



# From Housework to Human Resources: My Career Journey

Embarking on a professional journey often entails overcoming challenges, seizing opportunities, and evolving along the way. My story is perhaps a testament to a stubborn determination, early lessons in work ethic, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. I'm often asked about my story. So, let's delve right into the narrative of my career to date, shaped by a combination of family values, educational pursuits, and a steadfast commitment to growth.

## 1. The Foundation

My career trajectory traces its roots to my upbringing, where my parents instilled a strong work ethic from an early age. Housework, lawns, and cleaning cars for pocket money were the building blocks of responsibility, laying the foundation for the dynamic journey ahead.

## 2. From Shelves to Supervisor

At my local New World supermarket, my career began. Starting as soon as possible, in an after-school and weekend role, I swiftly progressed from stocking shelves to working in every department. Still surprising when I think back, at the tender age of 16, I was promoted into a Supervisor position, providing my very first experience in any sort of leadership role in a workplace.

## 3. A Pivotal Decision

The transition to university marked a pivotal juncture. Enrolling to study law and commerce at 17, I concurrently entered the world of Human Resources. The initial role as an HR Assistant during summer holidays

opened doors when the company offered to create a full-time position within my first year, provided that I cross-credit my studies to pursue Human Resources. It was an opportunity too good to pass up, and thus began my dedicated journey into the field. This role marked the beginning of a pattern where every four years or so, I sought the next challenge and progression in my career.

#### 4. Defying Ceilings

Despite the CEO's warning, while in my first fulltime role, that not obtaining a degree would impose a ceiling, I was determined to prove otherwise. Every subsequent employer, both in the Private and Public sectors, supported my education, covering fees and time to study, until the completion of my degree some 9 years later (I had also had a house built in the first few years of working). A scholarship for a post-graduate program in Strategic Human Resources at Hult Ashridge added a global dimension to my learning. As my career progressed, I started taking speaker and chair opportunities at conferences and other forums in my field.

#### 5. Challenges and Responsibilities

One notable aspect of my career journey has been the early exposure to significant responsibilities. From a young age, I was entrusted with substantial roles, assigned to large projects, and given the freedom to develop new systems and processes, even for very large organisations and companies. This early autonomy definitely helped nurture my confidence, and it also built resilience that in later years would keep me going. I also put my hand up for social activities at all of the places I have worked; at one time chairing the social club committee for a very large organisation and organising sporting, Christmas, and other large events.

#### 6. A Career Shaped by Growth

Taking on a Human Resources Manager role at 24, managing a significantly larger team, presented challenges. As I progressed into more senior roles, I did come across some of the traditional gender and age biases, but my determined spirit prevailed. Progressing to a General

Manager HR role, I navigated expanding operations into other countries, and gained exposure to governance. I was asked to participate on a number of committees/projects in the community too.

### 7. Board Roles and Consulting

The HR and employment relations (ER) consultancy phase marked a diverse chapter, where I embraced governance roles, including at a national level. My level of experience, accumulated over the earlier two decades, positioned me as a fairly versatile consultant. Tackling challenges from various sectors, supporting companies with strategic planning, training and coaching people-managers at all levels, and assisting clients across the full range of HR/ER activities, I continued to learn and grow over the next decade.

### 8. Entrepreneurial Leap

In early 2023, I took what felt like a very bold step at the time and established my HR/ER Consultancy company. This entrepreneurial leap allowed me to further diversify my skill set (perhaps more so than I really wanted, in some areas), with having to implement finance, marketing, and IT systems for my new business, and opening new horizons for much, much more to come.

In reflection, my career is a testament to the transformative power of early lessons, the importance of education, and the resilience needed to break through perceived limitations. As the journey continues, I eagerly anticipate the next chapter, fuelled by the same passion and determination that has defined my career to date.