

# ACCELERATING YOUR CAREER IN A POST- PANDEMIC WORLD

PREPARED BY



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Great food manufacturing careers don't begin by accident or accelerate without your application and focus.

The current workplace is changing with huge shifts in the global economy, DEI and remote working on the back of a worldwide pandemic that has altered our work. Earlier this year, Microsoft produced a research report about talent movement, which contains over thirty thousand responses.

The key communication point revealed that over forty percent of the global workplace are considering a move during the next twelve months.

People are starting to review their options again, and the manufacturing sector is no different; maybe it's time to plan your next career move?

The best careers come from focus, hard work, talent and the right blueprint, all mixed in with support and a little bit of luck.

A career development strategy is a roadmap to achieving what you want for your career goal. With the right plan in place, you determine which roles are best for you and what actions you need to take.

Strategies give you the accountability of fixed objectives, along with the inspiration and motivation that comes from knowing what you truly want to do.

In this complimentary report, we cover all the fundamental approaches to developing a robust career plan after the pandemic, from cultivating the right mindset to setting SMART goals to working with a recruiting professional.

Ready to get started?



**Scott Williams**  
**Director, Food Recruit**



## An Important Question: What Do You Want Post-Pandemic?

Last year, most people I spoke to had taken at least some time to reflect on what they now wanted from life.

People were selling homes in Surrey and moving north on the back of remote working possibilities. Others were retraining or changing careers completely, and some individuals were willing to take a pay cut to work from home.

At the same time, many food manufacturing employees were evaluating the actions of their current employers.

Not surprising when you consider the [Microsoft](#) report I mentioned earlier also revealed that over 46% of respondents felt unsupported by their current employer, both practically and fiscally, and that flexible working is here to stay.

Maybe this has now made you consider your options too?

Manufacturing roles are most definitely available; however, you might have more competition than you originally imagined.

Would you like a flexible approach to hybrid working? Perhaps the company culture has changed so that it is time to make different choices or seek out an opportunity in a different part of the country altogether?

Maybe the market economy has meant that the opportunity for you lies in a different sub-vertical of food manufacturing?

The questions and answers are endless; I wonder what you are now thinking? With some different ideas on what you want, what is your next logical step.

## Maintaining the Right Mindset

The first step in developing your manufacturing career is to embrace the right mindset. More than ever, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of working with our mentality to handle whatever is happening globally.

It's easy to assume that creativity, intelligence or talent are the things that set successful people apart from the rest of the world. However, the truth is that all the most powerful people in business today reached their goals through perseverance, grit, dedication and the right mindset.



According to [Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck](#) and scientists following her research, the best predictor of success in life is your mindset. The most successful people believe that they can achieve great things.

## Why Mindsets Matter

Though a strong career plan and excellent focus are critical to achieving your goals, your attitude is the fuel that keeps you moving in the right direction. Even the best employees face challenges at times, and the right mindset is how you overcome those obstacles and keep moving forward.

Google any notable business success in the food manufacturing sector, and you will be surprised at how pivotal mindset was to their success.

## How to Shift Your Mindset

With the right mindset, you can change everything. Converting your attitude from an "If I can" perspective to an "I can" focus, helps free you from limiting beliefs that hold you back from success. So, how can you use your mindset to develop your manufacturing career?

### 1. Exchange a "Fixed" Mindset for a "Growth" Mindset

The growth mindset concept created by Carol Dweck is one of the most powerful motivators for career-focused people. While a fixed mindset suggests that a situation is set in stone and there's nothing you can do to change it, a growth mindset encourages the creation of change.

With a growth mindset, you break free of your limitations by working hard, adapting to feedback and enhancing your skills. In other words, you take charge of your development.

### 2. Be Willing to Do What it Takes to Get What You Want

Once you decide what you want to accomplish with your career development plan, you need to be willing to go out there and take charge of your growth. To some extent, this means being willing to work hard, invest in yourself, and undergo additional training.

At the same time, it's important to be willing to fail. Sometimes the only way to grow is to make mistakes and learn from them. If you're not willing to take risks in pursuing your ideal position, you may end up stuck in a job or company that doesn't fulfil you.





## Know What You Want & Be Prepared to Adapt

As we alluded to earlier, a significant part of developing your manufacturing career is knowing what you want. More than half of all [employees are unsatisfied with their current position](#), simply because they don't know what they want.

The important thing to remember is that your idea of the perfect role can change over time. The more you learn about the food manufacturing sector, your skills and opportunities, the more your career path evolves.

Look at your current end goals and ask yourself whether they align with what you NOW want from a personal and professional perspective.

### 1. Planning your Ideal Day

Consider what the perfect day in your dream job would look like:

- What would your schedule be?
- Where would you be working?
- What would you be doing each day?
- Who would you be working with?

