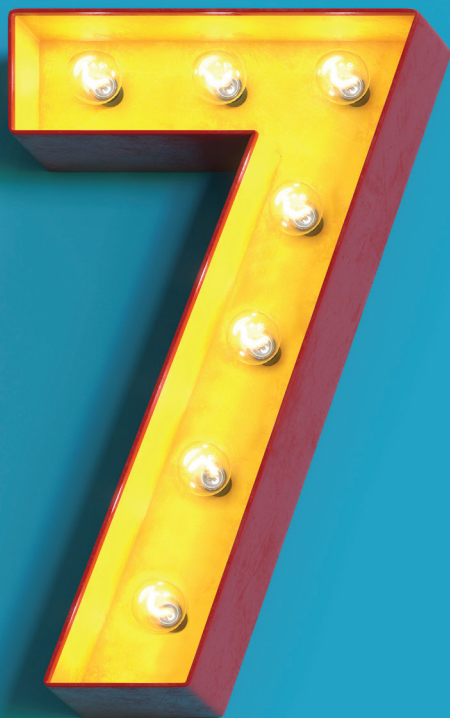


# Employable



**ATTRIBUTES TO ASSURE  
YOUR WORKING FUTURE**

**ROXANNE CALDER**

# Praise for **Employable**

‘Rocket engineer or hat maker, this passionate in-depth book will help you hone your skills, unleash your best qualities, drive your pathway and turbocharge your career to its ultimate success. A must-read for every step in your professional life.’

**Julia Ross**, Managing Director, Julia Ross Group

‘This is an essential book because it addresses a crucial trend that affects us all. What made us employable previously is not likely to be what makes us employable now or in the future.

‘Written with clarity by someone who has been matching people to jobs for many years, this book unpacks the key attributes that make one employable, and then provides a complete road map on how to stay current and ready for the best opportunities.

‘It’s a lively and practical read, an essential weapon in the battle against job uncertainty or insecurity. Full of anecdotes and practical examples, this book uncovers the “secrets” to employability! Roxanne is a deep expert in this area with 25 years of experience. And it shows!’

**Greg Savage**, Recruitment expert

*'Employable* is an easy-to-read handbook that covers everybody, not just the usual target of school leavers or graduates. Anyone can benefit from this book, even if you're not looking for a job change right now. There are interesting stories, personal anecdotes and the all-important practical advice to consider when thinking or re-thinking a career choice. But I also enjoyed the book just for its sheer "readability"'

**Dr Sue Slowikowski**, Undergraduate Advisor and Public Relations Lecturer, School of Business, University of Wollongong

'Rox Calder has always had a special connection with her clients. She looks at the person and the process from a holistic perspective and takes time to understand the characteristics of each person. Rox finds a way to bring their strengths to the forefront and to strengthen areas of less security, resulting in a confident, well-rounded candidate employers yearn for. Thoughtful, kind, clever and insightful, Rox covers all the prerequisites and adds so much more to ensure you can stand out and put your very best foot forward. As an experienced professional recruiter, Rox shares her invaluable insight, knowledge and advice on how to ensure you are at the head of the queue when it comes to employability. From attitude to skill set, presentation to communication, this book will show you how to be memorable for all the right reasons.'

**Dijanna Mulhearn**, Author of the *Wardrobe 101* book series

# Employable

# 7

ATTRIBUTES TO ASSURE  
YOUR WORKING FUTURE

**ROXANNE CALDER**





I dedicate this book to my family, always my family.  
George Calder, Ann Calder, Natalie Calder,  
beautiful Rick and BFF Daisy.

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# Foreword

## by Heather Swan

Most people would not consider climbing and jumping from a Himalayan mountain a good career choice. Yet it was for me. This, along with other adventures such as flying a wingsuit across the Grand Canyon, has enhanced my ‘employability factor’ enormously.

Who would have thought it?

Roxanne Calder would have.

If you want a long career, one you design not only to provide an income but also to enhance your whole self, your wellbeing, your sense of self-worth, your purpose and your happiness – read this book.

Roxanne will show you how to understand who you are, what you want, where you are now, where you want to be and how to bridge that very important – and sometimes very big – gap.

