

every
woman

WORKBOOK

Future proofing your career



CONTENTS

About this workbook	1
Section I: Your agile skillset	3
Section II: Know yourself today to promote yourself tomorrow	6
Section III: The ‘seven seismic shifts’	9
Section IV: Horizon scanning	15
Your personal action plan	18
everywoman experts	20
Further reading	21
Endnotes	21

ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

At everywoman, we deliver a range of innovative products and resources that unlock the potential and talent of women in business globally. For those women starting out or looking to progress their careers, or build and develop their own enterprise, the everywomanNetwork provides a wealth of personal development resources, advice and inspiration to address the challenges faced at key stages in business.

We produce workbooks on topics that matter most to our members and we're constantly listening to your views to give you the tools you need to propel you through your career, at a time and place that suits you.

Will a robot take your job? This was an actual headline that appeared on the BBC website, complete with a calculator predicting the odds of your particular role being overtaken by technology.¹ But this workbook isn't about ensuring you're ready to go into combat with a work-stealing Robotron. It's about future proofing what you do.



Today's business world is beset with disruptive forces that advance at breakneck speed. Big businesses are asking themselves how 'future proof' they are. Seventy per cent of senior executives say they're concerned about how relevant their organisation will be in two years' time.² As business professionals, we also face disruptive forces. The smart individual will face these head on, taking decisive action to ensure career longevity and onward success.

You've probably been future proofing your career for a number of years, constantly looking around you to identify where the next threat or opportunity is coming from, and flexing your skillset accordingly. This workbook will enable you to pause and reflect in a more conscious way on your future career.

“Two decades ago, if someone said they were a BlackBerry Specialist you might have asked what horticultural college they graduated from. If they said it today, you might be concerned for their career... Career options open up with agile skills and mindsets.”

Fiona Morden, Masterclass facilitator,
Future proofing your career 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

The activities are designed to help you take an honest assessment of your own ‘agility’ levels; to better understand where your career plan might be both vulnerable to progress and primed for opportunities; and plan what actions you need to take next.

This workbook is an extension of the sold-out masterclass we ran at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology, which was attended by over 650 women from around the world, and many more via live stream. This workbook is relevant to any and every industry sector, although you’ll find that some of the examples and exercises used in this workbook relate specifically to advances in technology. It’s about what we can learn *from* the fast-paced world of technology, rather than what we can learn *about* it. After all, says masterclass expert, Fiona Morden, we might be unsettled by the pace of ‘digital creep’ into every facet of life, “... but how much better would it be if we embrace it?”

As you embark on the transformative journey of future proofing your career, we wish you all the success in the world. And we’d love to know how you get on. Share your experience with contact@everywoman.com. Good luck!

Maxine & Karen

The everywoman team

SECTION I: YOUR AGILE SKILLSET

Can you recall the last time you cashed a cheque? Bought a CD? Used a public payphone? Navigated your way around a city with an A-Z? Used a paper directory to find a local business? It's difficult to think of a facet of life that hasn't been transformed by on-going advances in technology.

Just as household brand names live or die by their ability to nimbly navigate disruptive forces, as a business professional you also need to navigate disruptive forces and challenges.

Like a ball bearing ricocheting around a pinball machine, you need to be able to navigate obvious and unexpected hurdles in your career. You need to channel the energy of propulsion and the friction from knockbacks into continual forward momentum. Being agile helps you move forward with purpose and appropriate pace. Without agility, you can end up zooming off in the wrong direction, or rolling into a corner that's hard to break out of.

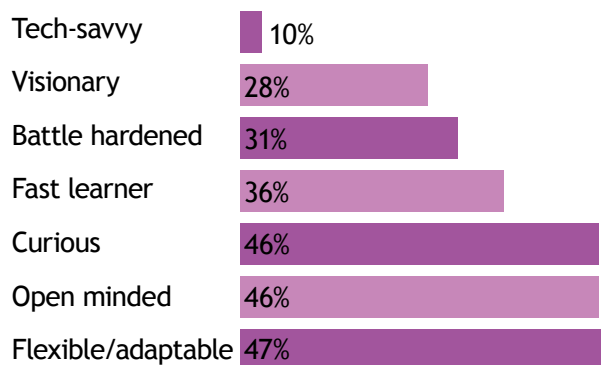
“Navigating change has, for millennia, been a core skill of the human race. Whether revolution or evolution is affecting us, the ability to respond ‘in the moment’ or to plan a future direction has enabled us to survive and thrive. Agility - whether in thinking or movement - supports us to evolve with purpose and pace by anticipating what might help or hinder our progress.”

