

# Career Planning, Knowledge, and Skills

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## PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. In thinking about your career path to this point, what has been your planning process?
2. Were you planful, impulsive, a procrastinator, or a fatalist?

## Introduction and Learning Objectives

*While it's true we cannot predict what the future has in store for us, planning can increase the odds that our life will hold meaning. Career planning can help create a personal vision of where we want to go with our working lives.*

— Kathleen Johnston

This chapter is about the knowledge and skills required to create and implement career planning for life. An important reality in today's multifaceted world is that change is a constant. Career development professionals need to consider and understand the nature of change as they support individuals in creating sound career strategies. Accordingly, career planning in the 21st century requires that you:

- know yourself;
- understand how best to choose work that fits your unique essence and

- strengths;
- know economic, occupational, and labour market trends;
- be adept at self-managing a career particularly when dealing with change and opportunity.

In this chapter, you will learn about **career planning** as an ongoing process through which an individual sets career goals and identifies the means to achieve them. It is through career planning that one evaluates abilities and interests, assesses values and personality, considers alternative career opportunities, establishes career goals, and plans practical developmental activities. The main components of career planning are self-discovery, researching occupations and the **labour market**, making career decisions, taking action, implementing **job search** skills, and developing and maintaining career management skills.

As you work through this chapter, consider the importance of understanding the career-planning process from the perspective of the professional career practitioner. As a starting point, we recommend that you begin a career-planning journal. Career practitioners are often challenged to consider the underlying values that can guide their practices with clients. Use this journal to record answers to questions as you read through the chapter; consider your perspectives both from the position of a client and of a practitioner; and highlight your assumptions and insights regarding each role. This journal will serve as a reflective tool that will shed light on your growth as a career development practitioner.

The learning objectives of this chapter are that you will be able to:

1. Appreciate the complexity and dynamic nature of selecting and managing a meaningful career path.
2. Understand the six components of the career-planning process.
3. Be able to define key labour market concepts and list main sources of labour market information.
4. Understand the skills involved in decision making, goal setting, action planning, and career management.

## Career Planning

The more you practise career planning for yourself the better able you will be as a career practitioner to help the client. By considering the career-planning process from the client's standpoint you will gain in self-understanding and be able to lead the client through the process. Start by answering the questions in this section with yourself as the client to gain that perspective.

## What Is Career Planning?

Making a plan for your career future involves understanding yourself, understanding the labour market, making informed decisions based on all relevant information, and, not the least, having a contingency plan to allow for change. In the 21st-century work world, it is imperative to know how to manage one's career continuously through all the stages of life. This means anticipating change and allowing for it in the plan.

Career planning can be a creative and dynamic process by which an individual develops a vision of work for the long term. The process helps people adapt to change, and deal with career challenges more expertly. But it's not easy to do alone: A professional career practitioner can help.

The following reflective questions are typically considered as part of the career-planning process and form the structure that guides a client through this process. Answer the following questions for yourself.

### WHO AM I?

- What is my life purpose? When I reach the end of my life journey, what is it I hope to have accomplished?
- What are my unique talents, interests, values, characteristics, motivators, likes, and dislikes?
- What specific results do I want to achieve from my career?
- How might those outcomes change as I move through different life stages?

### WHAT HAVE I DONE?

- What are my transferable skills?
- What education, training, knowledge, experience, and competencies do I have to offer?
- What is the most effective way to market myself in the world of work?

### WHERE AM I GOING?

- What's my understanding of alternatives and options for my career path?
- What are my specific career goals (short, medium, and long term)?
- How do I make successful career transitions?
- How will I ensure that my career brings meaning to my life?

### HOW WILL I GET THERE AND WHAT MIGHT GET IN THE WAY?

- What's my strategy for reaching the career goal(s) I have identified?
- What resources and strengths do I have to surmount obstacles and challenges?
- What support and networking resources are available to me?
- What ongoing career management strategies do I need?

Table 1: Questions for Career Planning.

## Career Strategies for a Lifetime of Success

by Deirdre Pickerell

*Career Planning and Labour Market Trends* by Roberta Neault has tips to help adults at any stage of life manage their careers more successfully.

See <<http://career-lifeskills.com/career-building-1/career-information-25/career-strategies-for-a-lifetime-of-success-10-2754.html>>.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Now that you have answered these questions for yourself, what challenges can you see facing clients in each of the steps outlined in the career-planning process?