Why? Because she has devoted herself to helping countless people do just that. She’s taken all those stories and experiences, all those lessons learned, and distilled them into a ‘how-to’ that works.

I’ve known Roxanne for more than a decade. I’ve seen her take on big challenges and confront big fears. I’ve taken her and her recruiting team head way outside their comfort zone – rock climbing, skydiving and even into the remote outback, where self-reliance is critical. I’ve watched Roxanne struggle with her fears and win. I’ve seen her apply that same grit in the business world while never losing her optimism and passion for what she does.

Roxanne understands the importance of standing firm in the face of obstacles and self-doubt. She knows that to have the career you want, you have to grow your comfort zone and yourself, not just the obvious business skill set. She has an uncanny talent for helping people find their way.

When my daughter went to Roxanne for help finding an office job, Roxanne found her a dog-walking position instead, a position she still has and loves years later. Roxanne has mentored countless people in the same way – helping them choose their true passion and make that choice a success.

Having a copy of Roxanne's book is akin to having her truthful, caring, reassuring voice on call. This alone is worth so much more than the cost of a book.

**Heather Swan**, world-record-holding BASE-jumper and wingsuit pilot, mountaineer, author and motivational speaker

# **Preface:**

## **My path to employability**

It was my first year at Monash University. I was lucky to be living on campus at one of the best universities in Australia, being exposed to a multitude of different people, courses and experiences and studying for a Bachelor of Arts, which I knew would interest me. I recall the relief of getting into a decent university and thinking, ‘Phew, now I’m okay, hard work done!’ Little did I know that the journey of forever being employable had only just begun.

I remember a conversation during my first three months at university. Vicky was a third-year student on my floor who was doing a Bachelor of Arts like me. She asked me what degree I was doing and then proceeded to tell me, at great length, that my degree was useless and wouldn’t land me a job when I graduated. She, herself, was uninspiring – a little negative and even a touch depressive to speak with. I couldn’t distinguish at that moment between what I could learn from her, and what was her own baggage.

We never spoke again, but her lecture/unsolicited advice stayed with me for the length of my degree.

Vicky was right to a certain extent. While I was annoyed at what I saw as her audacity, I have been grateful ever since. What she did was plant a seed, which I fed unconsciously with incremental actions. I chose subjects that might leverage my future job possibilities. One of these subjects was Human Resources (HR), which

I took in my final year. Studying HR was new then – I loved the subject, and it was one I did well in.

## **LEARNING MORE THAN JUST A LANGUAGE**

My other main subject was Japanese. Now, I was far too relaxed at university to have excelled at learning Japanese. Studying any language needs constant and consistent application and work – you can't cram it. Despite my apprehension, I decided to take part in an exchange program, which involved studying at a prestigious university in Japan – all in the name of keeping me on that path to 'future employability'.

I can tell you honestly, I didn't want to use my summer break by going to Japan. I was not a diligent student. I was 20 years old. After my first year at university, I had settled more into university life than into university studies. I would have preferred to be at the beach or the pub having summer fun with my friends, rather than staying at the homes of various Japanese families and going to university daily.

I went because, somehow, I knew it would be good for me – a little like choosing to eat a salad rather than a burger. The trip to Japan assisted me greatly with my language skills and opened my mind to a different culture and customs – and I knew it would look impressive on my résumé in the future.

By the time I graduated from university, at the height of the 1990s recession, jobs were scarce. I didn't want to mope around and do any old ho-hum job. Instead, I wanted to stay on a path of employability and continue upskilling. So, I took myself off to Japan with the purpose of fine-tuning my Japanese language skills. My plan was to stay for 12 months – but I ended up extending my trip to three-and-a-half years.

In the beginning, I was happy to have any job and started in hospitality, at a five-star hotel in a beachside town called Atami. My job was as a 'meeter and greeter', and I worked six days a week. It was the

norm in Japan, and all of us ‘meeters and greeters’ did it. Our job was to bow all day, every day – when someone entered, when they left and re-entered and then finally when they left for good. Very important job. On one side of the entry were all the petite and serenely beautiful Japanese girls lined up in their soft blue-flowered kimonos, and on the other side were the gents in their grey and blue (flowerless) kimonos.

