

BOOK REVIEW

Claudia Moşneagu¹

Sorin Gabriel Anton (ed.), Camelia Nicoleta Medeleanu, Mihai-Bogdan Petrişor. *Ghid pentru Angajare 2020+ [Employment Guide 2020+]*. Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iaşi, 2020.

An enriching self-reflection invitation, the book brings together major takeaways from advanced research in career development, doubled by experienced professionals sharing their learnings along their path to success.

The first chapter offers a market overview with its current realities as well as a projection into the future of the workforce. Readers are offered a preview of career options, organisational structures and a sneak peek into the future as the experts view it, not forgetting about demographics with its generational shifts and work dynamics throughout various historical contexts.

A zoom in on the generational characteristics briefly touches upon what is sometimes referred to as „generational conflict”. As workplaces vary so often from a both demographics and cultural dimension, we can see that in practice this aspect is still a struggle for management teams, while in theory the actual examination of underlying causes for this perceived conflict requires further investigation and so we see people taking different stands to this topic and not much consensus on the underlying phenomena. In the present book, the view of the authors directs the readers towards an understanding approach and the underlying condition of cultivating positive relations. We believe this can only be beneficial for the mechanics of the workplace interactions, no matter which side they can be on.

An in-depth analysis on research and academic careers invites us to see it at the „intersection between private an public sector” while describing the motives behind its social desirability - considering the contribution to innovation and to societal progress at the forefront of mind . We could argue that there has never been a better time for research to capture public attention than the present days.

The financial aspect, a quite sensitive subject specifically in the Romanian work space, is discussed as being a secondary factor when it comes to considering a first job (and we could add it is rarely the only motivating factor when making significant career decisions). The chapter also offers an in-depth analysis on the total rewards compounds that students would consider looking at their future employer. It should not come as a surprise that the data shows learning

¹ Manager Europe | Next-Gen Talent, Electronic Arts (EA),
claudiamosneagu@yahoo.com.

opportunities as being of utmost importance for first-job seekers and it is one of the reasons behind strategic organizations' mind shifts we see more often recently. We could add that there is growing evidence that next to these factors, flexibility work arrangements is gaining terrain, especially since the pandemic has made working from home the new normal.

On the other hand, competencies that align with the growing demands of this ever-shifting market are key to getting us land on the desired career direction. In line with experts' advice excerpts displayed on the pages of the book, a special attention is drawn to transferrable skills which should be seen as the guiding light at the beginning and along any career path.

Continuing along the lines of the the previous chapter, **the 2nd chapter** begins with a few practical considerations regarding competencies, means of continuous learning as well as direct sources to reach these goals. Some very thought-provoking exercises aimed to support career decision making process are inserted along the chapter, in a smooth blend with useful books on the subject and underlying research-based theories.

Students who are considering continuing their studies instead of immediate employment are offered a general overview on Master's and PhD programs for those individuals who are willing to specialize or decide on a domain shift following their Bachelor's degree.

A highlight of the chapter which is centered around lifelong learning experiences brings to front of mind the idea of staying current with your chosen career path skills. Some excerpts could build a strong recipe for success, similar to some of Newport's „Deep Work” key takeaways. The need to embrace change requires a continuous exercise of juggling with primary and secondary skills, while adding new ones to our „portfolio”. Luckily for students, professionals embrace this model as well and organizations seem to have shifted to a framework that builds success based on potential, with supportive programs and training designed for this segment of employees. There is a quite significant supportive library of ready-accessible resources inside the pages of the book, for students keen on gaining this experience or for those who are interested in expanding their knowledge into the matter.

Nonetheless, testimonials from fellow students who have pursued extracurricular activities or volunteering experiences can be extremely enriching and a powerful tool to leverage when deciding whether this is the right path one can choose. The examples in the book are additional arguments in support of getting immersed into those programs, building a powerful network as a foundation for your career. The same section also brings into light a concept that is gaining growing popularity recently – coaching and its benefits, one of the very important ones being the insightful conversations, the „a-ha moments” and the availability to answers we may already have and for which we gain more trust to search for into our minds.

The 3rd chapter offers a holistic overview on the conditions and steps to land a first job, from both the candidate and the employer's perspective, as well as

a step-by-step guide. Considering data already available on the market, the chapter is an invitation for the students to make sure that, before anything, they start off right – from the initial step of researching for the desired employer to creating the curriculum vitae and preparing for the interview. A very useful comparable analysis differentiates between private companies and state-owned companies or governmental institutions. While these two types of employers are very different considering the application process, recruitment and induction, etc. we could argue that there is also room for similarities if we think about competencies demonstrated for a particular role. The potential value added to the company correlated with employment background is a matter which stays in candidate's hands and their ability to bring that forward in any employment discussion. A rigorous preparation also means tailoring the CV as well as the speech and the approach, for that specific role, instead of a general employment background presentation, considering the recruiters and hiring managers would decide on the candidate that best fits their needs, comparing with other candidates. Recently, in the decision-making process we observe more and more a tendency to step away from what was previously known as „culture-fit” and a transition to „culture-add” so we could add that the steps taken in preparation for the interview implies at the end of the day, balancing it with the individual's personality and its true colors.

Lastly, the guide ends with an intro into the first steps into the long-awaited first job/new job, a sequential walkthrough the journey initiating describing both administrative aspects as well as workplace synergetic (expected behaviors and potential challenges). An extremely useful section talks about labor law details, as the present times bring significant changes to labor code that impact employees at all levels. To make sure the professional experience stays a positive one on the long run, it is highly recommended that the legal matters are thoroughly documented and respected.

By reading the guide's entire section, students are equipped with tools on how to overcome most challenges that employees face in dealing with new employers and efficient manners to prevent their recurrence on future occasions.