

DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & ORGANIZATION
CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

YOUR CAREER: WHAT'S NEXT AFTER YOUR PHD/POSTDOC?

FLW RESEARCH DAY
29 NOVEMBER 2017

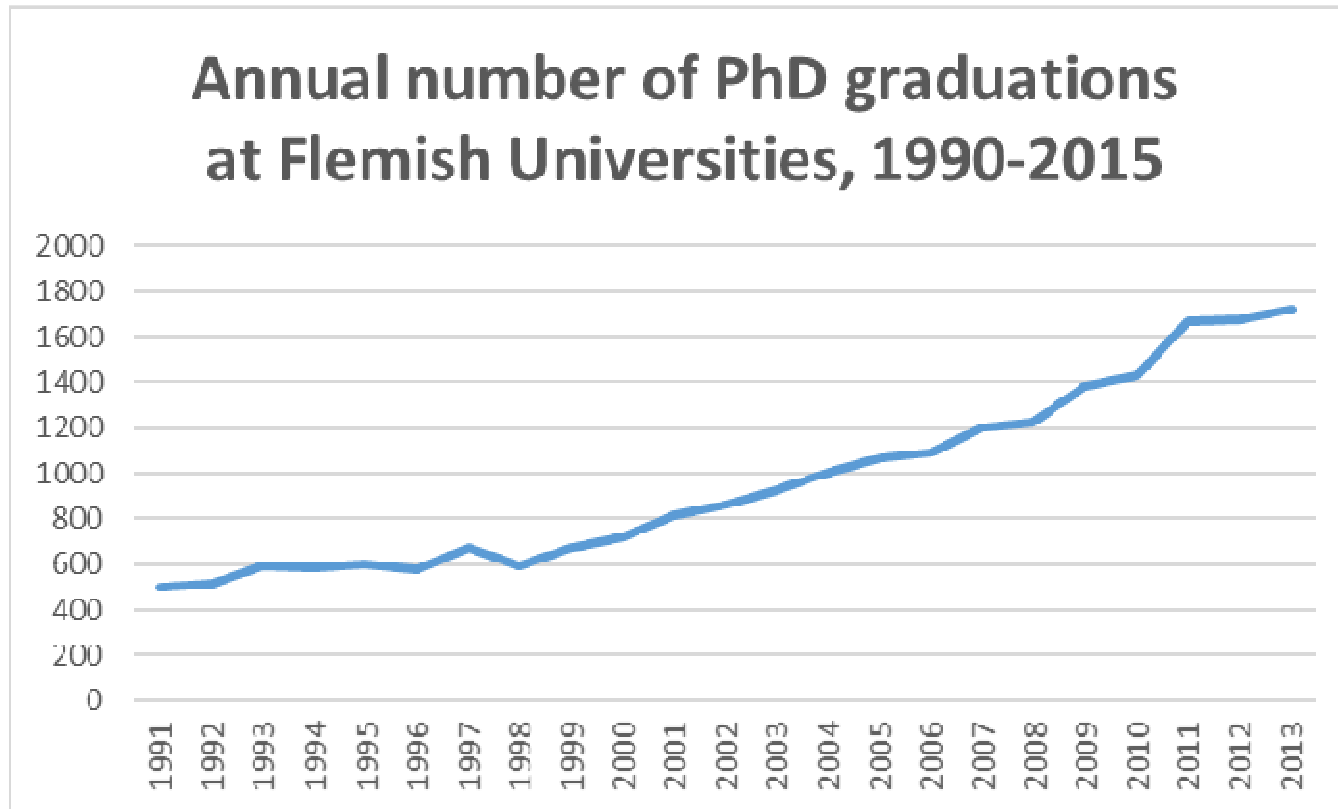
dr. Jasmien Van Daele

SOME FACTS

PHD IN NUMBERS

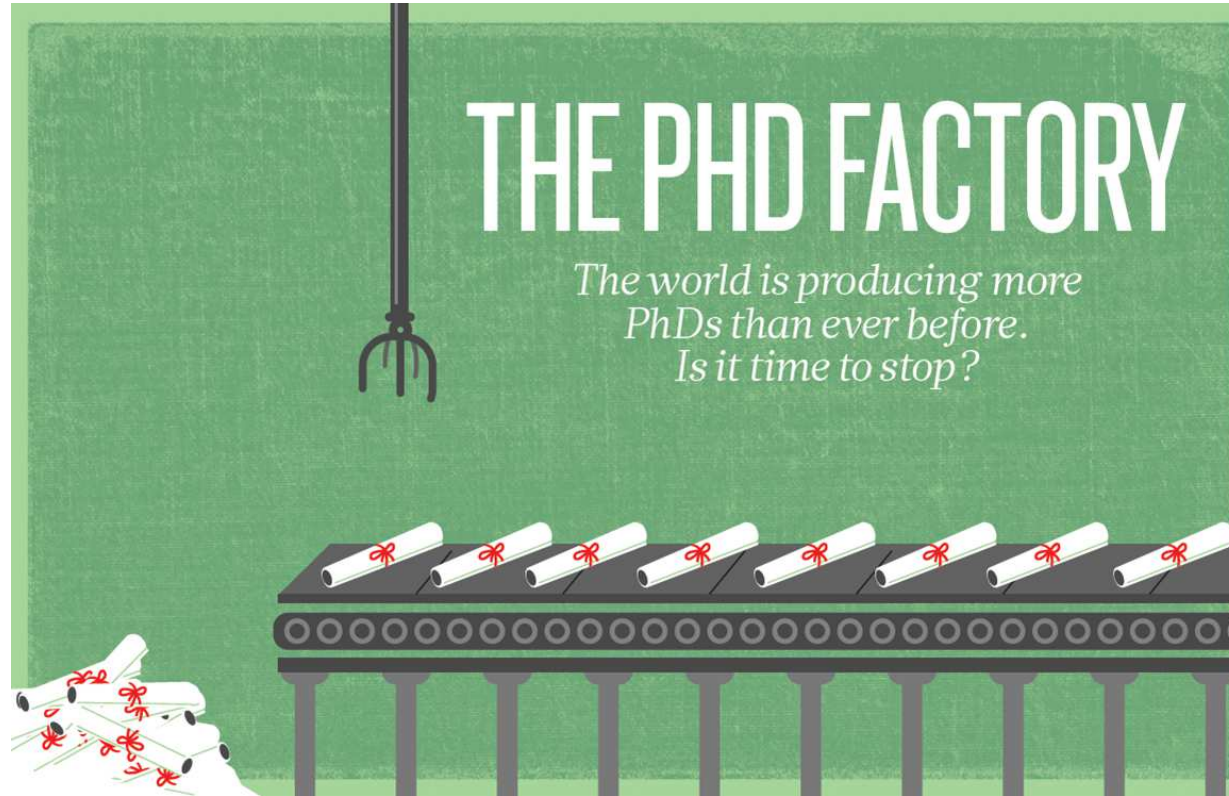
Humanities:

- Flemish universities: 73 (1995-96) → 245 (2014-15)
- UGent: 10 (1995-96) → 74 (2014-15)