I was with the Japanese ladies, of course, until I didn’t fit anymore – literally as well as culturally. I ate so much Japanese curry (most people associate the Japanese with sushi, but their curry is very popular!) that I could not fit into my ladies’ kimono. Instead, I was hastened into the men’s kimono but, quite frankly, it was a disaster. I was then ‘promoted’ to the job of dishwasher in the hotel café. At first I was miffed, until I discovered we were allowed to eat ice cream during the quiet times. A silver lining. This experience was my first introduction to the importance of ‘fitting in’ at an organisation, and how quickly things can go pear-shaped if you don’t.

Following my dishwashing stint my vocations began to improve slightly. While my roles were all casual in style, they were helping me to achieve my goal of speaking fluent Japanese. Along the way, I also developed so many other skills and attributes that complemented my degree.

My time in Japan taught me an important lesson: while we may not know exactly how at the time, ultimately all our actions and efforts will lead somewhere. Inactivity and non-exploration is undoubtedly a much easier path to choose, but it’s not the way to secure our future.

Working and living in a foreign country, where English is not the main language, for that period of time was tough. My resilience and tenacity were tested and strengthened. The environment was unfamiliar on every cultural level – from views on women, marriage, Australians and foreigners, to beer, food, sleeping, religion – you name it, it was all poles apart from what I knew. I had to negotiate jobs, contracts, visas, bank accounts, living arrangements, car licences – all in Japanese. At the time, I didn’t think of it as an ordeal.

It just had to be dealt with if I wanted to be there. The unknown is sometimes uncomfortable, but it's also exciting, and I relished the thrill of trying to make things work, no matter the obstacles.

Towards the end of my stay in Japan, I became acutely aware of the unexpected benefits of living within limitations. I was discovering something new about myself every time I encountered a new challenge. I came to understand our inborn, human ability to persevere and create solutions instinctively.

I returned to Australia fluent in Japanese, but with no motivation or desire to work for a Japanese firm in Australia. However, those three-and-a-half years in Japan made me the perfect candidate for a job in recruitment. The number-one strength you need to work in the recruitment industry is resilience (refer to chapter 3). After living in Japan, I had this in abundance! During my travels I found there were very few setbacks that I could not deal with. I had to deal with all the stresses and challenges and solve all my problems myself – there was no-one else to fix things for me.

When you live in a foreign country where you must speak in a second language, all your senses become heightened. I became acutely attuned to read body language, interpret eye contact and recognise subtle messaging. For the first time, I became fully aware of what observing and being an observer means, and how powerful it can be. I surprised myself by how much I embraced my newfound observer role, considering I am not naturally patient.

I had to learn the art of observation to survive. Although I might not have understood half of what was being said, I learned to pick up the subtleties of interaction and how to use these to negotiate and influence. These are skills that have served me to this day.

## **MY FIRST STEPS IN RECRUITMENT**

Upon my return to Australia, I began what was to be a long and successful career in recruitment. My first job was with Julia Ross

– a well-known, inspirational entrepreneur, business magnate and founder of Julia Ross Recruitment. From the moment I interviewed with Julia, I wanted that job. I was enthralled by what she had achieved. I loved that she was a woman in business doing great things. There was a magical power and thrill about working there. I wanted to be a part of it!

Recruitment was tough, and working in a Julia Ross world was even tougher – standards were high. For the first time since completing my degree, I felt I was on track to having a professional career. My training was excellent – some of the best recruiters and managers at the time trained with Julia Ross. I know if it had not been for my experience with Julia, I would not be where I am today. I loved that job. It gave me a sense of belonging. I could have chosen a different recruitment company to work for, but I am not sure I would have been as enthralled and motivated in another firm. The values of loyalty, trust and having a strong work ethic, as well as Julia's high service levels and standards, innovative approach and willingness to strive for perfection, suited my personality and style.

The funny thing is, I fell into that job! I went for an interview at the Julia Ross Recruitment office in Parramatta for a job in banking and they suggested I might be suited to recruitment. They gave me a test: they said, 'We are advertising this weekend. Have a look out for the job ad.' (In those days, jobs were advertised in Saturday's newspaper.) I looked but couldn't see it. So, I called up on Monday and said I couldn't see the advert, but I asked to apply anyway. The rest is history!