### Career-Planning Models

One of the many challenging aspects of career planning is in identifying and organizing information about yourself. Career-counselling professionals often approach this through the application of a model (see Chapter 6 on Theoretical Foundations of Career Development) or the use of a specific process. Several

models have been developed in Canada.


- Bill O’Byrne (1998) developed the *Career Compass* model that focuses on four components: self-knowledge, development, social systems, and opportunity. Each component is broken down into sub-components for an easy-to-use practical tool.
- The *Five Critical Career Processes* model (Magnusson, 1992, 1995) includes: initiation, exploration, decision making, preparation, and implementation, with individuals moving back and forth through these processes as their circumstances change.
- The University of Waterloo’s Career Development eManual is an online, self-help tool (<<https://manual.uwaterloo.ca>>). Its six modules include self-assessment, research, career decision making, marketing one’s self, work skills, and life/work planning.
- Norm Amundson’s (2009) career counselling model as described in *Active Engagement* emphasizes the use of creativity, storytelling, questioning techniques, action strategies, and relationship building at the same time recognizing the need to integrate personal and career counselling.

Although each of these models uses different terminology and proposes different steps for the career-counselling process, they are similar in that they include self-discovery, research on occupational information, understanding the labour market, developing options and alternatives, goal setting, and strategies for achieving an outcome.

## Components of Career Planning

Career planning is a dynamic process that can be learned by individuals. Through this process, a person creates a personal vision of what he or she hopes to achieve through meaningful work. The planning process requires an in-depth understanding of self in relation to vocation. It includes setting goals that will meet lifestyle needs, and providing for change and transition as one moves through life-cycle changes. Individuals become self-directed in the management of their career over their lifetime as well as at specific times when re-careering. It is now common for people to have four or five distinctly different careers during a lifetime.

The six-step career-planning process outlined in this chapter looks like the table below.



	STEP	DESCRIPTION
	<b>6. Career Management Skills</b>	Manage career continuously and plan for the next.
	<b>5. Action Plans</b>	Create a road map from choosing an occupation to becoming employed in that occupation to reaching your long-term career goals.
	<b>4. Job Search Skills</b>	Find suitable jobs by accessing formal and informal networks.
	<b>3. Decision-Making Skills</b>	Identify the decision to be made, identify options, gather information, evaluate options to solve the problem, select the best option.
	<b>2. Occupational Information</b>	Identify and explore career options.
	<b>1. Self-Discovery</b>	Identify and understand your values, interests, skills, personal attributes, and personal mission.

Table 2: Six Steps to Career Planning.

### 1. Self-Discovery

The term **self-discovery** implies a reflective process of careful self-examination regarding something in particular, in this case, career planning. Through a self-discovery process, information will emerge that can be used for planning and decision making. There are many resources that can be applied in the self-discovery process. Although self-discovery suggests finding out about interests, things that interest you don't necessarily make the best careers. Interests are also influenced by opportunity

and exposure and may be related to your comfort level and familiarity. Although interests, as well as skills, are important, they are only part of the picture. You must also gather information about other key factors such as your:

- personality type,
- work environment preferences,
- work and personal values and motivators,
- natural talents and competencies (strengths/weaknesses),
- learning style preferences,
- life purpose and lifestyle preferences,
- personal and family needs/factors,
- academic strengths.

In the self-discovery part of career planning, individuals must be prepared to do reflective work, research, and engage in self-clarity. Self-clarity is the process of doing the work to answer the questions about yourself (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011).

With effort, self-clarity emerges. In many ways, the process is similar to developing a photograph. That is, self-reflection is like entering the photographer's darkroom to do the work that results in a clear image (self-clarity). Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle noted the importance of self-clarity when he emphasized the importance of "knowing thyself" to live life effectively. This advice is essential in managing your career effectively. Everything starts from the foundation of self-awareness. If you are clear about who you are, then you can use this important information to move forward systematically and intentionally in identifying and achieving your career goals.... Developing self-clarity will enable you to be the captain of your ship as opportunities and challenges are presented to you. (p. 19)

This self-discovery process needs to be repeated whenever the individual is faced with a career transition, or is experiencing an age or stage-of-life change. For tips on self-reflection, see Katharine Hansen's list available at <[http://www.quintcareers.com/15\\_assessment\\_tips.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/15_assessment_tips.html)>.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

How might your current personal and family factors impact your career options or choices?