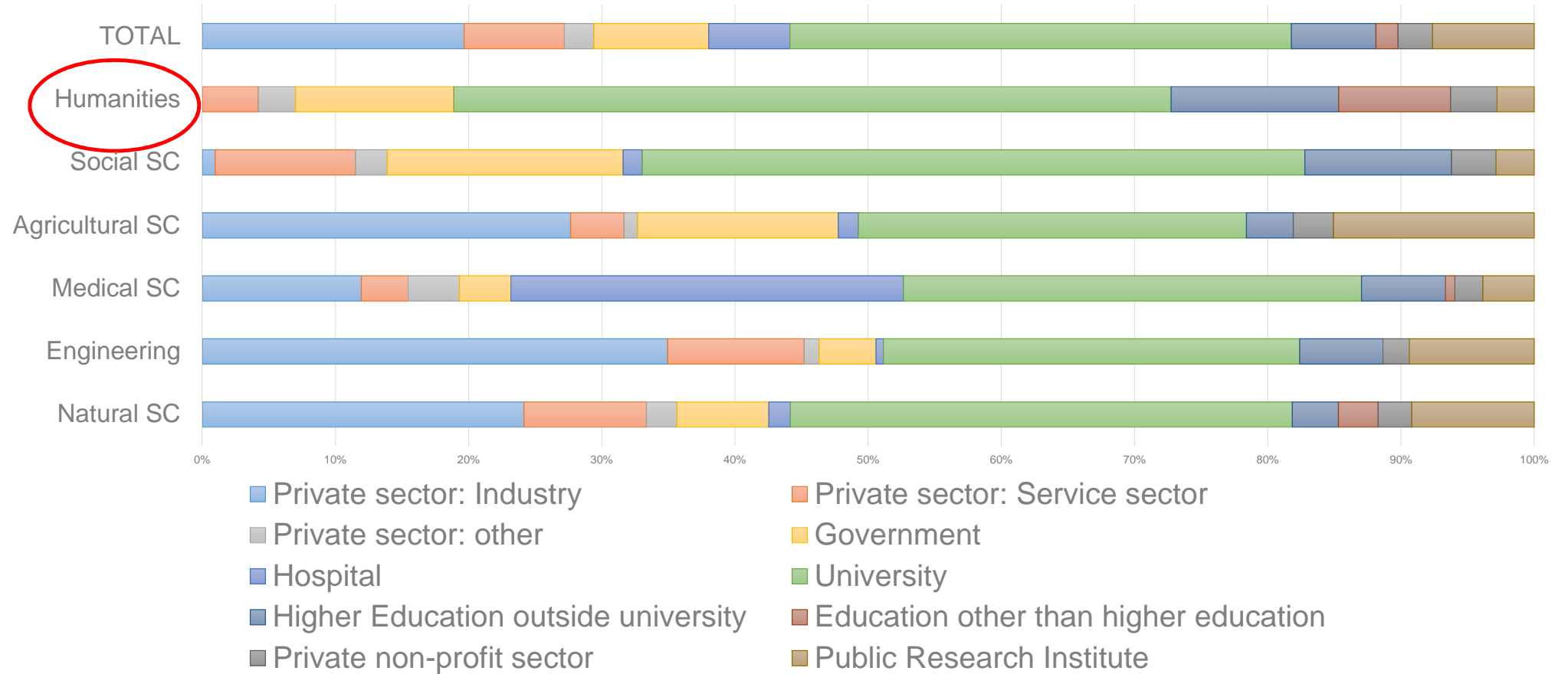


THE PHD FACTORY

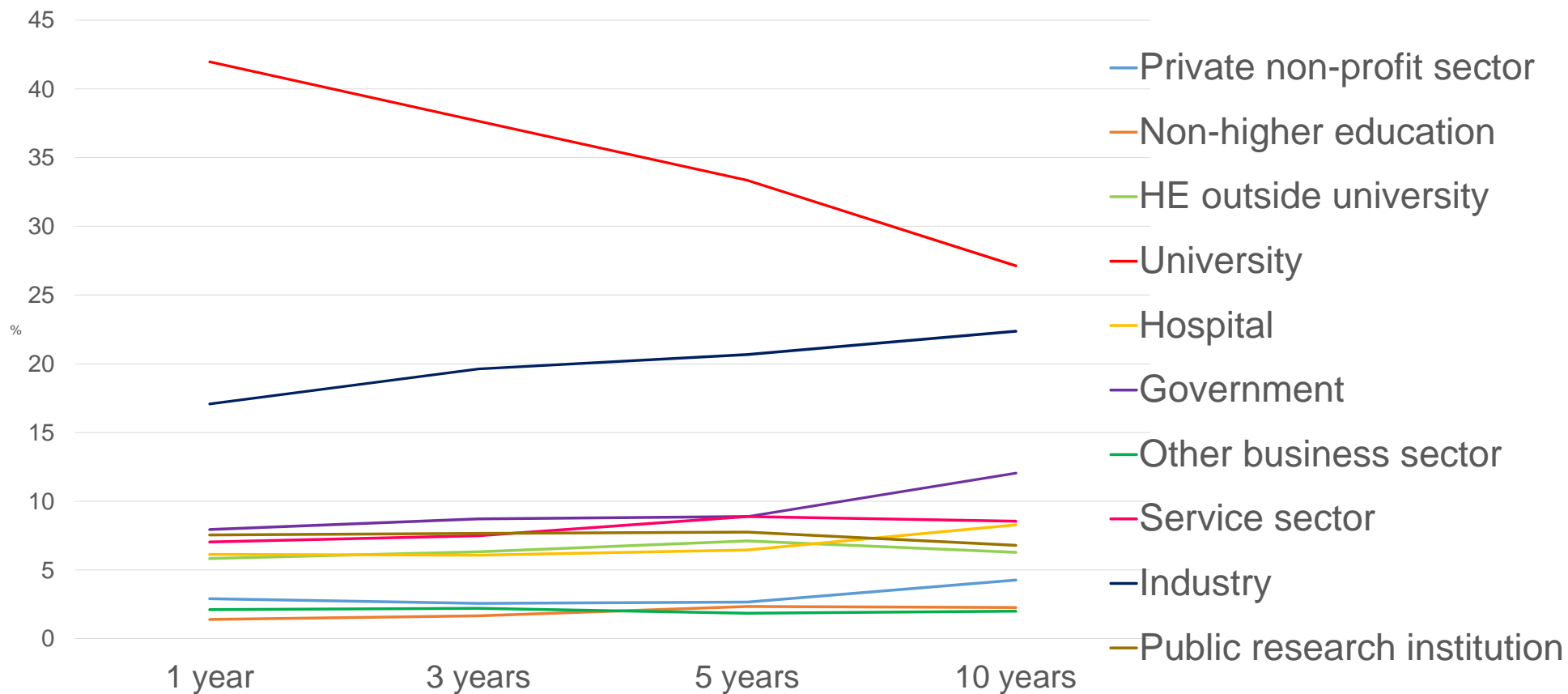
*The world is producing more
PhDs than ever before.
Is it time to stop?*



Employment 3 years after PhD



SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT OF PHD GRADUATES UNTIL 10 YEARS AFTER GRADUATION



Source: Belgian Science Policy Office, CDH Database 2013 - Data for Flanders

WITH A PHD IN HUMANITIES ...