## **JOINING THE DOTS**

I wonder if Vicky, the third-year Arts student, would be surprised to learn that my 25-plus-year career in recruitment has taken me throughout Australia and to the UK, Singapore and Hong Kong. Perhaps she'd be even more startled to hear that this experience led



me to complete an MBA and launch my own boutique recruitment firm, EST10, in 2010. So much for my ‘useless’ degree, Vicky!

As a young undergraduate, the concepts of lifelong learning and being employable were not something I gave any thought to, but my path to being employable had always shown in my actions and behaviours. I seemed to instinctually understand what I needed to do to make myself employable. It was only later in life that I started to pay close attention to the choices we humans make in life, and how they influence our future path.

Recruiters develop the ability to look at candidates and their résumés in terms of a ‘life map story’ – a map of the candidate’s direction, with many connecting dots representing the whole picture. This provides invaluable insight into candidates’ personalities, but also highlights their untapped potential.

I have always loved hearing stories of people who go against the tide and challenge our perception of what success is. I once read that Steve Jobs took a summer class in calligraphy, not knowing if it would ever have any value or application in his career. At the time, he had just dropped out of university and wanted to keep himself busy. In his own words, ‘If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do.’

Steve Jobs also said: ‘You cannot connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward.’ In other words, you need to trust that the dots of your life and experiences will connect in the future. You don’t always know which of your actions will change the course of your life.

If you cannot see how your dots connect yet, be patient. Sometime and somewhere, your personal and professional stories will come together in a beautiful arrangement, just like mine did.

# Introduction: What is employability?

Employability is insurance for your future. It is future-proofing yourself, giving yourself the freedom to choose your own path. The concept of employability is crucial to understand and embrace if you are to stay current and relevant in this ever-changing time.

In its simplest terms, employability is what makes someone more likely to gain employment, keep employment and be successful in their chosen occupation. It's made up of a set of continual achievements: skills, experience, understanding and personal attributes. However, employability is complex – it's not just a 'tick the box' exercise. It is your mindset. It includes 'soft skills' and an understanding of how to put your transferable skills into practice.

Employability benefits everyone – the individual, the workforce, the community and the economy.

In my 25-plus years at the coalface of employment, I've found there is an increasing shortage of employable people.

**Being employable is not the same as being employed.**

**Having a job does not necessarily mean you are employable.**

No-one has an accurate idea or data to predict with certainty how the employment world will look in the near or distant future. That means that if you are privileged to be employed right now, looking at ways to reskill and upskill while within the safety of your job will

go a long way to future-proofing your continued employment. The fragility of what the world experienced with COVID-19 has taught us that we must never sit on our hands. The responsibility lies only with you to make your professional development a priority.

If you are struggling to find work, you may benefit from reading this book in full, then taking stock of the areas you need to focus on. If you are a recent graduate, you need to be thinking about potential workplaces and evaluating your skill set for areas to develop. You have youth and time on your side – two benefits that are wonderful but pass quickly, missed by all who once had them!

In our current times, no matter whether you stay with your employer or change jobs and companies, knowing the attributes that make you employable will be imperative to your success.

It is dangerous to think just because you have a job you are employable. It's even more precarious to think just because you have a job you will forever have a job or work in that same company. Nothing lasts forever, which is the first lesson you learn in kindergarten. Yet, you might find that you still take things for granted or try to cling to conditions that long ago lost their usefulness or positive influence on your life.

## **UNCERTAINTY IS HERE TO STAY**

We have recently witnessed a swift upskilling in using technology for remote working. Five years ago, would you ever have imagined holding meetings via Zoom, or having telephone or video appointments with your doctor? Occasionally, maybe – particularly if you are travelling overseas – but not as the new normal.

There are jobs now that we'd never heard of a decade ago. According to the World Economic Forum, 65 per cent of primary school children will end up working in new job types that aren't even on your radar yet.

