reaching out to leaders across the organisation to gather insights into different domains will certainly help navigate the workplace at a faster and a meaningful pace.
- Nurturing professional relationships can be a big saviour when you need support. One should build, and maintain work relationships and allow them to evolve organically. This will help one shine in their current role enabling them to have an edge over others.

3. Having a vision is necessary for growth.

I am inspired by cricket legend Virat Kohli’s wise thoughts on why having a vision is important. One should have a vision of where they want to see themselves as it inspires them to outshine in their career aspirations. According to Kohli, the ones who have vision will get financial increments whilst those without vision will be rewarded with workload increments. This is such a profound truth, and I can vouch for it myself.

4. Regular and conscious up-skilling is important.

Getting a good and satisfying job is just the beginning. In due course, one should not forget to learn and stay updated. Getting further professional qualifications, completing short-term certificate courses, and acquiring skills aligned with the latest market trends is an extremely wise thing to do. One’s resume should be refreshed regularly and as long as one wants to build a fruitful career.

Lastly, drawing a fine **work-life balance** is key to performing well at work. Finding time for family and friends, and nurturing areas of interest outside work will help one stay rejuvenated.

Although these are some of the lessons I have learnt in my two-decade-old corporate journey, one should introspect on what could have been better, and at the same time not delve into too much regret.

Learning from mistakes and looking forward with optimism is the right thing to do, both at a personal level and in your professional life. Life is a journey to cherish and not merely a destination to reach hastily!!