Fiona Morden, Masterclass facilitator,
Future proofing your career 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

Business executives recognise the need for agility, both in their organisations at large and in their personal skills as leaders.

When the going gets tough, they need to be able to pack away their Plan A quickly and nimbly navigate to (and get comfortable with) Plan B. In one major study, 400 top global executives were asked about the most important characteristics in a leader today (see graph). Many of the traits they deemed essential to leadership today were connected to an agile mindset and flexibility.³

Most important characteristics of a leader



Gap International (2017)

EXERCISE

Whatever your role, the chances are that you already demonstrate many of the ideal characteristics of a leader. Using the chart below jot down any examples from your own career of a time you've demonstrated any of these agile traits in the workplace. If there are any gaps, take an honest assessment of why that might be. Have you lacked opportunity to demonstrate or cultivate these skills? Are there any particular areas that you need to work on?

Visionary

When have you been able to cultivate an idea or solution, and convince others of its merits?

Resilient (Battle hardened)

Do you bounce back from setbacks? What have you learned from some of your most challenging periods at work?

Fast learner

When have you needed to quickly get to grips with changes in your environment?

Curious

What intrigues you? How often do you challenge the status quo, asking why things are the way they are and how they could be better?

Open minded

Do you take a fresh outlook to new problems? Are you willing to see things from the perspective of others?

Flexible/adaptable

When have you been able to change your mind or actions according to external factors?

--	--	--

Now you've identified what you've done in the past, use this chart to identify any upcoming opportunities you might have to demonstrate these traits again. If you're unsure, think about a leader you admire and how they might demonstrate these qualities in a challenging workplace situation.

Visionary	Resilient (Battle hardened)	Fast learner
Curious	Open minded	Flexible/adaptable

SECTION II: KNOW YOURSELF TODAY TO PROMOTE YOURSELF TOMORROW

Before purchasing any technology item, you probably spend time trawling online reviews to find out what customers are saying about the product and why it's worth your money. Modern consumers are so digitally savvy that a brand can live or die by its reputation – and a solid reputation can carry a brand from its start-up days to global domination. Small wonder that organisations invest so heavily in PR and marketing.

To best position itself to current and future consumers, a brand must understand three things: its own identity, the position it fills in the marketplace, and the consumers whose needs it must meet. The same is true of your own personal 'USP' (Unique Selling Point). Before you can promote yourself to those who'll sponsor you in the future workplace, you must first understand who you are and what you can deliver for those who'll want your services.

In the chart below are the straplines offered by three major technology products and services, that summarise their USP.

Brand	Strapline	What if you applied that to yourself?
Amazon echo	"Always ready, connected and fast. Just ask."	Are you always ready to collaborate? Are you connected in a way that's mutually beneficial to all? Do you respond to challenges quickly and efficiently? Are you ready to raise your hand and push yourself out of your comfort zone?
Fitbit	"Reach your goals all year long."	What if you really were seen as someone committed to meeting - consistently - the company's goals?
MacBook Pro	"A touch of genius."	What is your specialty? What is it that makes people come to you first?

EXERCISE

Brands have marketing teams whose job it is to come up with compelling campaigns and brand straplines. But you and you alone are in charge of your own marketing. What's your marketing message? What do you offer the workplace? Taking inspiration from the makers of these market-leading gadgets, devise your own personal brand strapline.

In six words or fewer, try to capture the essence of you in a way that grabs attention and shows how you add value in the modern workplace.

Examples of straplines created by delegates at the Future proofing your career Masterclass at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology.

"AUTHENTIC INSPIRATION.
PASS IT ON."

"TENACITY. ENTHUSIASM.
ENABLES INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS."

"ALWAYS GETTING SMARTER."

"HUNGRY FOR NEW EXPERIENCE
AND KNOWLEDGE."

“It’s good practice to think about who we are, what we offer and how we get that message out there into the marketplace - to employers, to stakeholders, to anyone who needs to know us.”

Delegate at everywoman’s Future proofing your career Masterclass

As a delegate from the Future proofing your career Masterclass beautifully highlights, knowing your own USP is only half the battle. You also need to strategically communicate this USP to a network of people who can propagate the message for you.

TAKE IT FURTHER: Delve deeper into communicating your skillset in the everywomanNetwork workbooks ‘Promoting yourself’ and ‘Powerful workplace communications’.