**Seven jobs that no longer exist**

1. Human alarm clock
2. Lamplighter
3. Milkman
4. Night-cart man
5. Punch-card operator
6. Rat catcher
7. Switchboard operator

**Seven jobs that are unlikely to exist in ten years**

1. Cashier
2. Data entry operator
3. Legal secretary
4. Receptionist
5. Social media manager
6. Telemarketer
7. Travel agent

**Seven jobs that didn't exist ten years ago**

1. Blogger or vlogger
2. Cloud specialist
3. Drone pilot
4. Influencer
5. Listening officer
6. Social media analyst
7. Sustainability manager

Being employable is also about being 'on course' – aiming to be on par with or, ideally, a step ahead of your peers.

Without a skerrick of doubt, companies will be looking at totally different skill sets in the future. This will mean you need to act today

and be ready for the change ahead of time. These actions don't have to be big – incremental shifts are all that is required. Mentally accepting this concept is your first step.

The only real certainty is that uncertainty is the new normal. As I write this book, we are coming out from under the shroud of COVID-19 and many economists, the press and politicians are saying this might be one of the toughest economic climates Australia has faced. Our world has changed in ways we could never have foreseen. We have not seen an employment market like this before. We're navigating an entirely different working arena, one where technology is key to survive and thrive and for the first time ever, we have five generations all working together.

Through my work in recruitment, I saw firsthand the devastation COVID-19 has wrought. Between March and June 2020, my company fielded daily calls from the unemployed – people desperate and helpless after losing their jobs and fearful of losing their livelihoods.

Being confronted with this brought home the reality of how fragile our world is and how much we rely and depend upon our jobs – whether we realise, acknowledge or like it. This is why I have written this book – to help you find new ways, new skills and new attitudes to ensure your employability, no matter what situation you find yourself in.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not the only framework for you to test your employability. Any instability, be it economic, social or simply disruptive, will spark the talent competition and benefit those who decided to invest in their own development, learning and growth. The moment in time when this is done is crucial. Early adapters always win.

The world rate of change has been accelerating rapidly for decades now, and if you feel anxious about that, you are not alone. According to research by global leadership company Accenture, 64 per cent of the global workforce is experiencing high anxiety over their personal job security.

Technology advancements will occur – there is nothing more certain. Even if you are young now and technology is second nature to you, don't assume you will always be across what is new. Make sure you do not feel too comfortable; challenge your agility and make sure you're regularly across new developments.

**You always need to be employable – no matter where you are at, and no matter where the economy is at.**

## **BE DELIBERATE ABOUT YOUR DEVELOPMENT**

This concept of being employable is vital for anyone who relies on an income to support themselves. The days of lifelong tenure are long gone. In fact, depending on how old you are, you may never have heard of or witnessed this concept.

As I shared in the preface, I operated at an instinctual level for most of my early working life. However, thanks to the fact that my career depended on being acutely aware of all the necessities and changes in the employment landscape, I, too, started to see how essential it is to be employable. An occupational hazard/benefit, you could say!

**The key is to shift from being instinctive to deliberate in your ongoing professional development.**

You need to take full responsibility for your future career direction. Owning the process and consequences gives you a better sense of freedom, no matter the environment you find yourself in. It is the choice and not the 'accident' that will decide how successful you are.

In this zone, you are honing and fine-tuning the 'craft' of being employable. You don't have to be a hyper-dedicated, studious, nerdy, highbrow, ambitious, serious sort of person to be employable. You really can just be an improved you! Being employable belongs to you as much as anyone else.

## **BEING EMPLOYABLE DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN**

Although being employable does not have to be difficult, it doesn't just happen. Effort, patience and practice are required.

You need to work at it. You have to do things you would rather not and make sacrifices and compromises. Employability means being in the uncomfortable zone sometimes. To learn, develop and improve takes effort, just like developing and strengthening a new muscle: it can hurt at the beginning, but then it grows and develops and becomes stronger. It may even cause enough pain that you start to rethink whether you should continue. Don't be fooled! This is the unknown, instinctive and irrational side of the brain, according to Jungian psychology.

It will take effort, time, consistency and endurance, but if you stop and then go back to it, which is also okay, you will have already developed what is popularly referred to as muscle memory. Like any well-formed and repeated habit, it does get easier, because the previous tough times tested your mettle and showed you that you could do it.