Source: Belgian Science Policy Office, CDH Database 2013 - Data for Flanders

WHY CAREER PLANNING?

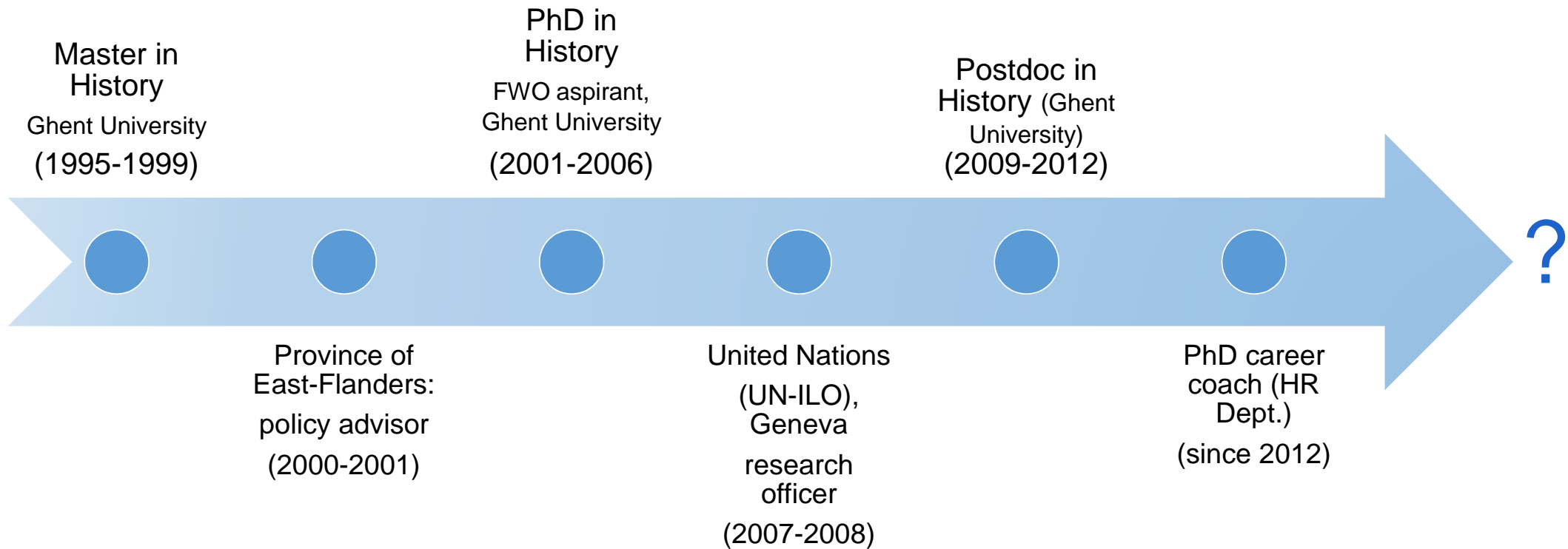
- Do not ignore the facts: reality check!
- A PhD or postdoc is a temporary job by default
- Academia is rather 'inward' looking: too much focus on *academic careers*
- Exploring your alternatives takes time: what's your strategy?
- Labour market today: career management is a skill you'll need anyhow (1 job in a lifetime does not exist anymore)