While it's important to be realistic with your vision, this visualisation strategy can help you to determine whether you're really on the right track in your current role.



## **2. Assess What You Like and Dislike About Your Current Position**

If you're feeling overwhelmed or burned out on the back of Covid or an unsupportive culture, it might be difficult to determine which parts of your role satisfy you. A good way to overcome this issue is to rank aspects of your job on a happiness scale. Think about what you do each day and give everything a number from 1 (terrible) to 10 (spot-on).

Ranking the happiness you feel in your position will help you decide whether it's time for a career change. The quantitative values assigned to the factors that make you happy can also help you look for the right career opportunity with your current team. For instance, if you know that you feel level 8 happiness when working with a team, you can focus on looking for a role where teamwork is critical and with a company culture that matches this.

## **3. Make Your Goals Both Short and Long Term**

Whether you decide to stick with your current position or transition somewhere new as a way to accelerate your growth, remember that you don't have to commit to your new goals forever.

Lives change as we all now know too well, and career ambitions change with them. While today you might love the idea of working in one part of the [sector] space, or remotely from home tomorrow, you might want something entirely different.

Additionally, remember to leave room for flexibility from a personal perspective too. Work and play are interlinked. For instance, you might one day want to settle down in a space with your family or travel while you work, which is likely to be a challenge unless you move companies.

## **Make Sure You Have a Plan**

When you know what you want out of a career and have the right mindset to go and get it, the next step is developing a plan.

Career planning is the tool you use to build bridges from your current manufacturing position to your new opportunities. The bridge gives you safety, direction, and focus as you pursue your ambitions. Develop your plan using the following steps:



## 1. Find the Right Field

The more you learn about the food manufacturing space, the more you'll discover new career opportunities and paths you can take. If you're not sure which road to take, there are ways that you can develop your insights. For instance:

- Job shadowing gives you experience in your field while allowing you to spend some time in someone else's shoes.
- Internships or volunteering: A more long-term approach to learning more about a specific field, internships and volunteering can give you a deeper insight into roles in your Sector.
- Networking: Discussing career opportunities with peers in your space can help you learn more about the positions that might appeal to you. Remember you can discuss your options with a specialist recruitment agency.

## 2. Start With The End in Mind

With a vocation in mind, consider where you'd like to be five years from now. In his famous New York Times best-selling book, Stephen Covey advised we all start with the end in mind as a logical way to look back and plan the steps needed to arrive at the ultimate goal we want.

Perhaps you want to be in a management position or have a role in a different sub-vertical of the manufacturing market. List the targets most key to you today, and consider what you might need to do to get from point A to point B.

For instance, you may need additional training to build your leadership skills if you want a management position.

## 3. Implement your Plan and Adjust as You Go

A successful career plan requires hard work and dedication. If you want an executive-level job, you may need to learn many new skills between now and year five. Getting the training you need while maintaining a high level of performance at work can be tough - but it's important to commit yourself to the path you choose.

However, while dedication is crucial, it's worth remembering that professional plans don't always follow a linear structure. While some people develop themselves one step at a time within the same company, others need to move sideways into new roles and opportunities.



## Set SMART Goals and Outcomes

Goals are crucial to developing any food manufacturing career. I will use the word outcomes here as a more powerful way to describe exactly what we want to happen.

Without goals/outcomes to inspire and drive you, it's impossible to know if you're moving in the right direction. In simple terms, if you don't know the destination, then you can't plan the journey.

Deciding what you want allows you to take control of your professional life. Simply saying that you want something isn't enough. Goal setting is a strategic process that considers what you want to achieve through a series of milestones and action steps and ends with hard work and dedication.

### How to Set Smart Goals and Outcomes

One of the most popular goal-setting strategies involves creating "SMART" goals. There are variations on what the "SMART" acronym stands for, but most experts agree that it requires your goals to be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound





## **Setting Specific Goals and Outcomes**

Career goals must be clear and defined. A vague goal like "I want to get a promotion" doesn't provide sufficient direction. Determine what kind of promotion you need, whether you have a specific title in mind, and when you want to accomplish that target by. If it helps, write your goals down.

### **Setting Measurable Goals**

Measurable goals include precise quantitative figures you can use to determine your success. For instance, if your goal is to get a pay rise, you can say, I want to earn 5% more by the end of the year. Measurable goals give you an easier way to track your success too.

## **Setting Attainable Yet Stretch Goals**

Choosing stretch goals means finding the right balance between targets you can realistically achieve and aims that challenge you. If you're currently in an entry-level manufacturing role, then it's unlikely that you're going to be a CEO by the end of the year. Setting goals that are too ambitious can erode your confidence and demoralise you.