Like all journeys, sometimes it will be easy-peasy, freewheeling, even lackadaisical, and other times it may feel like a constant uphill battle. The uphill battles, though, are often the biggest opportunities. The learning they present to you can catapult you forward, much further than you'd travel stuck in cruise control.

Working on being employable will give you a sense of security, safety and freedom to choose. It is no different to looking after your physical health by choosing to eat well and exercise. By being employable, you are looking after your employment health.

## **REDUNDANCY: IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU (OR IS IT?)**

During my career I've met with many good people who have been made redundant or sacked. They tell me their stories and, in some

cases, I read between the lines and can see what has really occurred: their lack of joy and enthusiasm for their job is the reason we find ourselves discussing their next career move. Often they admit that they didn't particularly like their job.

Now, redundancy occurs when a role is no longer required. It's not to be used as a way to performance-manage a person out of an organisation. The reality is, though, when companies and hiring managers are choosing which roles are to be on the redundancy list, employability can count. As an example, if 20 customer service roles need to be cut out of a team of 50, your attitude and enthusiasm for your role could potentially be part of that decision.

To be clear, though, in a lot of cases redundancy isn't due to your employability – it's just what happens sometimes in life. In these cases, your employability will get you through the process of looking for a new role far more easily.

As previously mentioned, when I graduated, we were right in the throes of the 1990s recession. I had been fortunate enough to have a wonderful part-time job throughout my time at university – I worked at David Jones department store on Friday nights and Saturdays, and as many hours as I could during the university breaks. I didn't feel the recession while studying – my costs and expenses were low: alcohol, rent, food and petrol (in that order). We didn't spend much on clothes in those days – your wardrobe contained the stuff your parents would buy for you and you made it last.

When I graduated, I found a job in Daimaru, a new Japanese department store that had just famously opened in Melbourne. My experience at David Jones, combined with my degree and language skills, made it relatively easy to secure that job.

After around six months, Daimaru made more than 100 people redundant and I was one of them. I was devastated. I recall thinking, 'Why me?' I thought my university degree made me so superior to my peers, some of whom didn't even have a 'proper' degree. I am embarrassed now by my ignorance back then.



I can see now that I wasn't actually very employable while I was working at Daimaru. I had been employable enough to secure the job on graduating, when graduate jobs were so scarce, but I was young, inexperienced and not grateful enough to appreciate the job. The package of 'me' – my skills and attitude – wasn't competitive enough to keep my job in tough economic times.

I did not enjoy my job at Daimaru, and I am sure that contributed to being selected for redundancy. I had loved my old job at David Jones and was good at it. Would I have been made redundant if I had stayed there? I don't think so. I believe it is critical to love enough of your job to retain the enthusiasm, joy and motivation to be on the path of being employable.

### **WHAT ABOUT LONG-TERM JOBS?**

I have interviewed numerous people who have left their jobs after, let's say, 10-plus years.

Personally, I love to see people stay with companies for a long time. It shows loyalty, relationship skills and consistency, plus it can also be great for learning and development.

However, a long-term tenure can also easily slip into a situation that isn't so great for learning and development. Some of the people I have interviewed fall into this category, and they find it exceptionally hard to secure their next role. This is a good example of being employed but not employable.

The difficulty lies in their grasp on the reality of the situation – that their skills may have slipped and they may not be as employable as they first thought. It is not a comfortable realisation and is often followed by feelings of rejection which, let's face it, can be very hard on all of us. It can be demoralising and the perfect situation for anxiety and, even worse, depression to occur. Our self-worth and even our whole identity is tied so closely to our jobs.

If people are quick in accepting the situation, the result can be much brighter. It's when the ego won't let reality come into view that there are consequences. The worst part of this scenario is the effect on self-esteem and confidence.

Imagine pulling a pair of old jeans from your wardrobe that you haven't tried on for 10 years. They fitted perfectly back then and you felt confident wearing them, but they are not quite the same now – a little tight around the waist, firmer than you recall around the thigh, not as on trend, maybe even out of date?

Maybe you haven't kept up your fitness, or maybe that style, which was so on point back then, is now yesterday's hero. Either way, you have some work to do!