## 2. Occupational Information

Consider your role as a developing career practitioner. What do you need to know or understand about occupational information in order to help your clients? Effective career planning involves research on **occupations** and job families. The latter are simply groups of occupations based upon skills, training, education, credentials, and work tasks. Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC, 2011) provides a standard way of organizing labour market information through the use of a uniform language to describe the work performed by Canadians in the labour market. Examples of job families include community and social services, legal, computer and mathematical, personal care and service, and health care support, to name a few.

The more informed people are about occupational possibilities, the better able they will be to select the occupations with the highest degree of personal fit. A recent study of people in 150 countries discovered that career well-being is the most essential element to an individual's well-being. That research indicated that people who are thriving in their careers are more than twice as likely to be thriving overall in their lives (Rath & Harter, 2010).

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

As a career practitioner, do you know the kind of work activities that bring you the greatest amount of satisfaction? Think back over your lifetime and brainstorm a list of the kinds of tasks that you love so much that time passes by unnoticed.

### *Labour Market Information (LMI)*

Labour market information (LMI) is body of knowledge and impressions gleaned from statistical data on the labour markets and analysis. It includes occupational or career information such as educational requirements, main duties, wage rates, the availability of workers, current employment trends, and the outlook for the position.

### Essential Skills

by Lara Shepard

Human Resources and Skills

Development Canada launched the Essential Skills National Research project in 1994 to identify common skills across all occupations. Over 180 jobs were studied. It identified nine essential skills that are used in almost every occupation in a variety of ways and at varying levels of complexity: reading text, document use, numeracy, oral communication, writing, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, and computer use. These skills are the foundation for learning new skills, and allow people to adapt to the changing workplace. Profiles were developed to describe how each essential skill is used by various workers in a particular occupation.

View these at

<[http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/english/all\\_profiles.aspx](http://www10.hrsdc.gc.ca/es/english/all_profiles.aspx)>.

More information can be found at Employment and Social Development Canada <<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/les/index.shtml>>.

LMI provides such information as how many people have jobs in the manufacturing sector in comparison to the service sector. This information may include descriptions of industries, lists of companies for an industry, and importance of those companies to a community. LMI can also include the economic well-being and outlook for communities such as unemployment rates, the supply and demand for skilled workers, and the age, gender, and educational level of people in the community. As such, LMI assists career practitioners in identifying changes or trends that affect the world of work.

The labour market in Canada is diverse and extremely flexible in nature. Occupations are being created, changed, and eliminated faster than ever before. An overall understanding of labour market trends actually helps guide long-term career plans and determines specific career paths. Consider for a moment that many jobs that existed 10 to 15 years ago no longer exist. One example is the major change in the manufacturing industry. Many of the jobs for skilled workers in manufacturing have been reduced or eliminated in the past 15 years while there has been rapid growth in the service-producing sector. Some new specialties have opened too — behavioural geneticists being one example.

Schell, Follero-Pugh, and Lloyd (2010) discuss how the labour market is being affected by changing economics in Canada. Gone are the days where employees stay with one organization for 25+ years. Instead the new trend sees Canadians changing jobs every 3 years with a major occupational shift occurring every 5 years. This trend is increasingly true for individuals under the age of 40. This is a pattern that will continue through your career and in the careers of those you advise.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Take some time and consider how the manufacturing industry has been transformed over the past 5, 10, and 25 years.

Labour market trends are powerful tools professionals may use to help clients make decisions about future careers and career paths. Many career development practitioners tend to distinguish between career information and LMI. Career information is defined as information related to the world of work that can be useful in the process of career development and typically includes educational, occupational, and psychosocial information related to work. LMI, on the other hand, is rarely directly related to a clients' immediate occupational need. Overall, the LMI is useful in identifying opportunities in the job market, in understanding labour market conditions and trends, in predicting outlooks for various occupational groups based on a variety of factors (economic, demographic, social, and political, technology, and globalization), and in providing information to support informed employment and career decisions.