However, don't set goals that are too easy, either. It's essential to challenge yourself, as that way, you can reap the rewards of feeling accomplished and driven. Find goals that help you to raise the bar on your work and performance. Remember, growth happens when we step outside our comfort zone.

## **Setting Time-Bound Goals and Outcomes**

Giving your goals a deadline keeps you motivated and focused. It can be challenging to know how long each move will take, setting times and deadlines to accelerate the process. Time focus eliminates procrastination and gives you milestones that you can use to measure your success. When you're working on a deadline in this way, you push yourself to be more efficient and productive.



## Conduct a Skills Audit and Contact A Recruiter

To accomplish career goals, you will have to up-level your skills relevant to the roles you want. Knowledge is power, and this is where talking to someone who has the ultimate position you want can be useful.

Although, remember that a lot has changed during the last few years and what was once required for a role, either skills or experience, might have changed.

This is where talking to a [specialist food manufacturing recruiter](#) will help. They have likely worked with many candidates who have followed the exact career path you want to take.

They will also have had extensive experience throughout the first days of Covid and will be able to give you an up to date awareness of what is required now.

They will also help you identify the skills you need to work on first.

With the specs for your ideal job to guide you and your CV in hand, write a list of the skills you need to work on and rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 4. A rating of 4 indicates that you're an expert in the area, while a rating of 1 means that you have very little knowledge or skill in that area.

Once you know which elements need the most work, you can develop a list of activities that will help you close the gap.

## Write Your Own Development Plan

There's a great quote to keep in mind when you're developing your manufacturing career:

"If it's to be, it's up to me."

If you want to accomplish incredible things in your career, you need to take control of your path. A personal development plan is a way of doing that. With a PDP, you can focus on mapping your path towards your ideal vision of success.

Your plan gives you the compass you need to make better decisions and pivot quickly when things move off track.

Looking at all the information about your outcomes, ambitions and skills that you've gathered so far, design your development plan template by:



## 1. Prioritising Your Outcomes

Look at your list of outcomes and decide what you need to accomplish first. For instance, while your end goal might be to achieve a management position General Manager, you'll need to reach other milestones first before you can get there. For instance, a hierarchy of focused outcomes might look like this:

- Develop specific manufacturing skills with training courses
- Build my professional network by 10%
- Achieve a promotion, or move to a more challenging role that will stretch my skills
- Take on additional challenges/projects in my role and build leadership skills
- Apply for a management position with the help of [my recruitment consultant](#)

Once you have your list of prioritised outcomes that you want to happen, give yourself deadlines and milestones related to when you want them to happen.



## 2. Recognise Strengths and Development Needs

As we described earlier, a skills audit is a great way to outline your current career plan's strengths and development areas. Once you know your strong skill points and what you need to work on, you can start taking action.

## 3. Get Help to Develop Yourself, and Measure Progress

Once you've got your ultimate outcome and milestones, and your ambitions to guide you, you can begin developing yourself into the food manufacturing employee you want to become.

While a development plan requires a lot of internal evaluation and personal effort, you don't have to do everything alone. Mentors, colleagues, and a [specialist recruitment company](#) can help to give you the guidance you need. Remember to turn to others for help when you struggle to work out which step to take next.

Additionally, don't forget to measure your progress. After six months or so, reflect on how far you've come and celebrate the successes. Recognition is a great way to boost your motivation and dedication. When it comes to ultimate career success, it is about the incremental gains you make.

## Get a Mentor

As mentioned above, while it's up to you to do the work required to accomplish your manufacturing goals, there are ways you can get help.

For instance, a mentor in your field can provide invaluable guidance as you advance in your career. A mentor can be an experienced colleague or someone from outside of your business.

- When you're just starting in a new role, they can help you to reduce your risks of making mistakes and ensure you make the right impression. Mentors can even help you to unlock the secrets of your industry.
- When you need a little extra motivation to find your path during your career, a mentor can help you climb up the ladder, discover new opportunities, and refine your goals.



Finally, when you're struggling to figure out where your career plan should take you next, a mentor is there to offer an educated outside perspective. Your mentor knows you, your goals, and the industry that you're working in. This means that they can provide you with ideas that you might never have considered yourself.

For instance, if you're unsure whether to take a new manager role because it means more time away from the family, your mentor may suggest asking about remote working or flexible scheduling opportunities.

Mentors can also assist you in making the right choices when new opportunities come along. Even if they just act as a sounding board, helping you sort through your options, the right guide provides you with a wider view of a complex situation.

## Work with a Specialist Recruiter in Your Field

When you're in the middle of your career path, it's easy to feel as though you're on your own. However, you do have an ally out there - [specialist recruiters](#).

