

Diary of a Gen X Job Hunter

Chapter 1 - What's my Story?

Redundancy, Reflection and Reinvention



*By Nick
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The Secret
DIARY
of
ADRIAN MOLE
aged 13 $\frac{3}{4}$

SUE TOWNSEND

Where it Began

I was 7 when the first book was released. I got this for either Christmas or my birthday, I can't remember exactly when I read it but at the time, in a difficult childhood, it was a ray of sunshine. Proper escapism into this persons similar world, trials and tribulations. Funny that here I am 43 years later about to share my own.

I've worked from the age of 15. That very first job, a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in a kitchen as a young apprentice earning £36.50 a week. My mum would take £20 of it for board. The rest went on the music I could afford (which was often loaned from the local library) and custard creams. I still love them to this day!



LEAVING HULL

The moment I turned 16, I left Hull and my little sister behind (with a release signature from my parents as I wasn't 17 yet) and took the 7.5 hour train journey to Plymouth to join the Royal Navy as chef.

The clay animation of Jackie Wilson's Reet Petite was playing on the station café TV. The Navy chapter is most certainly a spin off chapter in its own right, but in a nutshell the Navy gave me discipline, respect for authority, teamwork and the ability to cook, clean and iron. It also gave me my passion for travel after being lucky enough to see a lot of the world I wouldn't have ordinarily.

You could say this is where my work ethic, passion for travel, need for diversity and big company security started. I never had any real desire for promotions at the time, I just wanted to learn fast and do the best possible job I could do.

The skills I come to rely on today, self-awareness, emotional intelligence and reflection, just weren't a factor.

THE PIVOT

I continued as a chef in 'civvy street' before a complete career change to contact centre work as an advisor and right there is the pivot that started my L&D and operational journey.

Now don't worry, this isn't a wordy recount of my CV. I think this is a good point to skip 20 years to 2025. A lot of your journeys will be the same from advisor to trainer, to leadership and so on, so you can fill in blanks (or review my LinkedIn profile).

In those 20 years I've been made redundant a couple of times. Each time, they led to bigger and better things. I was either in the right place at the right time, fortunate or deserving of that opportunity. I think it was a mix.

Based on those redundancy experiences, I'd never had any qualms or fears about redundancy. Even this time around my feelings about it didn't really change and if I put my hand on my heart knew it was due. The strategy had been set, the team had effortlessly swung into action, and as a result, there was less need for me. I was going on my annual 10 day holidays and coming back to no 'turds' in the pool and a manageable inbox. It was a great place to be in all honesty.

My only concern was 'what is my story' when I get out, there.

FINDING CLARITY

“You do realise your sending me out into a very sticky and difficult market place at 50 years old?” was one of my lines to the HR VP and COO during one consultation meeting.

I knew I was never going to jump straight into another role. Firstly I needed time to breath, relax, detox for a while. I'd not stopped since the YTS. Giving my best in every single role I'd held. Secondly, what was I now offering business?

I did know at some point I would just have to get back on the horse but what was my story?

I've lead training delivery functions and most recently a vendor management function, to great effect, I must say (It's my diary after all). However in that 20 year period, the one constant has been change. One of the greatest things about being a Gen X is the phenomenal amount of change we've seen and adopted. I've made shapes in the shadows of an acetates projector, created PP slides with an athlete hurdler in the corner, had animations flying in from all directions, to what we see today. A world tailored to learning in the flow of work, virtual facilitators, VR goggles and A.I.

The A-Z of training delivery. From Acetate to Zoom, watch this space!

FINDING CLARITY

Since COVID, training delivery has changed. We all know that. Delivery was reducing as businesses decided where they could maximise their funding, and vendor management became more of the hot focus. My career was turning 'squiggly' and less linear.

In Chapter 2 I'll take more about 'The Noise' but one thing was becoming abundantly clear out there. You need a story and to be able to not only articulate it, but demonstrate it.

How does what you do, solve that hiring manager's/businesses problem?

That takes a really deep look at what your passionate about. What my experience shows I can do versus what I'd really like to do next. I was at a real crossroads and it was tough to navigate and decide where to go next, Delivery, VM, Org & People Dev or Operational.

After a long period of reflection, some mind mapping and a lot of vinyl playing in the background, I was decided, based on the fact at a senior level a lot of the skills I now possess are transferable.

REINVIGORATE

I picked out the 4 areas I was really comfortable with and before I created my first LinkedIn post and application, I created a draft with those four areas. I asked a variety of my most recent stakeholders if they would validate those areas. All said yes and would be happy to be included and provide further insight if needed.

This felt huge, organised and logical. Very me. So, I took the leap and I posted. That post is on my LinkedIn page and throughout December, helped me organise my thoughts and get this thing started.

A recap of those four:

- 1/ Setting a clear vision and strategy
- 2/ Outstanding service delivery
- 3/ Employee journeys
- 4/ Client and customer satisfaction.

Wrapped in those 4 is a story of leadership, capability, quality, purpose and drive. My Story and one I'm confident talking about and sharing. . .

Next week: Chapter 2. What's with all this Noise?

Cutting through The Noise to give my own personal experiences and observations since starting the job search.

Next week:

Chapter 2 - The Noise

In the next chapter I'll talk about cutting through the employment market noise.

My experiences, observations and resulting actions that helped put me in peak frame of mind for the job search.

The progress I've made and a reflective look at my early successes failures in January