### Supply and Demand

In the simplest form, the labour market can be explained by relating employment demand and supply to wages. Supply refers to the workforce and reflects the number of workers willing to work, whereas demand refers to the number of workers employers want to hire. For a specific wage level where demand for workers is equal to the supply, there will be no additional workers looking for jobs at that wage as well as no more job vacancies. In theory, this determines the number employed and the wage level in any workplace or a specific job.

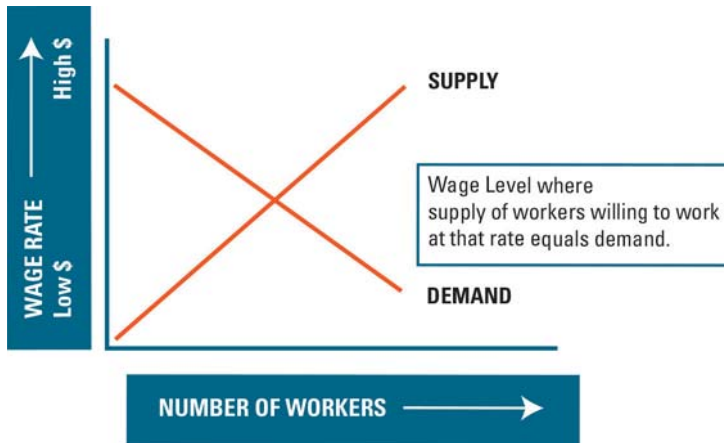


Figure 1: Supply and Demand for a Wage Level.

### Segmentation

**Skill segmentation** refers to special labour markets that exist for specialized skills. Although supply theory regards workers as identical mass units of labour (i.e., the total number of hours of work workers can provide), the reality is that workers are very different, varying in terms of skills or occupation, geographic location, personality, and family dynamics. This means that labour markets are segmented. As a result, special labour markets exist for specialized skills, and various barriers are put up to keep unqualified workers out.

*Geographic segmentation* is the term used to define the geographic area where employers recruit workers for most occupations. This is typically the area within commuting distance of the location of the company. The labour market for most occupations is concentrated around a particular locale. The availability of jobs depends on the way an organization hires its workers. Organizations that fill vacancies primarily from inside the organization are considered “internal labour markets.” Other organizations hire from outside, or the “external labour market.” Keep in mind that no organization can operate as a purely internal labour market.

### *Primary vs. Secondary Labour Markets*

Two separate labour markets are defined in the career development field. The “primary labour market” is defined as consisting of high-paying jobs, good working conditions, opportunities for promotion and training, and more employment stability. The “secondary labour market” is defined as consisting of low-paying jobs with high turnover, minimal job security, and often inconsistent personnel practices.

The economic downturn that began in 2008 resulted in a change in the way Canadians view the labour market. A prior upturn in the business cycle had improved profits in many organizations and increased demand for labour. However, when the economic crisis began, these organizations downsized operations and laid off workers. As the economy rebounded many organizations restructured such that they could increase productive outputs without increasing the size of their workforce. As a result, many workers who had been employed in primary labour markets found it extremely difficult to find meaningful employment. A large number of these employees took positions within the secondary labour market or in those occupations that tend to be located in the most competitive areas of the economy and are more labour intensive. These occupations tend to pay lower wages, be less secure in employment, be less unionized, and provide less opportunity for advancement. Some workers took up consulting work, contract employment, and other forms of self-employment, or were successful in forming partnerships or doing job sharing.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Consider the last dramatic employment downturn. How was the geographic region you reside in impacted compared to others?

### *The Role of the Career Practitioner in Using Labour Market Information (LMI)*

Career practitioners play a major role in assisting clients with the “when” and “how” of using LMI. In order to be effective, a career practitioner needs to have a thorough understanding of labour market trends and be comfortable with using the information with clients. They must be willing to keep up with the labour market information in their professional development activities. Career practitioners can remain current by subscribing to a selection of periodical publications, newsletters, journals, and publications that address labour market issues. The Conference Board of Canada is one source of publications on the impact of new technologies, employment practices, and major economic events. The publications that will be most useful to you will depend on the client population you serve. These publications should also keep current with circumstances that affect the labour market at local, provincial, and national levels. Catalogues, magazines, newspapers, brochures, phone books, and reports can also be valuable resources. Information on the labour force, help-wanted index, local government employment, pension plans, as well as resources from

Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Statistics Canada, and provincial government departments, should be available in offices where you work and on online. For example, the Alberta Learning Information Service (<[www.alis.alberta.ca](http://www.alis.alberta.ca)>) has put online such excellent resources as *Making Sense of Labour Market Information*.

