



THE 5Cs TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITION AMID DISRUPTION

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Disruption is the new normal. Many companies are threatened by the digitalisation of the economy, the onset of the 4th industrial revolution. And if companies are threatened by disruption, it is but a short step to career disruption and at worse, morale-sapping long-term unemployment.

These developments have put a premium on the skill of career agility or transition. It should be clear that we are not talking about changing jobs. That is an almost universal and normal condition. Most people do not stay in the same job. However, when they change jobs, either up, down or out (to another organisation or to retirement), it is not that common, while doing so, to change careers, from being an accountant to a comedian (to take the famous example of Bob Newhart – millennials can catch him on YouTube) or carpenter to actor (Harrison Ford).

Changing career is already a mind-bending and more challenging concept in the best of times. In this age of disruption, career transitions become even more challenging. Therefore, professionals must take responsibility in planning for their career transitions.

How to go about a career transition?

The first step is a mindset shift that allows for a change in scope. This shift entails strengthening the attributes encapsulated in the 5 Cs for success in career transitions: Competence, Confidence, Communication, Compass, and Commitment.

Complacency, which is another C, is not an option, unfortunately. Think back to just five years ago, where not many could predict how dependent we would become on our smart mobile phones. From a device that basically replaced the use of the landline telephone (remember them?), mobile phones are now used for integral daily needs – with a myriad of apps that allow you to access services such as ordering food and rides, doing shopping, house cleaning, house moving, banking and many more.

Such online services are just one aspect of the digital economy that has affected traditional businesses. Such businesses are forced to adjust or face the threat of bankruptcy. Cases in point are the closing down of retail stores owned by such famous names as Macy's, J.C. Penney, Sears and Kmart in the United States. Overall more than 5,000 stores were closed in 2017, and more than 2,000 store closures in the US have already been announced in the first few months of 2018.

If you think that Indonesia is immune to such global trends, think again. The largest department store chain, Matahari Department Store, owned by the Lippo conglomerate group, has closed their shops in several areas. It is not only the retail sectors that are affected by the new digital economy; local taxi companies, for example, have also come under well-publicised attacks from their international online rivals, Uber and Grab. Even giant state companies are forced to be agile; Telkom, the longest telephone monopoly, is in the process of transforming itself into a digital company.

With the downturn in natural resource commodity prices, major companies in the natural resources sector, such as oil companies and mining companies, have taken up large career transition programs. A

number of large private banks have also done the same as part of their corporate restructuring.

To overcome such disruptions, the key is to have:

COMPETENCE Strengthen your core **Competence** or set of skills that make others seek you out for advice on your particular expertise. This requires investment in time and effort to keep your competence up-to-date and relevant. It also includes the self-awareness to develop competence through identifying your strengths and weaknesses.

CONFIDENCE Have the **Confidence** to espouse your ideas openly and push them further for effective implementation. Your confidence gives you the courage to get out of your comfort zone, to take risks, and to persevere until you succeed. This includes the confidence in your ability to make the challenging career decisions in your life.

COMMUNICATION Enhance your **Communication** skills. Without good communication skills, your ideas will languish and not attract the necessary attention to bring them to fruition. Indeed, the skill to communicate is considered one of the most important career skills to possess. How else can you articulate your career aspirations and make them clear to the people able to help you achieve them?

COMPASS Allow your **Compass** to take control of your career decisions and not leave them up to others or to chance. Choose your career goals and think strategically to achieve them. This means knowing where you are going and having a plan to reach it. That plan will give you the sense of direction to stay on the right track to achieve your career goals.

COMMITMENT Have the **Commitment** to manage your career and the willingness to make the changes required. Your commitment allows you to weather and push through the inevitable difficult periods. Your dedication to your career and the willingness to sacrifice time to it can only enhance your chances to achieve success.