



Career Planning

Your Career Plan

Do you know where you want to be 10 years from now? 5 years? 1 year?

The reason for making decisions today about where you want to be tomorrow is so that you have the ability to actually get there. You need to have a Career Plan.

If you don't know exactly where you want to be, you will be wandering aimlessly from position to position *hoping* that somehow it will all work out. Unfortunately, that isn't how it works.

Think of it this way:

If you want to visit a friend

who has moved out of the province, you have to map it out or get directions. If you just start taking one street because it looks like the right way or another street because it seems to be pointing in the right direction, you will **never** get to where you want to go.

The great news is that Career Planning isn't some mystical smoke and mirrors experience. **It's not hard at all.** Just give yourself a little time and ask yourself a few questions and you'll be on the right track. As you have more time in the months and years to come, revisit your Career Plan and determine if it still makes sense for you or if

you need to make any changes.

Yes, this is another task you need to do yourself. You can ask friends, family members and others who know you well if they can provide clues as to what they believe are your strengths and abilities, but only YOU know where



What Are Your Career Strengths?

As you search for the perfect position, or even before you begin your search, you will certainly benefit from spending some time evaluating your career-related strengths. What are career strengths? What makes you a good candidate for the position you are applying for?

There are three areas to consider when assessing your strengths:

1. Knowledge
2. Skill
3. Attitude

Employers are looking for a variety of things when reviewing candidates. For the most part, they want to

know two basic things: will you do the job well and will you get along with the people with whom you will be working.

Hopefully, you will be able to identify what makes one candidate better than another. Use this as a guide to make any necessary improvements **BEFORE** you have an interview.



It is not easy trying to find qualified people to fill vacant positions. Put yourself

in the employer's shoes. Would you want someone sending in a resume with coffee stains on it? Ask any Human Resource Representative and you will hear stories of people who apparently did not know the first thing about making a good impression - on paper or in person. Think about how everything looks from the employer's perspective.

You, however, are going to be armed with the information human resources people want to know. Look at their world - from their perspective - and you will be much better prepared to provide exactly what they are looking for — **A GREAT CANDIDATE.**

What Is the Employer's Perspective?

1. Resumes are used to screen people out—not to screen them IN.
2. An important force behind hiring for an interviewer is the fear of making a hiring mistake.
3. Employees tend to look at what they can get rather than show what they can give.
4. If you don't put forth the effort to make your resume look as good as possible, why would an employer expect you to put forth the effort to do your best in the position?
5. Candidates who have a positive attitude will be more successful than those who do not.
6. Interviewees who are not on time will probably not get to work on time.
7. Leave your cell phone in your car. It does not belong at work and it certainly does not belong in the interview.
8. During an interview, don't just wait for your turn to talk. Listen. Listen closely. There are clues that will assist every applicant in answering questions more effectively if you listen well.
9. Your attitude and behaviour are as important, if not more so, than the experience you bring to any position. From the employer's perspective, you can be trained to do just about anything, but no one can train you to have a good attitude. In a school environment for example, setting an upbeat, positive atmosphere lets students, staff and parents know they are valued and important the moment they walk in the door.
10. Experience is not the same as skill. Talk about your skills, especially the ones you have mastered which FIT the needs of the position. Better yet, describe those skills in terms of what they did for the board or the school that you either last worked for or currently work in. Qualify and quantify your statements whenever possible. Give an example of a particular situation – what did you do?
11. Candidates who can contribute to the bottom line right away are more likely

to get hired than candidates who require a lot of training. (All other things being equal)

12. If you don't dress appropriately for the interview, you have already singled yourself out as someone who doesn't take the process seriously enough. So be sure to dress for success.
13. How well do you know the school or department you are interviewing with? You see, it is not just about the position, it's about *everything related to the position*, too.
14. When your mother dropped you off to visit a friend or relative, she always said, "Mind your manners". The same rules apply to meeting with prospective employers. Be polite, courteous and friendly.
15. Being yourself is important. Making a great impression is important. The result if you add both of those together? Being your BEST.

If you look at things from the employer's perspective, you see the process in a completely different way. Change your own point of view and you have a great opportunity to rise above the crowd.

If you want the "same old - same old" you can do things the same way again and again. If you want things to be BETTER, then you must DO things BETTER.

Putting yourself in the employer's shoes makes a big difference in how you approach your own activities (preparing your resume, cover letter and during an interview).

