



# THE GBS CAREER CORNER BOOKLET



*WITH SALLY FLETCHER, HEAD OF ONLINE EVENTS*



# INTRODUCTION

What is a career in shared services? Since its inception in the 90s, the answer has changed dramatically as the growth in opportunities matches the expansion of services and the technologies used to deliver them. Whereas once a shared services career would have meant long periods in transactional, repetitive roles, and with cost-saving as the sole driver, this is no longer the case. The introduction of digital technologies and value-added services means you can now find newer roles in fields such as data analytics, marketing, digitization, customer experience, and traditional finance and IT jobs.

Working within a GBS environment provides a unique opportunity from which to gain perspective over the entire organization. Furthermore, unlike in many career paths (where once you get a few years under your belt, moving roles means a drop in salary or responsibility), because of GBS' need for rapid growth and flexibility, non-conventional moves are possible. I've seen accountants take on digital transformation roles, recruiters morph into customer experience managers and finance take on data analytics. Indeed, the ability to be agile and go where needed is an incredible strength for shared services professionals who want to get ahead.

But although GBS provides incredible career opportunities it does require the right skills to be honed and work to be done. Continuous improvement is part of shared services DNA and that includes continuous improvement of yourself, so learning from those who've reached the top is essential.

That's why SSON has developed the [GBS Careers Corner](#). A series of interviews with senior-level GBS professionals talking about their own career paths, what they did to get noticed, what made an impact and their advice for the next generation. These interviews have been released weekly as part of SSONext (SSON's podcast).

The goal of this booklet is to summarize the three key takeaways from each of the interviews conducted so far. If you read closely you'll notice trends have emerged in mentorship, adding technology skills, and being open-minded about where you work.

If you have any career questions you would love answered, please submit them to [sally.fletcher@ssonetwork.com](mailto:sally.fletcher@ssonetwork.com) or contact Sally on [LinkedIn](#).

# THE ART OF SELECTING A SHARED SERVICES MENTOR

WITH GEORGE CONNELL, FORMER VP STRATEGY AND FINANCE, SHELL GBS

1

Working in and leading a shared service center can be hugely politically charged at some points. Implementing a SSC is a big, dynamic, and sensitive change that will draw upon all your leadership skills, so make sure you hone and demonstrate them.



2

**Request the support of a mentor**, particularly one who compliments your strengths and can help you fill in your skill gaps. Not only will this help you do your current job better, but it also differentiates you on your CV as it shows you're taking an active interest in your career.

3

If you are moving roles then pick your organization well. Ensure that if you are going to be leading or working in a senior position within shared services there is some kind of company mandate for SSC and leadership support for what you're doing. The absence of this makes an already difficult job even more challenging.

# TAKING A LEADERSHIP POSITION AND DEALING WITH THE UNEXPECTED

WITH GARY CRITCHLEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES, QATAR AIRWAYS



1

Tell an interesting story on your CV by thinking about your CV and career in chapters. Those chapters could either sit with different organizations, different functions within the same organization or even different projects within the same function. The idea is to create interest but also demonstrate that you have done different things.

2

You don't get as much credit for problems that were expected. Being able to deal with things the business didn't anticipate is what gets you noticed, so being able to cope with the unexpected and corral multi-functional teams together to formulate a plan and make it happen – is where you'll differentiate yourself. So next time something unexpected occurs in your business, look at it in this context and consider it as an opportunity to stand out.

3

**Take a leadership position:** whether it's delivering an audit action, filling in a company survey, or leading a major transformation project, be first. If you can build that as an ethos in your team and personally model and demonstrate that, it shows positive intent, differentiates you, and is fantastic for your business and your career.



# PROVING YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF UNPOPULAR TASKS

WITH HELEN EMMETT, CFO, EXPERIAN UK AND IRELAND



1

Don't be afraid to put your hand up and volunteer for a task, project or available role! **There is never a perfect time to take advantage of an opportunity**, so sometimes you have to take that risk and just go for it.

2

Look out for tasks and projects that aren't universally appealing to colleagues, maybe they're not the most exciting tasks or they're hard work – but these are great opportunities for you to get in there and prove your worth and your leadership potential.

3

Give some context to your CV when applying abroad especially if it's a brand that isn't internationally well-known. For example make sure to add if your University was ranked one of the top in the country, or how big the organization is that you are applying from. This also applies when zooming in, how big is the team your leading, how many processes does the SSC operate, has it won any awards, etc.

# KEEPING A LEARNING MINDSET AND REVERSE MENTORING

WITH PAUL BRYANHILL, FORMER VP FINANCE OPERATIONS, NBC UNIVERSAL

1

When you are presenting a new idea or vision to your manager, **make sure you have thought it through holistically**. So not only what it can bring to the organization, but what are the pitfalls and the impact to business as usual. Demonstrating that you have thought through other eventualities is also showcasing your leadership potential.