For additional resources, including short articles and webinars, browse our topic libraries for **Personal brand** and **Communication**.

SECTION III: THE ‘SEVEN SEISMIC SHIFTS’

Developing an agile skillset can be made easier by thinking in terms of shifting skills. In an article for Harvard Business Review, Michael D Watkins highlights the ‘seven seismic shifts’ an executive must undergo when he or she steps out of a functional management role and into that of enterprise leader. This model can be useful for all of us, whatever our level, as it shows the benefit of an agile mindset when we are future proofing our career.

Each of these seismic shifts are explored below using a series of continuums. An agile, future-minded leader, rather than simply jumping from one (red) end of the scale to the other (green) end, must be able to flex along the scale, as the situation demands.

As you explore each of the seismic shifts, reflect on where you’ve been in your career, your current situation, and what may lie ahead in the short and longer terms. Remember that the labels on each continuum apply to skillsets, rather than specific job titles.

“To make the transition [from management to leadership] successfully, executives must navigate a tricky set of changes in their leadership focus and skills.”

Michael D Watkins

“How Managers Become Leaders” Harvard Business Review (2012)

1.

SPECIALIST ◀-----▶ GENERALIST

A specialism can be the thing that gets you noticed, the thing that creates a queue of colleagues and clients at your desk and what wins you respect from your wider business network. Specialism can also be the thing that gets you stuck in a career cul-de-sac. Future-thinkers may maintain a specialism, are they are agile enough to flex along the scale according to different demands. Regardless of your seniority, being flexible and able to shift from specialist to generalist puts you in the strongest possible position.

“Early in my career, I was definitely a generalist, acting like a sponge soaking up what I could of everyone’s specialism. When I recognised the need to create my own specialism, I spent a long time building up knowledge and promoting myself. Now that I’m firmly in the specialist end of the spectrum, I can see that I need to broaden out my skillset so that I remain invaluable.”

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

2.

ANALYST ◀-----▶ INTEGRATOR

An early-adopting millennial in ‘analyst’ mode might propose Snapchat as a viable option for a new company-wide internal communications channel. Someone taking an integrator approach might first seek to understand the varying needs of individuals and multi-generational teams across the entire organisation. A CEO might still need to dig deep into the numbers, but he or she must be able to take a step back and understand the application of the data for the wider business. Whatever your career ambitions with regards to seniority, ‘big picture’ thinking is a skill that can serve you well at all levels.

“In my current role I have to move constantly between both ends of the spectrum. But placing myself somewhere near the middle of the scale poses a lot of questions about how I need to shift further up the continuum if I’m to meet the 3-5 years goals in my career plan.”

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

3.

TECHNICIAN  STRATEGIST

Another way to think about this continuum is ‘doer’ and ‘thinker’. Every role requires a certain amount of rolling up of sleeves and getting stuck in. But how often do you press pause and really analyse the action plan you’re following? If you applied the same scale to your career plan, a technician might be busy acquiring new skills and building a network of connections, but a strategist might ask: “Where next?”, “What are the core skills that will accelerate completion of my next goal?” and “Who can help me get there?” Or “Where are the gaps in my network that I should be seeking to fill?”

“As a senior manager I recognise the need for me to occupy the strategist end of the spectrum. But having just returned from maternity leave and needing to catch up with so much missed activity, I am currently at the extreme end of technician. Time to hit pause and be a bit more targeted in my approach.”

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

4.

BRICKLAYER  ARCHITECT

The bricklayer builds her project one brick at a time; the architect imagines the finished residence. The bricklayer is face to face with the detail of every aspect; the architect anticipates how each piece fits together and understands how a mistake in the foundations changes the overall structure. It’s easy to see how leaders need to be effective architects, but what if you were to take an architect role to your entire career, understanding how a move made here now, impacts the bigger plan?

“I’d have probably put myself more in Bricklayer mode, but recently I received some feedback from a manager, who I know sees me more as Architect. A good reminder that sometimes how we see ourselves isn’t how others see us.”

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

5.

PROBLEM SOLVER ◀-----▶ AGENDA SETTER

Being the person who solves organisational problems can win you a great deal of visibility and promotional opportunities. But problem solvers stepping into leadership can become unstuck if they don't transition into anticipating where focus may need to be going forward. It's the shift between planning the right direction for tomorrow while solving the issues of today. It's being able to get to the crux of an issue, while also being able to set future goals in a way that helps people connect.