WHO AM I?

A PHD IN HISTORY WHO BECAME A

PHD CAREER COACH ...

MY CAREER



IN HINDSIGHT ...

- A straight line? From humanities to human resources
- No! A '*zig zag*' career (between academia and policymaking)
- I had no career plan ... and discovered that life is full of (often unforeseen) opportunities
- I followed my heart and made a career switch

YOUR CAREER PLAN?

THE PLANS:



THE PLAN YOU
TELL YOUR
ADVISOR

- "I'M GOING TO BE A
PROFESSOR AT A MAJOR
RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
AFTER I GRADUATE."



THE REAL
PLAN

- LOOK FOR CAREER
ALTERNATIVES.



THE SECRET
PLAN

- BECOME A
BAKER/ROCKSTAR/WRITER.

JORGE CHAM © 2012

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

“Dare to think!”

**Not only in your
research,
but also about yourself
and your own future**





3 million dollar questions!!!

- 1) What do I *want*?
(motivation, what gives me energy, values)
- 2) What *can* I do?
(skills, competencies, strengths, qualities)
- 3) What is out *there*?
(jobs, labour market, where to go)

HOW TO BUILD YOUR ACADEMIC CV?

- Present your work regularly → national and international networks
- Organize masterclass/workshops/conferences
- Collaborate with people inside and outside your group
- Publish your work: build an academic network
- Try to arrange some teaching

WHAT IF YOU DON'T WANT THIS?

- Stay calm
- Try to approach it positively: “What **do** I want”?
- Be open with your supervisor / network: talk to people
- See what your university has to offer (career coach, workshops, job fairs, ...) or take external career coaching (loopbaancheques!)

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU! CAREER SUPPORT @UGENT

- Workshops & training courses
 - ✓ Cluster “career management” (Doctoral Schools)
 - ✓ Career Management for Postdocs (Postdoc Talent Management, DPO)
- Mentoring for postdocs (MenZa/MenTa)
- One-to-one career coaching for PhD students and postdocs
- Online career resources (e-tools and practical guides)
- Labour market events (“Job Market for Young Researchers”, 27 March 2018 – *mark in your agenda!*)
- Postdoc Community as a grass-roots organization/peer-to-peer support network
- Network of external career coaches (VDAB career vouchers)

What's next?

A practical guide for exploring your job opportunities outside academia

Chiara San Giorgi
Jasmien Van Doele

FULL TEXT ONLINE available (in Dutch/English):

https://www.ugent.be/en/work/career/postdoc-talent-management/researcherscareertoolkit/at_download/file



EXERCISE: MY SKILLS

A non-academic career?