### **I HAVE A DEGREE – ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?**

As a final point in this introductory chapter, I want to touch on education, qualifications, degrees and the like. In my opinion they are important – I always like to hire people with a degree for my business – but I never rule out people if they don't have one.

For my employees it's a nice-to-have. A degree shows to me an ability to learn, to apply yourself, to think and work at something over a period of time – developing the resilience muscle, which is so needed in recruitment!

There are of course many ways to gain further education. In fact, if you're in Australia, you live in one of the luckiest countries in the world for education, where mature-age entry is easily accessible.

Qualifications are critical and necessary for certain jobs. However, buyer beware: they are only part of the equation.

**Being employable is a continual journey of lifelong learning.**

Your education and learning should be ongoing. This goes hand-in-hand with being curious, asking questions and looking to understand.

Attitude and personality also come into play. I have worked with too many people who have indeed had degrees and been exceptionally well qualified and smart, but they have not been employable.

Do not rest on your laurels if you have a degree. Use it and keep leveraging, learning and developing.

## **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

This book will help you understand why being employable with conscious intent is important for your future – financially, spiritually and psychologically. It will help you acquire the tools to make employability a vital part of your working life's practice.

I have written this book for everyone – whether you are a school leaver, a university graduate, in your first job, returning from parental leave, a senior executive thriving in your career, a business owner, a managing director or someone like me – in your 50s, with a successful career in place, yet knowing there is so much more to do.

This book is for you, whether you're career-focused or someone who is happy to simply 'have a job': that is, go to work and come home. You may be comfortable in your job and have no intention of leaving, but that is no reason to take your finger off the employability pulse. Put simply, you never know what will happen. Life is unpredictable, but to frame it in a positive way, change enables growth and development. You can be comfortable and happy by staying in your comfort zone, if you choose, but life will always find a way to introduce you to unexpected events.

In this book, I'll take you through the process of evaluating your own employability, helping you devise an action plan to fill in the gaps.

In part I, we'll look at the 7 attributes of employability. These are the attributes that I have observed in my career as those that the most employable candidates possess, and you can use them to boost your own employability. I provide insights and expert advice

from my career, as well as sharing those from a host of experts in business, HR, recruitment and leadership. I feel privileged to share the knowledge these experts have gained over many years and many lessons – their failures as well as successes.

In part II, we'll explore all the ways that life can get in the way of our best-laid plans! Family, births, marriages, health issues, concerns for children, ageing parents, financial matters and the like can all derail our career pathways. We'll also look at employability throughout the different stages of life. While the need to remain employable doesn't change, a school leaver or graduate is in a vastly different situation from a parent who is returning to work, someone in midcareer, a breadwinner who has just been retrenched or someone trying to decide whether to retire or not. We will unwrap some tools to fast-track the process of becoming employable at each of these stages.

*The secret of change is to focus all your energy,  
not on fighting the old, but on building the new.*

–

DAN MILLMAN

In part III, we'll unpack the nitty gritty of employability – the tools you need to win that job. We'll look at CVs and target résumés, interview skills and cover letters. It's no longer enough to simply rinse and repeat the same old CV year in, year out.

### **From the files**

Part of being employable is learning from your own, and others', mistakes. When it comes to jobs and careers, I have seen it all – in my role as a recruiter, and in my personal life. In this book, I share some practical examples of my

experiences and observations ‘from the files’ – stories that you can learn from and perhaps apply to your own life. I hope you’ll enjoy taking a peek into a recruiter’s files.

Employability is a forever journey. For that reason, all the behaviours and actions that go into the journey of being employable will enrich your life in many other ways – your self-esteem, your confidence and your coping mechanisms, for starters.

Employability is ingrained in me, and I hope the information in this book will empower you to take control of what you want for your future.

### **TOP FIVE TAKEAWAYS**

1. Uncertainty is here to stay – no-one is protected from disruptions to the economy, in their field or in global, national or local circumstances.
2. Employability is for everyone, whatever your stage in life.
3. Education and learning should be ongoing.
4. Employability gives you freedom by giving you control over your employment prospects. It is your insurance against the risk of unemployment.
5. Employability is an ongoing journey – qualifications help, but they are only part of it.