"As a short term contractor I was pretty much paid to turn up and solve problem after problem. I then consciously took on a role where I was the person highlighting the problems that I'd lead a team of experts in solving. This has been a good exercise in reinforcing who I thought I was - and wanted to be - at this point in my journey."

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

6.

WARRIOR ◀-----▶ DIPLOMAT

Warriors have winning mindsets. They want to be the best member of the team, create the winning ideas and take the highest profile projects for themselves. Diplomats want to succeed too, but their approach is different. A business leader in diplomat mode may end up partnering with competition to bring about industry change. Earlier in their careers, diplomats can deploy their skills through fostering collaborative teams, negotiating win-win outcomes with challengers and using their influencing skills to convince sceptics.

"It can pay to be pushy and fight for what you believe in, but it's easy for that to create clashes. For me it's about channelling my feistiness and ambition into a way of working that focuses more on teamwork and bringing others on the journey with me."

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

7.

SUPPORTING CAST  LEAD ROLE

Most members of an organisation fall into the supporting cast category. But that doesn't mean that those with a less senior position can't take on some of the characteristics of a lead role. It could mean being the person who isn't afraid to speak up in a meeting with more senior figures and asking that difficult question. Or being the one who challenges the team's assumptions or processes. Standing in the spotlight takes courage, but by doing so you can enable others to learn, grow, or engage more thoroughly with a project or organisational vision.

"I've placed myself in the red. I recognise the need to move towards green, but I don't really know how I can do that in my organisation. It's something I'll take back to my mentor for help with."

Quote from a delegate at the 2017 everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology

EXERCISE

Now you've reviewed each of the seven seismic shift continuums it's time to consider where you currently position yourself on each one. Where are you now? Where might you need to move to?

1. Where are you currently positioned on each continuum, in your career right now? Mark where you think you currently are.
2. Below each continuum, briefly summarise the reasons why you think that's where you're positioned right now.

SPECIALIST  GENERALIST 

ANALYST  INTEGRATOR 

TECHNICIAN  STRATEGIST 

BRICKLAYER  ARCHITECT 

PROBLEM SOLVER  AGENDA SETTER 

WARRIOR  DIPLOMAT 

SUPPORTING CAST  LEAD ROLE 

EXERCISE

1. Think about your next career move. Which of the seismic shifts would you most need to be known for to make that career move a reality? Select two or three continuums and then consider where you might need to be placed.

2. Which continuum requires you to make the biggest shift? What actions can you take now to begin the transition? Think about what you might need to do less of, as well as more of.

3. What might be reducing your agility skills? What keeps you 'stuck' in one place on the continuum? Pride, apathy or fear can be common reasons for staying stuck. What actions can you take to help yourself get 'unstuck'?

SECTION IV: HORIZON SCANNING

By examining your skillset and identifying where you need to flex your skills towards that of an agile leader, you've taken important steps in future proofing your career. Having looked inward, the next step is to explore the landscape. Horizon scanning asks that you continually monitor your environment, ensuring that all your newfound self-knowledge is being applied in the context of the bigger picture.

Things you might want to consider include:

1. What trends are currently emerging, and what might they mean for you in the short, medium and longer terms?
2. What are the biggest threats to your industry, sector, organisation, business function or role right now?
3. Who are the biggest influencers, sponsors and decision makers in your career today? How might that change tomorrow?
4. Where are there gaps in your network that need addressing so that you are best positioned for future opportunities?

You can even think more broadly than this: taking each of the above points, what might the answers look like for other individuals - managers, colleagues, senior leaders - in your environment?

Taking stock of your personal brand or action planning the developments in your skillset is something you should return to periodically. Horizon scanning, on the other hand, is something that future proofers will seek to integrate into their everyday working lives, so that they are always attuned to shifts in the landscape and can respond with agility and speed.

EXERCISE

1. In what ways are you already horizon scanning? What impact has this had? How can you capitalise more on this activity in order to maximise your work in future proofing?

e.g. Attending networking events is the way in which I already horizon scan. In future I can be more strategic about which networking events I attend as a means to building a more diverse set of connections whose expertise I can draw on.

2. Where are there gaps in your current horizon scanning activities? How can you integrate some new activity to address this shortfall?

e.g. I don't spend much time keeping abreast of industry news. My department gets a copy of the trade magazine so I can ensure I take time out to browse key news. I can also make more time to check in for coffee meetings with those in my network who I've identified as industry thought leaders and who are also ready and willing to share their insight.