As you search for the perfect position, or even before you begin your search, you will certainly benefit from spending some time evaluating your personality traits. Why? Only when you truly know yourself, will you be able to make the important choices that affect your career growth. How will you know what makes you happy if you don't know the kind of person you really are?

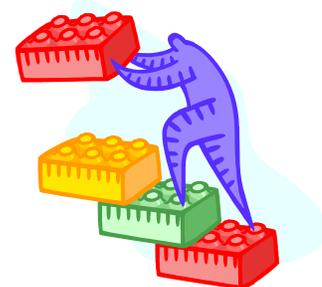
When evaluating your individual traits, keep in mind that these are key characteristics that define "who you are". Be honest with yourself as you review the list

below. Reflect on your finest qualities as you see them today.

NOTE: These are not qualities you hope to possess. They are not characteristics you possessed 10 years ago. These traits define you NOW – at this point in time. People change over time and sometimes their traits change as well.

Accepting	Efficient	Insightful	Productive
Adventurous	Energetic	Intuitive	Professional
Ambitious	Enterprising	Judicious	Punctual
Assertive	Enthusiastic	Logical	Quiet
Careful	Focused	Loyal	Rational
Cheerful	Friendly	Mature	Realistic
Confident	Gentle	Meticulous	Reassuring
Conscientious	Genuine	Open-Minded	Relational
Considerate	Good-natured	Optimistic	Reliable
Cooperative	Gregarious	Organized	Resourceful
Courteous	Happy	Outgoing	Responsive
Creative	Hard-working	Patient	Self-Controlled
Decisive	Helpful	Perceptive	Selfless
Dependable	Honest	Persistent	Sensitive
Devoted	Humorous	Personable	Sincere
Disciplined	Imaginative	Poised	Thorough
Earnest	Independent	Polite	Truthful

As you review this list you will begin to gain some insight into the character – the essence of "who you are". Think about how these attributes will benefit your future employer. Be prepared to inject these specific traits into your resume, cover letter and in your interview. The more you are able to show the employer what an asset you will be to the organization, the better your chances for getting a job offer.



Responding to the Employer's Needs

Why is it important to delve into your character when searching for a position? One reason is that you are better prepared to respond to an employer's questions about the way you handle situations on the job. If you are honest, reliable, confident, decisive, anticipatory of needs and loyal, you will make choices that are well-defined, firm and likely to be in the best interest of the Board. Many employers value an employee with this approach. When you build trust with your em-

ployer, you validate your credibility and increase your desirability.

If you are not a good fit with the organization you are interviewing with, you will have to determine if you will enjoy working there just as the interviewer will have to decide if you will get along well with the other employees.

Understanding your personality traits is an important aspect of making good career decisions. Only when you know

yourself well will you be able to make the important choices that affect your job satisfaction.

Make your Career Planning Choices point YOU on the road to SUCCESS.



The 7 Essential Principles of Career Success

1. A Positive Mental Attitude

As boring as it sounds, this is important. It is probably the most important of all. As you think of yourself so you are. You want positive things to happen to you, you must first have a positive attitude. That means looking on the bright side of things regardless of how tough your day, month and year have been.

If you dread going to work tomorrow; your day will turn out dreaded just as you thought it would be. You are a master of your thoughts, not a slave to them. When you feel you have lost interest; remind yourself why you found interest in the first place. Almost always it will reignite you.

You don't know how to be positive? Start with a single thought. Say to yourself – "Look at the sun today, it is such a nice day." But that is also as easy as it gets. It's tough? That's because you think it is tough. Again, it goes back to your thought process. Make positive thinking part of your career planning success.

Think, feel, and do. Think happy thoughts, feel the energy and act happy. When you do it often enough you become a positive person. The energy needed to think worrying and negative thoughts is the same that is needed to think happy and positive thoughts. Why waste that energy? Think a happy thought now.

2. A Sense of Purpose

We think when people say, what is your purpose in life? The answer must surely be grand. Travel to another country, start

a charity, volunteer at a home and so on and so forth. Sure, if you know that is your calling, so be it. Go ahead and do it. But what if you do not and are still muddling through life? Is life's purpose so easily discovered? If your life's purpose was revealed to you today, would you even know it? Are you willing to pay the price for it? While you discover your purpose in life may I suggest the following?

Your work is not a hindrance to that search for your grander purpose in life. If it is, you have a choice. If it isn't, do not blame your work. Get angry at it, you will drift further from your answer. In fact, your work now is part of the process of discovering your purpose in life. It is filled with hints, clues and challenges that point you towards that purpose.

