

Fly High in Your Career in Science - Professor Dr. Leann Tilley, University of Melbourne

Ten tips for early stage researchers seeking a career in discovery and translational research science.

1. Find your area of expertise

- Develop a technique/ instrument/ system.
- Offer to share your expertise with other colleagues.

2. Develop original research ideas

- Read widely. Go to seminars and conferences. Ask questions.
- Talk about your ideas to anyone who will listen.
- Pick a high profile problem that fascinates you.
- Dig deep into your chosen problem.
- Consider how your work fits into the 'big picture.
- Reach out across discipline boundaries.
- Find a supervisor to support and challenge you.

3. Be passionate about your science and your career

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fl4L4M8m4d0>

4. Build your networks

- Be prepared to move institutions.
- An exchange or a position overseas can win you powerful friends.
- Exposure to different ideas and techniques in top labs will put you at the forefront of your chosen research field.
- Today's collaborators are tomorrow's grant and paper reviewers.
- Find some experienced mentors.
- Seek influential sponsors.
- Establish a network of mutually supportive peers.
- Offer to be a mentor yourself.
- "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" - *Helen Keller*
- "Success should not be measured by how far you climb but by how many people you bring with you" – *Prof Asma Ismail, USM VC*.

5. Know and promote your strengths

- Develop your "pitch" so you can clearly articulate your ideas.
- Keep your CV up to date and spend energy on generating points of differentiation.
- Make the most of your successes.
- Let it be known that you are ambitious.
- Ask to be nominated for awards.
- Don't be discouraged by knock-backs.

6. Make a name for yourself

- Introduce yourself to others in the field.
- Share your expertise and ideas at conferences.
- Organise conferences and workshops.
- Visit different labs/ institutions.
- Offer (& ask) to exchange reagents & specialist techniques.

7. Develop a vision.

8. Publish high impact papers

- Seek involvement in highly successful teams.
- Position yourself in an area that is “hot”.
- Delve deeply into your chosen problem using several different (cross-disciplinary) approaches.
- Articulate clearly how your work fits into the ‘big picture’.
- Aim high. Don’t be discouraged by knock-backs.

Explain why your work is important?

Why does the rest of the world need to know now?

9. Apply for grants

- Seek involvement in well-funded teams.
- Position yourself in an area that is well-funded.
- Start applying for small grants (eg travel grants).
- Build up to larger grants. Don’t be discouraged by knock-backs
- Articulate your hypothesis clearly.
- Why is the research worth doing?
- Why are you the best person for the project?
- Are publishable outcomes ensured?

Why this? Why you? Why now?

10. Final tip for success (esp for women)

- Don’t give up.
- Don’t put yourself down. Most people will value you at your own evaluation.
- Choose your life partner well.
- Feel the passion. Enjoy the journey.