



Maryland Career Development Association

March 2021 Newsletter

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MCDA's New Strategic Initiatives & Leadership Opportunities

It's hard to believe this month will mark the one-year anniversary since the pandemic began in full force here in the US. Take a moment and think about all the ways you, your family, your friends and colleagues have adapted in the past year, and in fact, continue to adapt...

Crazy, isn't it? But what strikes me as equally remarkable, if not more, is how **resilient** we have proved we can be, and I believe those same themes of adaptation and resilience ring true not only for individuals, but for organizations as well.

For MCDA, the past year has been about finding our new path forward, and we are still on that journey of discovery. It is undoubtedly challenging, but with each challenge, we also have the opportunity to discover new possibilities. I'd like to share with you a few of the strategic initiatives MCDA is working on as well as the opportunities that exist for you to shape our future...

Strategic Partnerships with Other Organizations

MCDA is very pleased to have formalized strategic partnerships with PACDA (Pennsylvania Career Development Association) and APCDA (Asia Pacific Career Development Association). We are also currently in talks with MACCA and other state CDA's in the hopes of establishing additional partnerships and a potential mid-Atlantic alliance. These partnerships are a win-win since they help extend our reach, broaden our programming and networking opportunities and strengthen the career development community at large.

As mentioned in January's newsletter, our partnership with PACDA in a nutshell means that MCDA members will receive discounted rates for PACDA events and programs. We are also looking into planning joint programs and networking events. This month, PACDA is offering an exciting webinar featuring two accomplished thought leaders on [DEI Career Coaching Strategies for Underserved and Marginalized Populations](#) on March 4th.

MCDA is also excited to announce our partnership with APCDA as a co-sponsor of their [2021 Annual Conference “Walking on Uncharted Career Paths”](#) from May 19th-29th which will take place virtually. Keynote speakers include two giants in the field: Dr. Mark Savickas who will speak on career construction and life design counseling and Dr. Norm Amundson who will speak on Hope-Action Theory with his colleague, Andrea Fruhling. Moreover, this is a unique opportunity to network and connect with fellow practitioners from a diverse array of countries including Australia, China, India, Korea, Japan and Singapore.

Revamped Private Practice/Affiliate Membership

Are you a private practitioner and looking for ways to increase your visibility and reach to new clients?

MCDA’s Private Practice/Affiliate membership has recently been revised and includes the new benefit of being publicly listed on our website. More info on this membership option can be found [here](#).

Are there other ways MCDA can support private practitioners? If so, let us know. We’d love to hear your ideas.

Leadership & Professional Development Opportunities

Are you in search of a leadership or professional development opportunity? Do any of the above-mentioned initiatives interest you? Have a new and innovative idea that you think MCDA should pursue?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes” or even a “maybe”, then consider stepping up to serve as a Board or Committee member. MCDA is in search of the next generation of leaders, innovators and change-makers to help move us forward. More info can be found on mdcareers.org.

Have questions or want to chat further? Feel free to reach out to me or any MCDA Board or Committee member. Our contact details can be found [here](#).

Julie Neill
MCDA President



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The Five C's of Piloting Your Career

Confess, Climb, Conserve, Communicate, and Commit

By Robert Castle, M.S., LCPC



Aircraft pilots are taught to follow a list of critical steps if they become lost while in flight: confess, climb, conserve, communicate, and comply.

Often referred to as the “Lost 5 C’s,” some variations add a sixth tag word like “Circle” (in order to take better stock of one’s exact location). I’ve modified the fifth “C” for career navigation purposes, making it “Commit” instead of comply, as some situations lack the equivalent of air-traffic controllers and might call for a well-reasoned plan that does not conform to the status quo.

So here is how the “Five C’s” can be applied to the common predicament of getting lost in the midst of your career odyssey.