3. Think about someone in your environment for whom the horizon might look different to your own. What learning can you take from how they might currently be viewing the world? If you draw any blanks in this exercise, think about different ways you can gain some insight.

e.g. I've realised that I have little visibility of the pressures my boss is under. It would help our relationship - and give me more insight into what my next step up the ladder could look like - if I had access to his KPIs and better understood the biggest problems he's seeking to address right now. Something to raise in our next 1-1/appraisal.

YOUR PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Use the space below to draw up your personal action plan

1. In what ways are you already successfully future proofing your career? How can you capitalise further on this success?

e.g. I am taking steps to strategically grow my network, through events and connectors which introduce me to a wider pool of experts and thought leaders. I can capitalise further by taking steps to position myself as one of those connectors, and making introductions that benefit others.

2. What is the most prominent factor you've identified that currently limits your future proofing ability? What first steps will you take towards addressing it? By when?

e.g. I am known within my inner circle as a solid specialist. As I transition towards being a generalist, I need to promote myself to a much wider circle of influencers. I'll do this by raising my hand for stretch assignments and stepping in for my boss whenever possible.

3. How are you going to build horizon scanning into your future proofing strategy?
What will you do and when?

e.g.

- 1. Actively seek more feedback from my line manager to ensure my skillset is relevant to emerging needs.*
- 2. Plan regular catch-ups with peers at competitor organisations. What similarities and differences exist in our worlds?*

4. What resources will you draw on as you incorporate future proofing into your workload, and how will you maintain those resources? Resources could include anything from your personal advisory board to your mental energy reserves.

e.g.

- 1. Sessions with my mentor - ensure I plan for these adequately so I'm getting the most out of the hour.*
- 2. During peer to peer horizon scanning chats, ensure that I'm inputting as much into the activity as I hope to get from it.*
- 3. Mindset alteration: Need to give myself permission to make room in my diary for scheduled horizon scanning and other future proofing work.*

EVERYWOMAN EXPERTS

everywoman creates resources on topics that matter most to our Network members. We draw on member surveys and the latest thinking from the academic and business worlds, as well our own experiences as we navigate our careers. Each workbook offers practical advice, enabling tangible actions for your daily working lives.



Fiona Morden, everywoman Expert

Fiona Morden is a coach, consultant and public speaker specialising in the areas of People and Culture Change, and is passionate about making a positive difference through her work. She has more than 30 years' experience working with the Private, Public and Not-for-profit sectors, in People and Operational Management and Organisational Change.

Fiona is an expert in the field of Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility. Her work supports talented individuals from all backgrounds to develop to their full potential, within workplace cultures where leaders have the skills and confidence to create the inclusive cultures that ensures talent from all backgrounds can thrive



Maxine Benson MBE & Karen Gill MBE

Co-founders of everywoman, Karen and Max have spoken to thousands of women about the challenges they face at work. Through their own experiences of starting a business, they uncovered a real need for a network where female entrepreneurs and businesswomen could interact and share experiences. The everywomanNetwork, launched in 2013, serves as a truly global tool to enable members the world over to propel their careers through online membership.

everywoman workbook team

Rebecca Lewis, Associate Editor

Victoria Pavry, Head of Content

Kate Farrow, Senior Client Manager

Any topics you'd like to see covered on the everywomanNetwork?

We'd love to hear from you: contact@everywoman.com

FURTHER READING:

everywomanNetwork resources

[Boost your career satisfaction levels \(workbook\)](#)

[Future proofing the careers of the next generation \(webinar\)](#)

[Building your personal brand \(video\)](#)

[Get your personal brand on the radar \(webinar\)](#)

External resources

[Harvard Business Review: How managers become leaders by Michael D Watkins \(2012\)](#)

ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-34066941>
2. http://www.gapinternational.com/docs/default-source/resources/gap-international_challenge-or-be-challenged_2017.pdf
3. **Ibid.**
4. [Watkins, Michael D. "How Managers Become Leaders". *Harvard Business Review*. Harvard Business Publishing, 2012. Web. 20 Feb. 2017.](#)

COPYRIGHT

© 2017 Everywoman Ltd. All rights reserved worldwide. This publication is protected by law and all rights are reserved, including resale rights: no part of this publication may be reproduced and you are not allowed to make copies and distribute or sell this workbook to anyone else. You may only use it if you are a member of the everywomanNetwork and have downloaded it from www.everywoman.com.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organisation acting or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Everywoman Ltd or the authors/experts.

advancing **WOMEN IN BUSINESS**