“Having a PhD is not a skill, it’s a degree”

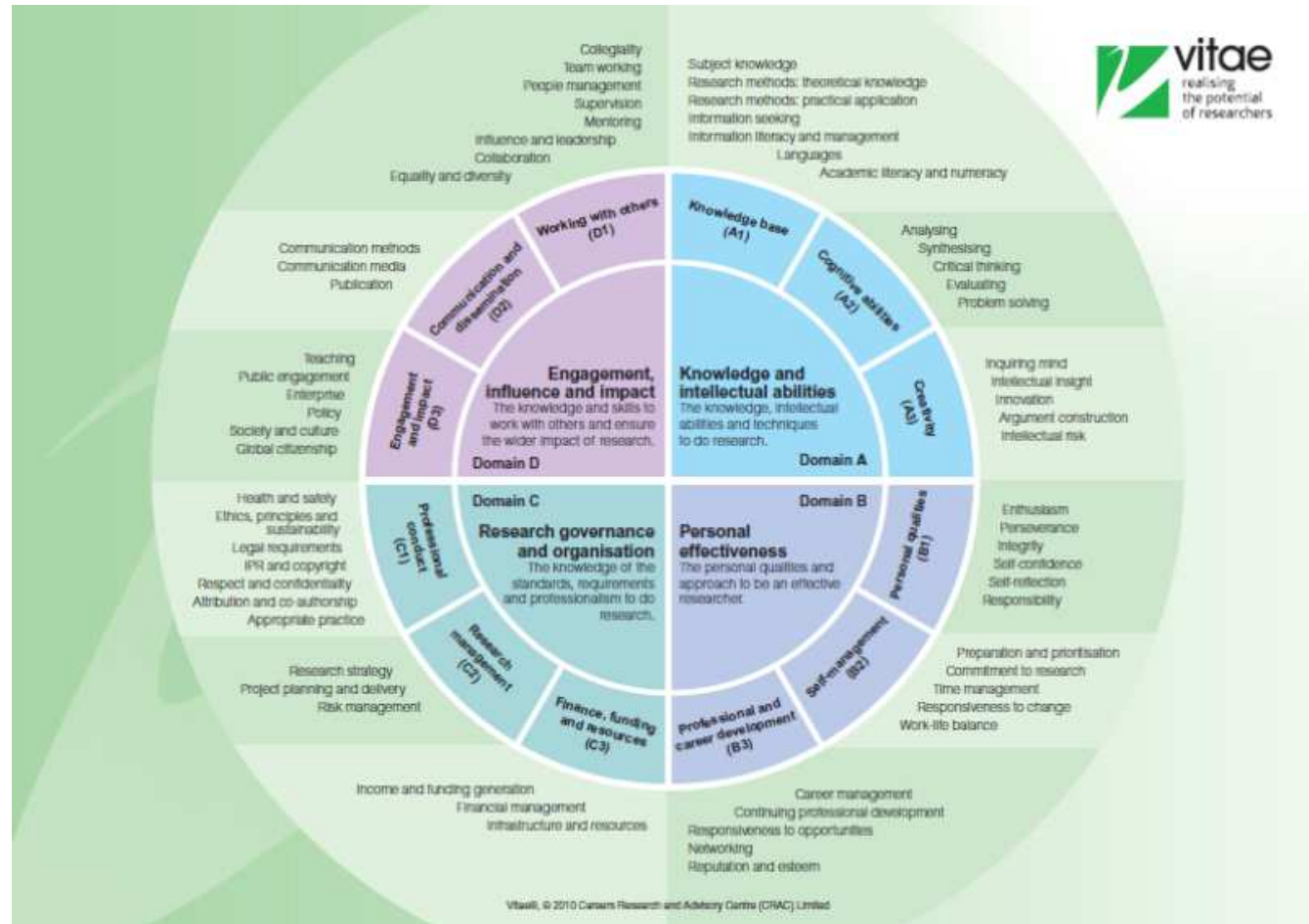
Think of what a normal working day currently looks like for you.

