

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

Find Your Professional Future



How do you envision yourself happily working every day?

Do you see yourself starting a business, moving up the career ladder in your current field or transitioning to an entirely new profession? Whatever your career goals are, you're more likely to succeed if you have a comprehensive strategy. At the Center for Professional Education, we know how important planning for your future is, and that's why we've developed this **Career Planning Workbook** to help you map out the steps you need to achieve your professional dreams.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

—Steve Jobs

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry






The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Professional Education

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF

Someone once said that **no matter how fast you travel, you'll never reach your destination if you're moving in the wrong direction.** Self-reflection as a tool to identify your values and strengths is the first step on the path to true career fulfillment. Another key component in this process is identifying your natural aptitudes, the skills you've developed over the course of your life and the things that inspire you.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  <p>What are you passionate about? (e.g., Meeting new people)</p> |  <p>What are your top three strengths? (e.g., Communication)</p> |  <p>What are your top three skills? (e.g., Interviewing)</p> |
| <div data-bbox="207 997 578 1822"></div> | <div data-bbox="625 976 995 1241">1</div> <div data-bbox="625 1287 995 1530">2</div> <div data-bbox="625 1577 995 1822">3</div> | <div data-bbox="1042 976 1412 1241">1</div> <div data-bbox="1042 1287 1412 1530">2</div> <div data-bbox="1042 1577 1412 1822">3</div> |

Tip: Ask a friend or colleague to help you pinpoint your strengths.

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF

Another element of your self-assessment includes clarifying your values.

To have a meaningful career, you must align your day-to-day actions with your values and beliefs. For this exercise, we'll stick to identifying your core values. Core values are the unwavering principles by which you live your life. These fundamental beliefs help you understand the difference between right and wrong and thus dictate your behavior. Some examples of core values include convictions about religion or spirituality, social justice issues and the environment.



Which of these **core values** resonate with you?

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Reciprocity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courage | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosperity | <input type="checkbox"/> Love of Career | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness | <input type="checkbox"/> Joy/Play | <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship/Relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion | <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritualism | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement | <input type="checkbox"/> Happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Trusting Your Gut | <input type="checkbox"/> Contentment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Smarter and Harder | <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Strength | <input type="checkbox"/> Pride in Your Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career | <input type="checkbox"/> Grace | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving People a Chance | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professionalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertain | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Tradition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Endurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Paying It Forward | <input type="checkbox"/> Competition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Love | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement | <input type="checkbox"/> Profit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Openness | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun-Loving | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Goodness | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Charisma | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanity | <input type="checkbox"/> Power | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Respect | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun | <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patience | <input type="checkbox"/> Order | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Success | <input type="checkbox"/> Affection | <input type="checkbox"/> Abundance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> Fame | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | |

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF



What **occupational areas** interest you?

Highlight as many as you like.

ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

- Architecture
- Urban & Regional Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Sustainable Environmental Design
- Interior Design

ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

- Arts Administration
- Arts Education
- Art Therapy
- Broadcasting; Film; Video
- Fashion
- Textile Art
- Fine Arts
- Visual Arts
- Graphic Design
- Museums
- Libraries
- Performing Arts
- Music

BUSINESS

- Accounting
- Consulting; Entrepreneurship
- Small Business
- Event Planning & Hospitality
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Leadership Development Programs
- Marketing; Real Estate
- Retail
- Sales
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Corporate Responsibility

COMMUNICATIONS

- Advertising; Marketing
- Public Relations
- Journalism
- Literary

- Publishing
- Translation & Interpretation
- Writing Careers

EDUCATION

- Teacher Prep
- Teaching
- School & School Districts Information
- Education Research/Policy
- Education Technology
- Higher Education
- Guidance Counseling
- School Psychology
- School Social Work
- Library/Information Services
- Special Education
- Teaching Without a Credential

ENGINEERING & COMPUTER SCIENCE

- Aerospace/Aeronautical Engineering
- Biomedical/Bioengineering
- Chemistry/Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Energy Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Industrial Engineering & Operations Research
- Materials Science Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Nuclear Engineering
- Statistics/Mathematics

ENVIRONMENT

- Environmental Engineering
- Environmental Consulting
- Forestry
- Conservation Scientist

