

About

I created the “career maze” on the following page prompted by *The Mission Daily* July 2018 “idea maze” mini-series; podcast episodes [61](#), [62](#), and [63](#). The mini-series arrived when I was already in a period of career reflection trying to decide where I would next invest to manifest what may be my last significant career “pivot.”

The process of crafting this one-page storyline helped me better understand and internalize my career journey. Part of this reflection was to acknowledge that many of my pivots were shaped more by external forces and unanticipated challenges or opportunities, than any well-thought and intentional strategic moves on my part. This became even truer as the timeline advanced, and I hypothesize that others may conclude the same regarding their own trajectories, since increasing financial and family commitments can attenuate willingness to make proactive bold moves in our later years.

I hope that by sharing this example I might motivate others to more deeply understand their own career maze and motivations; and for anyone that might be curious, to better understand mine.

Cheers,

Ray    

School & Career

Greater Good

High School	Math & Science nerd with a goal of becoming an Architect ✗ Father intervenes with "There are too many unemployed architects; go into Civil Engineering given your strength in math and science."	Passion for the outdoors & ecology emerges
College	Start engineering school at University of Illinois; however, the stronger passion is still for competitive cycling, which I had started in High School. ✗ College drop-out Race bicycles full-time and manage a bicycle store. ✗ Not competitive at National-level, and engineering again becomes attractive. Realize passion is stronger for Mechanical (vs Civil) Engineering and re-enter school at ✗ General Motors Institute (now Kettering University)—self-funded by cooperative education working for GM, initially in Manufacturing. ✗ Two (5 th year) thesis offers: one in Manufacturing Engineering & one in Automotive Design. I pick Design, with a nod to earlier Architecture goal. ✗ Working in design I become more interested in research & decide to continue at University of Michigan with intent of Ph.D. and to then teach mechanical engineering. ✗ Alas, too theoretical, & I have itch to get back to industry. I stop education at Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering.	
Early Career	IBM mainframe computers, initially in power & thermal subsystem quality assurance, then manufacturing process engineering, and later cooling mechanical design. I am successfully able to blend manufacturing and design interests. After 10+ years and an IBM downturn, I am feeling drawn to do something more outwardly facing. I apply to business schools and to the Peace Corps. ✗ I am accepted to both & make the safer choice: b-school; however, with intent of pursuing a role in business that positively influences ecology. At Cornell business school in 1994 just as the internet is coming to life. Set aside ecology & go all-in with Information Technology (IT), Marketing, and Organizational Behavior. ✗ During the 2 nd year of business school, I narrow my targeting two options: Product Management and IT Consulting. The job market takes me into the latter.	Volunteer work: Big Brothers Big Sisters, hiking trail maintenance, wildlife tracking & plant growth research
Mid-Career	IT Consultant at Cambridge Technology Partners (CTP) specializing in call centers. After several years, desire to start family & reduce travel. Attracted to the Knowledge ✗ Management (KM) support function as a way to give back to consulting colleagues and reconnect with my passion for learning. Novell acquires CTP, I continue as the leader for the KM function.	Adopt son from Russia
Later Career	✗ Novell implodes and I move to Deloitte leading KM for the Technology, Media & Telecom vertical. My industry interests broaden to include especially Media. I appreciate the firm's commitment to KM and enjoy my increased opportunity to (initially) be more hands-on and to be paid to keep-up with the industry via sector research. A dream-job for the information & learning addict that I am. ✗ However, in time, the hands-on moves offshore and I'm feeling too removed from the front-lines of revenue generation. After several reorganizations, I decide on an early retirement to pursue some of my many other interests.	Volunteer work: community farms
Career Sabbatical	Reenergized and updated from immersion in Product Management, UX, Agile, Business and Data Analysis, and Knowledge Management; after a detour through manufacturing, additive manufacturing, robotics, and Lean Six Sigma I am now ready to get back into the game.	
Next	Realize goal to return to traditional employment in a Business Analyst, Product Owner, Customer Success Manager, and/or Knowledge Management role.	