- 1) Confess:** Admit to yourself (and other people you trust) when you’ve lost your sense of direction, purpose, or meaningful progress regarding where you want to be in your career. The opposite of confession is denial or avoidance of relevant facts and truth, which can foster naïve complacency and continued meandering along a fruitless pathway. **Consider:** While facing the facts of your career situation might feel awkward or even demoralizing, it can also increase emotional clarity, cognitive focus, and creative energy. Giving a name to that vague sense of restless angst is the first step towards understanding and enacting critical changes.
- 2) Climb:** Gain perceptual “altitude” (i.e., get above the weeds!) to expand your mental horizon with a more accurate view of the larger landscape. This will include contemplating the scope of your life, education, and job accomplishments, your inner sense of calling or meaning, the local and global economy, the market demand for the compensable services you can or wish to provide, emerging trends in your field or profession, etc. **Consider:** Reflect on your original sense of mission and recent accomplishments. Compile a list of relevant life and career factors for reflection, sorting and evaluation. Just like you might analyze a business plan, assess how to capitalize on your strengths and assets and better compensate for any weaknesses and potential threats to your goals.
- 3) Conserve:** Like the pilot or commander of a vessel, reduce unnecessary or wasteful drains on your finite reserves of energy, time, concentration, and creativity. In order to make these precious commodities last for an uncertain length of time, you’ll need to a more conscious “budget” to guide how they are deployed in accordance with your priorities. **Consider:** Evaluate and trim back on nice-but-optional activities that are now less essential to progress in your more critical life and career plan. This can free up hours in your schedule for education, networking, and special projects of strategic value to your overarching career plan.
- 4) Communicate:** Confer with all reliable sources of advice, data, and intelligence, including two-way dialogue with knowledgeable people who can facilitate development of your best qualities and ideas. This means much more than simply reading news feeds and career advice blogs

(like this one!). **Consider:** Set up an intentional meeting with a close friend, a faculty advisor, your pastor or rabbi, or a trusted professional mentor to discuss your career path questions. This can lead to new insights and awareness, with practical suggestions and some accountability for follow through. Many people also benefit from investing in a few career counseling sessions with a professional coach or licensed counselor.

5) Commit: Once you have renewed your focus on your primary and secondary goals, with practical means of reaching them (“Plan your Work”), then activate the types of observable behaviors (not just abstract thinking) that will carry you towards that next goal (“Work your Plan”). Even if it is only an interim goal, not your ultimate destination, the process of committing to a well-reasoned course of action with measurable benchmarks will be valuable practice for every ensuing leg of your journey. **Consider:** Create a written plan for researching formal education options (degree or certificate), initiate communication with several known and new business professionals to activate your network, and apply to more jobs that are closer to your ideal goal, even if outside your normal sector or geographic range.

In the many dicey phases of my own career odyssey, amidst moments of despair, fatigue, or disorientation, I have remembered Charles Lindbergh’s historic 1927 flight from New York to Paris in his experimental aircraft, the “Spirit of St. Louis.” His years of planning and preparation likely entailed numerous examples of the Five C’s, in addition to sheer pluck, perseverance, entrepreneurship and courage. During his 33-hour solo flight, and without any modern navigational aids, he became convinced he was hopelessly lost. His sleep deprived mind wandered to bemoaning his plight and berating himself for all the things he could have done differently. After listing his woes and dire circumstances, he bolstered his resolve with the admonition, likely spoken out loud, **“But I have an ocean to cross and a continent to find.”** When he finally reached the southern tip of Ireland, he was 2 ½ hours ahead of schedule and less than three miles off course.

More than just a drill for effective navigation, in both aircraft and career adventures, applying the Five C’s can foster an overall attitude and mental discipline for almost every life endeavor. Face the facts, expand your perspective, manage resources in accordance with your strategic goals, collaborate with reliable sources of knowledge, and follow a well-reasoned and measurable plan with focus and courage.



Robert Castle, M.S., LCPC, draws upon his dual careers in human resource management and licensed counseling services to assist clients in the arenas of personal, relational and career growth. He is active with the LCPCM association and has delivered training presentations for the MCDA and MCA on the intersection of mental health and career development. More information about his background and services can be found at www.CollaborativeCounseling.pro.

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Surviving as a New Employee in a Screen-to-Screen Environment

By Karol Taylor, GCDFI, CSP, CCMC, JCTC, CCC, CBBSC



Staffing does not stay static just because we are in a pandemic. New hires are on-boarded; employees change jobs; and individuals transfer to new jobs and/or work teams on a regular basis.

Being new in a screen-to-screen communication environment is HARD. If you change jobs, you don't really know your colleagues up close even if you previously knew them from afar. If you are a new hire, you really don't know anyone else but your supervisor and you need to become a team player from a distance.

