



CAREER PLANNING—KNOWING YOURSELF

As you begin to consider various career options, you will need to: 1) do some assessments to learn more about yourself; 2) research the current work environment and 3) learn more about specific types of work and employers.

Research can help you choose which careers to pursue. Many people choose a specific career only to later regret their choice and dream of doing something else to earn a living. You can increase the odds of being happy and successful in your next position if you take an objective look at three things: 1) What is important to you? 2) What are your key skills and strengths? 3) What past accomplishments show these strengths in action? The following assessments will help you determine the answers to these critical issues.

Prioritizing Your Goals Directions: Rank in order of preference from (1) through (20) – 1 being the most important goal in your new job and 20 being the least important.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| A. Company location | 1. _____ |
| B. Compensation | 2. _____ |
| C. Benefits | 3. _____ |
| D. Company size (\$1Million/\$1Billion) | 4. _____ |
| E. Type of business | 5. _____ |
| F. Job satisfaction | 6. _____ |
| G. Advancement | 7. _____ |
| H. Financial stability of company | 8. _____ |
| I. Corporate culture/chemistry | 9. _____ |
| J. Self-employment | 10. _____ |
| K. Job Opportunities for spouse | 11. _____ |
| L. School system | 12. _____ |
| M. Housing | 13. _____ |
| N. Cost of living | 14. _____ |

- O. Climate 15. _____
- P. More time with family 16. _____
- Q. Complete career change 17. _____
- R. Growth industry 18. _____
- S. Exciting job 19. _____
- T. Communicate more with family 20. _____

Personal Values

Number these values in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important. You may not rate any as ties.

_____ **Independence and Autonomy:** Doing things on your own; not having too many rules and restrictions placed on you.

_____ **Power:** Controlling the situation around you in order to make things happen in organizations.

_____ **Leadership/Management:** Coordinating the work of others and taking responsibility for the overall results.

_____ **Technical Expertise:** Being strong in specific skill areas such as finance, marketing, engineering, human resources.

_____ **Lifestyle:** Being holistic about unifying all of the various parts of your life, such as career, family and interests.

_____ **Service:** Contributing to the welfare of others; dedicating yourself to a worthwhile cause.

_____ **Friendship:** Being liked by others; maintaining important relationships and having companionship.

_____ **Security:** Reducing worries about future financial welfare; preferring stability and predictability.

_____ **Challenge:** Desiring to take on and win the “tough ones” in any field of endeavor.

_____ **Wealth:** Accumulating a large amount of money – more than average and much more than necessities require.

_____ **Other (s):**

Now that you have really examined what is important to you, take the assessments below to determine the skills and personal characteristics that will make you an asset to your next employer.

Transferable Skills Inventory Use this list to assist you in identifying the skills you have learned or developed through experience. Select the six skills that best describe you. Enter them on the lines at the bottom of Page 12. Be sure each skill you select is supported by experience, education or achievements. This list is necessarily general. It is important that you include any additional skills needed to create an accurate picture of yourself.

Coordinating Cataloging
Correcting Following Up
Recording Reporting
Scheduling Others:

Financial Management
Auditing Budgeting
Controlling Cost Accounting
Financial Analysis Financial
Planning Fund Raising
Managing Finance Others:

Managing Data Analyzing
data Assessing quality
Computing Gathering data
Managing information
Measuring Research Setting
standards Taking inventory
Others:

Organizing Administering
Assigning Categorizing
Developing work plans
Projecting Restructuring
Setting priorities Others:

Managing/Directing
Approving Delegating
Developing procedures
Developing systems
Directing Formulating
Implementing Instructing
Interpreting policy Making
decisions Managing details
Managing people
Managing projects
Managing tasks
Revitalizing Serving as a
change agent Others:

Planning Analyzing
Conceptualizing Designing
Developing policy
Developing strategy
Reviewing Surveying
Others:

Selling/Marketing

Advertising Analyzing
markets Managing sales
Marketing Pricing
Promoting Relating to
clients Selling Writing
proposals Others:

Serving Client Relations
Handling complaints
Responding promptly
Serving customers Others:

Technical Skills

Computer literate Designing Designing systems
Developing products Engineering Inventing Scientific
research Manufacturing Programming Tooling Others:

Of these six, select the three that most represent your strongest skills and those you most enjoy using. Place a check next to these three.

Assessing Your Personal Characteristics

Each of us possesses certain personal characteristics – or traits – that make us unique and enhance our ability to perform different tasks successfully. Review the list below and select the six traits that describe you best. You can add others. Enter the traits on the lines below. Be sure that there is clear evidence of your accomplishments for the traits you select.

Accurate	Enthusiastic	Persuasive
Adventurous	Expressive	Physically fit
Artistic	Good attitude	Practical
Assertive	Hard worker	Productive
Challenging	High standards	Rational
Civic minded	Imaginative	Responsible
Committed	Independent	Responsive
Communicate well	Inquisitive	Results oriented
Compassionate	Intelligent	Self assured
Confident	Intuitive	Self controlled
Creative	Kind	Self starter
Curious	Leader	Sense of humor
Dedicated	Levelheaded	Sensitive
Dependable	Loyal	Sociable
Efficient	Original	Stable
Emotional	People oriented	Tolerant
Energetic	Perfectionist	Trustworthy
Entertaining	Personable	Others:

Of the six, select the three that represent your most prominent traits and place a check next to them. You can learn more about yourself by reviewing the above list again. This time look for a trait that may be considered something an interviewer could consider as a weakness.

The most difficult and most important assessment helps you illustrate your skills and personality characteristic in action. The following exercise is designed to help you identify your accomplishments at work or in any volunteer position.