Recruitment consultants can't give you the dedication and drive you need to reach your career goals, but they can help steer you in the right direction by providing insights into the industry and roles that will get you where you want to go.

This is especially the case after the pandemic we have experienced, where some organisations are overwhelmed with inappropriate CVs.

[Specialist recruitment teams](#) commit themselves to finding the right person for the ideal position. They understand your Sector, and if they think you're the right person for a role, they can be a huge help in getting you in front of a hiring manager. Just some of the benefits of working alongside a specialist recruiter include:

Excellent knowledge of the industry: Your consultant can help you to figure out where you need to develop your skills to make you more compelling as a must-have employee. They also know where the latest opportunities are.

- Large networks: The extensive yet focused nature of a specialist recruitment company means that you have access to plenty of opportunities relevant to your career path. Remember, they will also have access to exclusive roles you can't find anywhere else.





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Developing your food manufacturing career is hard work, but it's worth it.

With a solid plan, the right support, and a strong vision of your goals, you can achieve incredible things in your professional life.

Taking charge of your career development plan puts the power back into your hands and reminds you that you're responsible for where your job takes you. Is it time for you to develop your career?

Get in touch with me by calling [07835426149](tel:07835426149) or emailing [hello@food-recruit.com](mailto:hello@food-recruit.com) and let's start improving productivity in your organisation today.

**Scott Williams**  
**Director**

What to do next?

Connect with me on LinkedIn



To book a confidential call, please click here





## About Food Recruit

With a proven blend of knowledge, research and contact network, we source candidates who meet your specific needs.

Helping Blue Chip, SME & Start Ups source their critical hires. We identify and nurture the best Food Manufacturing talent across the UK and internationally.

Matching both your expectations and candidate aspirations, we ensure you are the right fit for each other providing a professional and personal service.

Over 10 years practical Food Supply Chain & Business Development experience. Over 5 years search & selection and CIPS (Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply) certified. We have an unrivalled industry network allowing us to source exceptional candidates that meet our clients needs

Whether you are looking to fill a void left by a departing senior colleague, you are looking to up skill the team or looking to grow or diversify your board – Please get in touch to arrange a discovery call.



## About Scott Williams

I started my career in the Food Manufacturing industry back in 2007 as a Forecast Analyst for one of the worlds largest value-added food producers. Progressing through the business, I oversaw the £90m supply of poultry, duck, seafood and dim sum into Manufacturers, Foodservice, Retailers, Cash & Carries and QSR Restaurants.

Wanting to round my CV with a more commercial perspective, I moved to a competitor as Business Development Manager looking after the same market.

Fast forward to 2016, and unfortunately, I found myself redundant due to my home working role becoming office-based.

It was at this stage that I was approached by a reputable local Automotive and Engineering recruitment consultancy, looking to establish a footing in the Food & Drink market.

Although I had not previously considered recruitment as a chosen profession, as experience as a hiring manager and indeed a candidate, I knew my market well, and so it made a logical step to take.

Progressing through the business from Senior Consultant to Group Business Development Manager, I honed my skills and provided leading talent to Food Manufacturers in an industry I had worked in my whole career.

A similar story to most, the pandemic then hit, and I had a chance for some self-reflection and I took the opportunity to launch my business Food Recruit – Search & Selection in September 2020.

I partner with clients from startups to SME's through to Blue Chip brands across the UK and abroad. My professional, flexible and solutions-driven approach has enabled me to work with the industry's well-known names, staying humble and hungry for success.

It is this hunger that drives my service and determination to disrupt the market and make Food Recruit – Search & Selection the go-to name in the Food Manufacturing sector.



## Testimonials

What you need when you are recruiting is someone who understands your requirements, who can put themselves in your shoes as they sift through the masses of CVs for the candidates that are appropriate for your needs.

Anybody can throw CVs at a client, but very few can throw the right ones and the certainty that the skillset and cultural fit are aligned to the client's needs.

With Scott, you get someone who has the industry knowledge within Procurement & Supply Chain, he just gets it because he has done it, he also has integrity in abundance, something that can be overlooked as we play our part in the "recruiting game".

Other recruitment organisations should take a good look at themselves and understand you don't need salespeople to recruit, you need subject matter experts who know what their clients are seeking.

Would I use Scott again? Absolutely, in a heartbeat!

**ANDY NEILSON FCIPS, FCILT**

It is an absolute pleasure to work with Scott.

Open, honest, collaborative and communicative, Scott mixes utmost professionalism with humour and personality which makes the (often painful) process of finding top talent a pleasant experience.

Scott takes the time to fully understand the needs and personality of the organisation before recommending candidates but still delivers within often very often tight timescales.

I look forward to working with Scott again and have no hesitation in recommending him to support your executive search.

**HEAD OF HR**