The organizational culture can also exacerbate situation. For example, the social norm at the SEC is for employees to turn off their cameras during staff meetings. And many SEC employees do not even have cameras on their computers. New people do not get to see the faces of their colleagues as they interact. All-important context clues are lost.

Why is this important? Much of our day-to-day, face-to-face interaction is nonverbal communication. A central function of nonverbal communication is the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. People who are skilled at encoding nonverbal messages have various interpersonal advantages, including being more popular, having larger social networks, and being less likely to be lonely or socially anxious. Can you imagine how it feels when this function is removed? It adds one more hurdle for the new hire to overcome.

Nonverbal communication conveys emotional meaning, so the ability to effectively encode and decode appropriate nonverbal messages sent through facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and touch leads to high-quality interactions that are rewarding for the communicators involved. In a situation where this interactivity cannot happen, communication suffers, and new employees can feel isolated and unwelcome.

Remote work means "less shooting the breeze and random encounters on project status and responsibilities," says [Kevin Rockmann](#), a professor of management at the School of Business at George Mason University. "Personal challenges may include working out of a cramped apartment, dealing with illness at home, managing online school for children, caring for an elderly relative or all of the above." Job-related "struggles, pinch points and frustrations" might include communication frequency or assignment clarity. These issues become more pronounced when you really don't know the people you work with.

When you do not actually know your coworkers, keeping yourself engaged and your productivity high becomes more and more challenging the longer the pandemic stretches on. Here are some tips that might help:

1. Schedule a daily call or video chat with a coworker to help yourself feel like part of the team. This can be a virtual coffee during break. Take this opportunity to ask questions.

2. Ask a coworker to serve as your peer mentor. Peer mentoring can be highly advantageous to both parties. It gives the new person a contact for questions and helps the Peer Mentor develop confidence and pride in their jobs. Encourage Peer Mentors to have daily check-ins to establish a professional relationship and help you feel included.
3. Identify those things which you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
4. Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your supportive colleagues, coworkers, family, and friends.
5. Remind yourself that everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources. While yours is unique, we are all trying to navigate the unknown during the pandemic.
6. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting.
7. Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you. Make an appointment with Career Horizons. We are here to help, and also to listen.
 - a. Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, mailing letters or cards, video chat, and social media.
 - b. Check on others. Helping others improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as [depression and anxiety](#).

Keep in mind that the adjustments we made for our current at-home workplace will help us to adjust to any upcoming changes needed for our return. This is a time for observation and evaluation. It is also a time for extreme self-care. Stay mindful and check in with yourself daily to make sure your emotional “thermostat” (previously mentioned in the April 2019 Career Nuggets) stays regulated. You may be a new employee, but you were hired because of your exceptional skills. Use those skills to your advantage as you find success in navigating your way around your new workplace. If you’d like copy of the April 2019 Career Nuggets please send a message to careerhorizons@sec.gov and one will be emailed to you.)

RESOURCES

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT: <http://textbooks.whatcom.edu/cmst210/chapter/4-4/>

ONBOARDING DURING THE PANDEMIC: HOW TO GIVE NEW EMPLOYEES A RUNNING START
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2020/07/12/onboarding-during-the-pandemic-how-to-give-new-employees-a-running-start/?sh=463fe07d67ef#:~:text=>

CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/mental-health-non-healthcare.html>



Karol Taylor has been a member of MACD/MCA and MCDA for more than 17 years, 13 as an MCDA Board member and executive leader, and 8 on the MACD/MCA Board. Karol is an award-winning expert in the federal job search, but she also has expertise in leadership and organizational

development. The emergence of COVID-19 motivated Karol to consider how people might respond in the new telework-place.

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Newsletter Article Submissions

MCDCA welcomes article submissions on topics of interest to the career practitioner community. We are seeking articles that address emerging trends, best practices (especially as we navigate these uncertain times) and training opportunities. For best consideration, please submit articles (maximum length 700 words, although shorter is preferred) by the 15th of the month prior to the desired month of publication. The newsletter will be published monthly. The article deadline for the April issue is March 15, 2021. For article submissions or questions, please email: Rachel Loock, Editor, MCDCA.Newsletter@MDCareers.org

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