- Which tasks do you regularly perform? What do you actually do?
- What are you good at?
- What do and what don’t you like in your current work?

Translate your PhD experience into skills & activities!

LEARN THE 'SKILLS LANGUAGE'

Researchers Development
(competencies & skills)
Framework (Vitae, but
there are many more
instruments – check the
internet!)



SET OF PHD SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Analysis & Problem-Solving

- Define a problem and identify possible causes
- Comprehend large amounts of information
- Form and defend independent conclusions
- Design an experiment, plan, or model that defines a problem, tests potential resolutions and implements a solution

Interpersonal & Leadership Skills

- Facilitate group discussions or conduct meetings
- Motivate others to complete projects (group or individual)
- Respond appropriately to positive or negative feedback
- Effectively mentor subordinates and/or peers
- Collaborate on projects
- Teach skills or concepts to others
- Navigate complex bureaucratic environments

SET OF PHD SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Project Management & Organization

- Manage a project or projects from beginning to end
- Identify goals and/or tasks to be accomplished and a realistic timeline for completion
- Prioritize tasks while anticipating potential problems
- Maintain flexibility in the face of changing circumstances

Research & Information Management

- Identify sources of information applicable to a given problem
- Understand and synthesize large quantities of data
- Design and analyze surveys
- Develop organizing principles to effectively sort and evaluate data

SET OF PHD SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Self-Management

- Work effectively under pressure and to meet deadlines
- Comprehend new material and subject matter quickly
- Work effectively with limited supervision

Communication

- Prepare concise and logically-written materials
- Organize and communicate ideas effectively in oral presentations to small and large groups
- Write at all levels — brief abstract to book-length manuscript
- Debate issues in a collegial manner and participate in group discussions
- Use logical argument to persuade others
- Explain complex or difficult concepts in basic terms and language
- Write effective grant proposals

SKILLS OF PHDS USEFUL FOR THE EXTERNAL LABOUR MARKET

Fons Leroy, Managing Director at VDAB: “PhDs have a more holistic vision, and many organisations are looking for people who are highly educated and also have the competencies of the future, i.e. being able to think holistically, being critical, innovative, establishing links and thinking outside the box. These are competencies that can be found in PhDs.”

- PhDs have good research skills
- think analytically
- have large experience with writing reports
- can work independently
- have experience in giving presentations
- are quick learners
- have the ability to persevere in harsh circumstances
- are good problem-solvers

10 KEY MESSAGES FROM A CAREER COACH

1. “Stop and take stock”

Step back from the rush of daily work once in a while – make time for this – take a helicopter perspective on where you are – **dare to think** (not only in your research but also about your future self)

2. “Know yourself”

What drives you, what gives you energy, what do you miss in your current job? Know what you are good at.

3. **Follow your heart.** It’s as simple as that 😊.

4. “Dare to choose”

Say Yes! No! – focus on YOUR priorities

5. “Develop a plan B (C, D, ...) or ... many plans A”

Don’t have the tunnel vision that academia is the only track – “you do not *drop out* if you leave, you just move on with your life!” – take a broad horizon/there’s a world out there!

6. **“Get off your ass” (the GOYA-principle)**
Don't stay behind your desk or locked in the library, take advantage of every opportunity (e.g. skills training, go to conferences, build a network).
7. **“Everyone needs supporters and facilitators – you too”**
Discuss not only your research, but also your career aspirations with supervisor, colleagues, friends – find yourself a supportive and challenging network
8. **“Start early on”**
The end of your PhD or postdoc is too late!
9. **“Dare to fail”**
“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. And fail better”
(Samuel Beckett) Bad experiences help you to make good choices.
10. **“Apply the 9 rules above”.**
Just do it!

DO IT! TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT

Ask **5 people who are close** to you (supervisor, parents, partner, good friends, colleagues, ...) **2 questions**:

- 1) What do you consider as my strengths/talents/things that make me stand out from the crowd?
(= your special set of core talents and assets you can share with a future employer ...!)
- 2) In which (types of) jobs do you think I will flourish?



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THANK YOU AND ...
GOOD LUCK IN YOUR
CAREER!