GOVERNMENT

- Federal
- State and Local (City/County)
- Politics, Political Parties, Legislative Branch (Federal and State)
- Military/Armed Forces and Defense

HEALTH & MEDICINE

- Allied Health
- Alternative Medicine
- Audiology/Speech Pathology
- Chiropractic
- Dentistry
- Genetic Counseling; Gerontology & Aging
- Health Management
- Policy & Consulting
- Human Medicine
- Mental Health
- Nursing; Nutrition & Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry; Pharmaceutical Sales
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistant
- Podiatric Medicine
- Public Health
- Recreation/Sports
- Veterinary Medicine

LAW & PUBLIC POLICY

- Law
- Law Directories
- Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
- Lobbying/Labor Relations
- Public Policy/Advocacy/Think Tanks

SCIENCES – BIOLOGICAL & PHYSICAL

- Animal Science/Zoology & Marine Science
- Bioinformatics/Biostatistics
- Biotechnology/Pharmaceuticals

SOCIAL IMPACT & COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Consumer Rights
- Civil & Human Rights
- Lobbying
- Nonprofits
- Research
- Social Work
- Public Health

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF



Describe your optimal **work environment**.

Consider these details and write down your preferences.

Culture – Do you favor business or casual dress? Do you find a traditional, hierarchical organization comforting or stifling? Does an activist culture within a socially-progressive organization appeal to you? Are firm boundaries between work and personal time an essential requirement?

Physical Environment – Do you see yourself spending your days in a corporate office with lots of on-site perks like a gym and coffee shop, or would you prefer flexible, independent workplace options, so you can work from home, outdoors or while traveling?

Working Conditions – Do you thrive in collaborative, open-plan settings, or do you prefer quiet spaces that allow for more individual focus and concentration? Are you comfortable with quickly shifting project work, or is a steady pace with clear deliverables more your speed? Do you wish to work independently or as part of a team?

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 1: ASSESS YOURSELF

Assemble all the pieces, and tell your story. It is crucial that you communicate your skills, strengths and interests to anyone who can support your career planning. Forget the elevator pitch. Instead, use storytelling to highlight the essential components of your plan.



Write your **career story**.

Use the guide below to begin.

I am a _____ professional,
(current field)

who's passionate about _____
(one to three core values)

_____, and I'm

looking for a job in _____.
(occupational area)

I want to work _____ in a
(describe your preferred culture)

_____ where my work is
(physical environment preference)

conducted _____.
(describe your desired working conditions)

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 2: EXPLORE YOUR POTENTIAL

Now that you've completed your self-evaluation and defined what motivates you, it's time to **consider the different possibilities for your career direction**. Don't limit yourself to one role or industry—see yourself in all the various jobs that interest you.

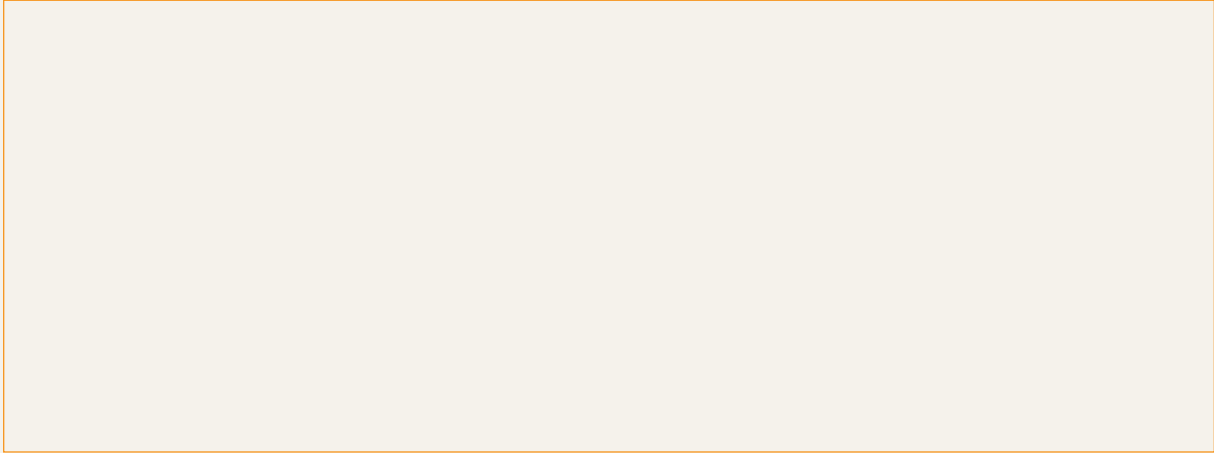
| Blue | Dark Teal | Green |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1</p> <p>I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF BEING A:</p> | <p>1</p> <p>I'VE OFTEN WONDERED IF I COULD DO:</p> | <p>1</p> <p>I WANT TO TRY:</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>THE PRECONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS ARE:</p> | <p>2</p> <p>THE PRECONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS ARE:</p> | <p>2</p> <p>THE PRECONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS ARE:</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>TO REALIZE THIS DREAM, I NEED TO:</p> | <p>3</p> <p>TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL, I NEED TO:</p> | <p>3</p> <p>TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE, I NEED TO:</p> |