2

If you get opportunities from your organization to develop, take them, even if you don't think you need them. Keeping a learning mindset is vital to your own development but also in allowing people to see that you are someone that can adapt to different projects and unforeseen circumstances. On a personal note, stating that you have undertaken something like communications or design thinking training is an objective, fact-based way of selling yourself on your CV and has more impact than just writing 'good communicator.'

3

Try **reverse mentoring** and take feedback from people more junior in the business than you, not just your managers. This helps challenge your way of thinking and brings a fresh perspective. If you are trying to improve the way you manage, it arguably makes more sense to take advice from people who you are managing as opposed to someone senior and remote from the team.

# THE POWER OF COLLABORATION TO EMPOWER AND UPSKILL EMPLOYEES

WITH DENNIS LUI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF VITAL SHARED SERVICES



1

Look to collaborate with technology vendors and local educational institutions to upskill your staff. You don't need to do it all yourself! Working with outside experts can be an inexpensive way to provide top-level training and qualifications to your staff, which will enthuse them with purpose and excitement for their careers.

2

As a GBS leader you need to have a combination of the following three skillsets: Ability to manage groups of people, competence in operational technology and the ability to work not just within your own organization but across the broader ecosystem of customers, suppliers and other government departments.

3

Using RPA and no-code, low-code technologies is a fantastic way to give your employees new career opportunities and to transform their job roles. By giving staff the opportunity to become experts in these technologies you can reduce turnover and empower them to be the boss of robots. **They have the power of creation in their hands.**

# GENERATING PRIDE, RESILIENCE AND BELONGING IN YOUR SHARED SERVICE CENTRE

WITH DR. FRANK SCHÜHLER, MANAGING DIRECTOR, DHL GLOBAL FORWARDING'S GLOBAL SERVICE CENTER



1

If you get the chance, **get international experience** – the exposure you will get to diverse cultures and people will help enormously if you lead a global business services.

2

Use shared services reputation as an underdog to generate pride, energy, belonging and comradeship within your team. You can also use it to generate resilience within yourself – which you will need when managing large transformation projects.

3

It's not enough to be tech savvy. You need to learn to translate the technology into tangible business benefits. Take the initiative to learn a new skill and further your career.



# GROWING THROUGH MISTAKES AND WORKING ABROAD

WITH EDOARDO PENNICHE, VP GBS, APTIV



1

If you want to grow a career in shared services, Edoardo advises you to start at the bottom. You need to learn the details from a process and structure level. Being process-oriented will help you enormously as you go through your career in GBS.

2

If you have the opportunity to get international experience, take it. Learning from others with an international mindset will help shape you as a leader and lead to new opportunities, and new perspectives. **Don't be afraid of the uncertainty!**

3

Making mistakes is part of the journey and learning process for GBS. If you're a shared services leader, it's important to develop tolerance and acceptance of mistakes in your team. Without this, our teams will always be limiting themselves as they are afraid to try and take those risks necessary to grow and innovate. You want people to feel free and be entrepreneurial in your shared service teams.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF DYNAMIC CAPABILITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN GBS

WITH KAI-EBERHARD LUEG, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES, SIEMENS AG



1

A good change culture and dynamic capability are of utmost importance. **Shared services is about change, transformation and growth**, so you must be able to question yourself and your services.

2

Being able to speak directly and honestly in a meeting is a huge advantage. You need to be crystal clear about the problems you're facing and targets for your team, in order to ensure you're all driving in the same direction. Therefore you should be direct and honest about yourself in your interview.

3

Having a work-life balance is a huge advantage as it demonstrates self-respect and means that you can recharge in your downtime and put in 100% when you are at work. So it is ultimately more productive. It also means that your career is more sustainable and you'll likely be with the company for longer as you're not in danger of suffering from burnout.

# WHICH GBS ROLES ARE HOT AND HOW TO CHOOSE A GBS ORGANIZATION

WITH DEBORAH KOPS, PRINCIPAL AND CO-FOUNDER, SOURCING CHANGE



1

**Build a leadership brand** – show up, speak, write and make sure you have something to say something new. Write and network on LinkedIn.

2

Picking the right organization is important – does that organization understand what it takes to build a GBS. Have they calculated the cost, the time and the resources it will take? If they don't know this, then you can't be sure they are fully committed to the model.

3

Know where you are and where you want to be. This means understanding what capabilities you currently possess and what capabilities you need to build and showcase to reach your goal. Have a career passport so you can track and plan this.