Identifying Accomplishments

Review the questions and place a check next to those that apply to you. Beside each item you check, specify a key word that will remind you of the accomplishment. You will use the accomplishments to communicate your value in your resume and when interviewing.

Accomplishments	Key Word
Did you identify a problem and solve for it? What were the results?	
Did you introduce a new system or procedure that made work easier or more accurate?	
Did you save the company money or time? How much? What positive impact did the savings have on the company?	
Did your efforts increase the company's profit line? By how much?	
Did you increase productivity or reduce downtime? By how much? How did the savings affect the bottom line?	
Did you effectively manage systems or people? What were the results of your efforts?	
Did you initiate a sales or incentive program that worked? What were the results in dollars and cents? On company image? On morale?	
Did you participate in decision making or planning? What contributions did you make to the team? What were the results of your efforts?	
Did you write any major reports, programs, publications,	

<p>promotions or newsletters? What was the intended audience? What was the distribution of readership?</p>	
<p>Did you improve the efficiency of people or operations? What were the savings?</p>	
<p>Were you responsible for reducing staff or trimming an operation? How were you able to do this efficiently?</p>	
<p>Were you involved in a start-up or shutdown? What were the challenges you faced? What success did you have?</p>	
<p>Did you automate or create systems or procedures? How many people did you train? How much money was involved in the automation?</p>	
<p>Were you a liaison between departments? How were you able to make things run more efficiently?</p>	
<p>Did you produce reports or data that enabled management to make more informed decisions?</p>	
<p>Did you receive any awards, bonuses or promotions?</p>	
<p>Did someone in a higher position ever give you a particularly strong compliment?</p>	

An important way to illustrate the difference between a responsibility and accomplishment is that an accomplishment answers the question “so what”. Here are some examples

□ **Responsibility Statement:** “Reorganized the entire department”. **Accomplishment Statement:** “Increased the efficiency of all personnel by reorganizing the entire department”.

□ **Responsibility Statement:** “Developed a new \$10 million system”. **Accomplishment Statement:** “Developed a new \$10 million dollar system resulting in a 10% increase in the company’s profit line”.

□ **Responsibility Statement:** “Edited a 500-page technical manual”. **Accomplishment Statement:** “Edited a 500-page technical manual ensuring that the language used was easily comprehensible even for non-technical employees”.

Here are some sample accomplishment statements:

Quantity

- Developed a sales strategy that directly increased customer base by 20%

- Redesigned the production line, increasing output by 2,000 units.

- Developed a training program that contributed to a 35% reduction in errors.

- Entered 15 new markets, increasing market share.

Quality

- Successfully conducted a presentation for key project stakeholders. Unsolicited feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

- Designed new training program that resulted in an improvement in evaluations from 3.2 – 4.8 on a 5-point scale.

- Implemented a new employee benefit program. Over 90% of the employees identified the changes as improvements.

- Hired a new printing firm that improved quality of the marketing

materials.

- Developed a safety program that reduced accident fines by 15%.

- Designed a user-friendly operations manual that is currently being used by employees.

Productivity

- Automated a claim processing system that reduced the turnaround time from two weeks to two days.

- Implemented a new phone system that reduced average answering speed from eight minutes to less than one minute.

- Completed the project ahead of schedule.

- Developed and introduced a unique product that was the first in the marketplace.

Cost / Revenue

- Negotiated a contract that saved the department over \$500,000.

- Reduced overhead by 30%.

- Developed a new product that increased quarterly revenue by \$50,000.

- Turned a troubled operation around from a negative \$238,000 to a positive \$1,570,000.

- Increased sales over 40%.

There are other sources of information that can help you come up with accomplishment statements. In addition to the accomplishments that you were prompted to remember by the "Identifying Accomplishments" questions, you should also review your old job descriptions and performance evaluations. Checking old calendars that have special dates noted and remembering any non-recurring or special projects that you were involved in may also remind you of some accomplishments. Once you have completed this you will have a thorough knowledge of who you are and what you can accomplish in future jobs. When you create your own accomplishment statements in the bullet format that will be used in your resume, they will all begin with an action verb in the past tense. The following list of verbs may both remind you of some of your accomplishments and help you word them succinctly.

Accomplishment Indicators:

Accelerated	Expanded	Reduced
Achieved	Formulated	Reorganized
Acted	Founded	Researched
Analyzed	Handled	Resolved
Approved	Headed	Revised
Arranged	Hired	Scheduled
Assisted	Gained	Serviced
Assured	Generated	Simplified
Attained	Identified	Sorted
Attended	Implemented	Set-up
Authored	Improved	Sold
Authorized	Improvised	Solved
Bargained	Increased	Staffed
Built	Initiated	Started
Broadened	Innovated	Structured
Campaigned	Installed	Streamlined
Co-authored	Instituted	Strengthened
Conceived	Introduced	Stressed
Conducted	Invented	Succeeded
Completed	Maintained	Summarized
Consolidated	Managed	Supervised
Controlled	Moderated	Systematized
Converted	Modified	Terminated
Coordinated	Negotiated	Tracked
Created	Operated	Traded
Cut Costs	Organized	Trained
Delivered	Originated	Transferred
Developed	Performed	Translated
Devised	Planned	Tripled
Demonstrated	Prepared	Trimmed
Designed	Presented	Traced
Directed	Presided	Uncovered
Disapproved	Processed	Unified
Doubled	Produced	Unraveled
Earned	Programmed	Utilized
Edited	Promoted	Verified
Eliminated	Proposed	Won
Encouraged	Provided	Worked
Enlarged	Purchased	Wrote
Established		Recommended
Examined		Recruited

Below is a worksheet for you to record all of the accomplishments you have created:

Accomplishment Inventory
