



## CHOICES, CHOICES

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If you're anything like me, then from time to time you'll have wondered if the career path you've chosen is the right choice. At best it can be a nagging doubt at the back of your mind and at worst it can be total dissatisfaction with your work life.

Usually getting help is a case of speaking to friends & family to share your problems and ask advice. For many years I've had a close friend advise me on job choices and to help prepare for interviews, but not everyone has access to trustworthy advice and even if you do, some professional help can only be beneficial.

That's where a career specialist can be useful, so to find out what's on offer, Works for me decided to track down an expert in the field and after some digging we unearthed Slessers Maclean, a consultancy specialising in career coaching & confidence building. I met up with Carol Slessers who has been in the business of helping candidates at all levels for thirteen years.

Carol's years spent in professional coaching have enabled her to develop a unique insight into the job market and how to make it work for you."Each industry sector and occupation tends to require a specific combination of characteristics and skills. People who have successful careers, spent time identifying their unique selling points, where necessary have gone on courses to improve their skills and whenever possible spoken to people already in their chosen industry sector to discuss their suitability."

Too many people have a very defined view of themselves to which Carol advises "Think about the way you view yourself, don't limit yourself by thinking too narrowly, e.g. by a title such as banker, sales executive, or doctor. View yourself from different perspectives, market yourself as a person with a portfolio of marketable assets".

Slessers Maclean offer an all round service, not only helping people with their feet firmly on the top rungs of the corporate ladder but also graduates just starting their careers. Starting with an initial interview lasting between two to three hours, Carol gets to know her clients by discussing their childhood, background, schooling, university degree (if applicable) and areas of work they enjoy and want to pursue letting go of real and perceived blockages stopping them moving forward with confidence.

From the initial interview, Slesser Maclean gives you with a pack entitled "Who are you?" which basically helps you identify your marketable assets and areas of importance when choosing your next career move which you take away and complete and bring to the next meeting which helps to formulate a plan of action Carol calls "Choices & Options". Sounding like something that your bank would offer when applying for a loan, it lays the groundwork to either revitalise your chosen career or to pave the way for a new one.

The next stage is crucial you need to research the viability of your chosen profession, in some cases you may even decide to start your own business or consultancy and you will be given tips and guidance on how to do this. Once you have successfully completed your research you need to put a cv together outlining skills, achievements and differences made in your career to date. If you are a recent graduate you need to mention achievements accomplished at school/university or work experience in the holidays, a marketing document aimed at making you stand out from the crowd resulting in interviews. Carol then helps you to facilitate your job search campaign by advising on the best way to respond to advertisements, making the most of recruitment consultants, networking and letter of application.

Carol also favours the use of role-playing interview skills using closed circuit television. "We do two role-plays the first often shows the candidate lacking energy, charisma and poor quality of answers." By reviewing the tape, followed by a second session, clients are able to see for themselves how potential employers view them and learn how to project themselves confidently through their body language, voice projection, quality of answers, energy and charisma. At the end of the session you are given the tape and a handout called "Making An Impression At Interviews" one tailored for the experienced job searcher and another aimed at graduates.

Slesser Maclean's approach might not appeal to everyone, but what is certain is that it most certainly will help in either moving up in your career ladder or choosing one in the first place. With a bewildering amount of choice these days it's good to consult someone whose advice and help can be trusted.