To do that, find a sense of purpose in your work now. What role do you play? What services do you offer to your fellow colleagues to make this a better place to work and a better world, and also through the services that we offer as a school board? Understand that role and you will understand your grander purpose better, if not, discover it. This is an important part of your career planning and a factor for career success.

3. Joyful Effort

Too many times, you hear people talk about effort. About having to work hard and how you need a combination of working hard and smart. You want to make your career success journey a happy one. Remember these two

words— "Joyful Effort". Effort itself is not enough. You must do it joyfully. Work will become a dread whether through monotony or constant challenges. If it was just plain effort, you would get tired easily.

Joyful effort gives you energy and endurance. It keeps you from being sidetracked by laziness. It keeps you from becoming disillusioned by challenges and adversity.

How do you put joy into effort? One way is to have a strong and healthy mind. How do you have a strong and healthy mind? Think positive. How do you think positive? Seed a positive thought. The other way is to see adversity as lessons that increase chances of success and a test of mental strength. When you see how these efforts contribute to your success (and discovery of your purpose, if that is your goal), you will do things joyfully.

4. Focus

You can be doing many things with joyous effort and yet fail because you do not focus. Being focused means to train your mind not to wander. Do not focus on one goal now only to switch goals before you even do enough for the previous one.

Concentrate on the task at hand and pursue it. When you focus, you gain clarity to situations that are confusing and insights into misconceptions that feed negative thoughts to your mind. Then your career planning success has a higher

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The 7 Essential Principles of Career Success

chance of coming to fruition.

What does this mean? For example, if you have a project that everyone has agreed to pursue but half way someone outside the group criticizes it. Focus.

Those comments only bring confusion to you if you do not focus and allow your ego to get into that situation. You will become confused and distracted. Gain clarity by focusing and you will know those comments aren't important to the pursuit of your goals. Focus is an important factor for career success.

5. Right Ethics

Right Ethics really just means in the things that we say or do – we refrain from being deceitful, refrain from using harsh words, refrain from gossiping, refrain from using divisive speech and refrain from being malicious.

Always think win-win at work (and in life). You have to believe that there is such a thing as win-win. Do not scheme and plot your career success. Even if it happens by such means, it won't last. If you put in the effort, good things will happen to your career soon enough. Your career planning success is really as simple as that.

Of course it is not easy practicing this principle, but the more you are able to do it the more freedom you will feel. The more self-discipline you have in doing it, the less you will be caught up in confusing situations and it frees you from malice and wrong views. Being nice is really just that easy. Practice the right ethics.

6. Embrace Setbacks

There are no failures in life, only setbacks. In your career planning successes do not ever believe in failures. You truly only fail when you give up. So long as you continue to try, do your best and focus on your goals, you will be in the running for success. Learn to embrace setbacks because they teach you what not to do the next time and they test your patience. It is also a test of your resolve.

You are not born to know how to do it all. Hence, everything is a learning process. As with every learning process, there are bound to be setbacks. Even if you know how to do something there is no guarantee of success, as we are prone to make mistakes or forget. Setbacks can be just that. A reminder of what we did wrong or have forgotten. Include this factor in your career planning success.

When faced with setbacks. You can still spring forward. Learn from it, plan and activate what you have learned. You need not beat yourself over it. Cut yourself some slack, so to speak. Minimize the anger and sadness and move on.

7. Teamwork and Support Group

No one can teach you everything. No one can know everything. No one can do everything. You need to know the value of teamwork and the process to build teamwork. You increase your own success when you help the team succeed. The team's goals are fundamentally weaved into your own goals, just as your goals at work are weaved into your per-

sonal goals. Being able to switch gears and offer help to co-workers when it is needed is essential to a smoothly-running workplace. Include others in your career planning success and you will succeed faster and easier.

Build strong social networks to motivate, encourage or just to slap some sense into you when you need it. This network can be made up of individuals who are your friends whom you meet often. It need not and is not meant to be formal. Remember that when you are down and negative you do not need more negative energy surrounding you. You need to remember not to be a positive energy drainer as well in such situations.

Do not go to your friends and expect to be convinced to be positive. Positive people have a tendency to avoid negative people who drain them too often.



Dr. Callaway says: Never lose your sense of humour. The ability to see the funny side of life's awkward situations is what spells the difference between resignation and rejoicing.