Do you know what you have to offer

When I asked a client in outplacement whether she maintained a system in which she recorded her professional experience, she replied: “Good idea. I really need to call my former HR manager and ask him to send me my competency matrix.” Outsourcing your own skills management system? Not a good idea.

Peter Näf
Zurich, November 2026

My client was a highly qualified specialist with extensive professional experience. It became apparent that she struggled to describe her experience and provide an overview of her skills and competencies. As a highly experienced professional, she had simply forgotten many of the things she had done over the years.

Someone with twenty years of professional experience can often sell themselves less effectively than someone with five years of experience – because they have lost track of their own experience.

Entrepreneur of your own career

Imagine you are considering doing business with a company. You ask a salesperson whether the company offers a particular service. The reply: “I don't know. I'd have to ask our strategy consultant first.” A ridiculous comparison?

Given the pace of change in today's economy, are we not all, by now, entrepreneurs in our own right?

I regularly encourage my coachees to adopt the mindset of running their own business. Part of that responsibility is knowing what you have to offer and keeping it up to date.

Companies employ specialists for different functions. In your own business, however, you are £responsible for every function yourself. In some areas, you can seek advice. But there is very little room for outsourcing.

Your offer is the CEO's responsibility

There are certain areas that I recommend you treat as executive responsibilities: understanding your own offer and communicating it effectively – in other words, self-awareness and self-marketing. What can we learn from companies in this respect?

Many organisations use skill management systems to maintain an overview of their resources. And that is precisely what I recommend for you as the entrepreneur of your own career. For younger professionals, memory alone is often sufficient to keep track of their experience. Very experienced professionals, however, need a reliable external system. The exact format depends on your background. Simpler is usually better.

For most people – including the client mentioned above – a simple list is enough: responsibilities for each position in one column and the skills developed from those responsibilities in the other. The greatest challenge is the same as with competency management systems in organisations: Your records are only as good as the effort you put into maintaining them.

No company would lose track of its own value proposition. Why should you?

#application #personalbranding #hardskills

Please find further articles on career topics on my homepage
https://karrierecoaching.ch/en/articles/

© PETER NÄF karrierecoaching