Tip: Think about what you would like to do professionally if you didn't have any financial constraints.

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 2: EXPLORE YOUR POTENTIAL

Tip: Brainstorm career ideas with family, friends, colleagues, or an educator, mentor or career coach. People who know you well may have other insights to contribute to your career exploration.



CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 3: EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS

After you've investigated different career pathways and gathered recommendations from others, it's time to **consider the pros and cons of each of the possibilities you've identified.**

Career Path Example #1: Flight Attendant



PROS:

- Global travel opportunities
- Engaging with many people
- Long-term income prospects



CONS:

- Cost of training
- Away from family overnight
- Work-life balance in the short term

Career Path Example #2: Marketing Director



PROS:

- Increase in salary
- Next step in my existing career
- Using my advanced degree



CONS:

- Lack of leadership experience
- Too much travel
- Work-life imbalance

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 3: EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS

Career Path #1:

PROS:

CONS:

Career Path #2:

PROS:

CONS:

Career Path #3:

PROS:

CONS:

Which path feels like the best fit? Give serious consideration to each career option above and choose the one that inspires you the most. **I will follow this career path:**

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 4: ESTABLISH YOUR OBJECTIVES

Now that you've identified the career you'd like to pursue, it's time to determine how you'll get there. **Setting short-term goals is crucial to success.** We recommend that you use SMART goals. These are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**rackable targets that you can check off your list as you go. The best way to measure your success is to write your goals down and share them with a friend or colleague. Writing your goals down cements them in your short and long-term memory, and sharing them can help hold you accountable.



My long-term objective is:



Short-term goals to achieve my objective are:

Tip: If your final objective is to become a jeweler, your short-term goals might include enrolling and completing a beginner's metalsmithing class at your local community college.

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 4: ESTABLISH YOUR OBJECTIVES

Goal #1

GOAL: 1

BEGIN: 2

END: 3

ACTION ITEMS: 4

Goal #2

GOAL: 1

BEGIN: 2

END: 3

ACTION ITEMS: 4

Goal #3

GOAL: 1

BEGIN: 2

END: 3

ACTION ITEMS: 4

Goal #4

GOAL: 1

BEGIN: 2

END: 3

ACTION ITEMS: 4

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 5: CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Remember to check in with yourself to **make sure that you're still on the right path**. Schedule regular dates to review your career plan and make any necessary course corrections. Don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments!

| Check-In #1 | Check-In #2 |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| <p>1</p> <p>DATE:</p> | <p>1</p> <p>DATE:</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>NOTES:</p> | <p>2</p> <p>NOTES:</p> |
| Check-In #3 | Check-In #4 |
| <p>1</p> <p>DATE:</p> | <p>1</p> <p>DATE:</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>NOTES:</p> | <p>2</p> <p>NOTES:</p> |

Tip: To hold yourself accountable for meeting your short-term goals, consider scheduling these check-ins ahead of time and inviting a friend, colleague or mentor.

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 6: EVOLVE IF NECESSARY

While you're doing the work to find the right career, remember to take risks, and don't let the fear of failure or the unknown stop you from taking those first steps.

Always follow your intuition and stick to the goals you set for yourself.

And don't forget, this is your life and your path, so have fun!

CAREER PLANNING WORKBOOK

STEP 6: EVOLVE IF NECESSARY



The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Professional Education

professionaled.utexas.edu
cpe@austin.utexas.edu