Clients can find labour market information at multiple places including university career centres, public libraries, the Internet, and professional organizations. Despite the market situation of late, many job seekers use job boards to gather job and labour market information. With over 40,000 job board and employment websites available on the Internet, it is hard to know where to turn for accurate information. The most popular job boards in Canada include:

- Workopolis <<http://www.workopolis.com>>. Workopolis describes itself as the largest job board in Canada. It has career resources, job listings, and résumé submission.
- Monster.ca <<http://www.monster.ca>>. Formerly Monster Board Canada, this site provides a listing of job openings, employer profiles, résumé postings, and a career centre.
- Hot Jobs in Canada <<http://www.hotjobscanada.ca/>>.
- Service Canada Job Bank <<http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/intro-eng.aspx>>. Employers from across the country post listings of jobs and work or business opportunities.
- Public Service <<http://jobs-emploi.gc.ca>>. This site posts positions available within the federal government.

### 3. Decision Making, Goal Setting, and Action Plans

A third important factor in career planning is making career decisions, setting goals, and making action plans. The concept of a “job for life” belongs to a bygone era. Individuals can expect to be engaged in career decision making continuously in the dynamic work environment of the 21st century. To accommodate technology changes as well as socioeconomic changes — not to mention age and stage-of-life changes — individuals must be proactive about their careers.

#### *Decision Making*

**Decision making** can be a difficult process for some people. There are quick decisions that might be spontaneous and based on an opportunity that presents itself out of the blue. However, even when a career decision must be made quickly, it is wise to consider the long-term impact before implementation. The ability to consider the overall vision one holds for one’s career can be most helpful.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

How do you make a decision? Most people use a combination of styles with some styles being more practical than others. Read through the list below. Which styles describe the ways you make decisions?

- *Impulsive* — Spends little time considering alternatives; makes a decision at the last moment; dislikes making decisions; usually takes the first alternative available.
- *Intuitive* — Bases a decision on gut feelings that have not been verbalized. “It just feels right.”
- “*What Do You Think?*” *Style* — Makes a decision based on the wishes of another person and goes along with the ideas or plans of someone else rather than making decision of their own. A person using this style generally doesn’t trust his/her ability to make a decision.
- *Agonizing* — Involves much time and thought in gathering data and analyzing alternatives. The decision maker often gets lost in a pile of information and has trouble getting to the decision point.
- *Delaying* — Postpones thought and action on a problem until later. “I’ll think about it tomorrow.”
- *Fatalistic* — Leaves the decision to fate or the environment. “What will be, will be ...”
- *Paralytic* — Accepts the responsibility for making a decision, but then is unable to set the decision-making process in motion. “I know I should, but I just can’t make this decision.”
- *Planful* — Bases a decision on a rational approach with a balance between the cognitive and the emotional. People who use this style of decision obtain relevant information and clarify objectives before making decisions. They evaluate the cause and effect of their decisions before choosing and they usually choose something that seems comfortable and secure.

### *Steps to Career Decision Making*

The format in Table 3 (see next page) is a planful, prescriptive model designed to lead problem solvers to the solution as efficiently as possible (Crozier, 2001).

### *Goal Setting*

**Goal setting** is an important part of career planning and career management. Career goals provide the individual with a sense of direction and meaning. Career goals are not visions, hopes, dreams, or wishes. They are a defined method for getting to where you want to be in the future. When goals are directly connected to an individual’s life purpose, they can become strong motivational factors. Ideally, career goals need to be aligned with an individual’s strengths and values in order

STEP	DESCRIPTION
1. Reach a decision point.	A decision-making point is reached whenever you are required to make an important career decision.
2. Research.	Research yourself and your career. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yourself: identify your interests, skills, values, temperament, and lifestyle factors.</li> <li>2. Career: learn more about the educational programs and occupations you are most interested in pursuing. Once this research is complete, alternatives can be generated.</li> </ol>
3. Evaluate alternatives and make a choice.	It is important to have more than one choice because choices allow you to develop a contingency plan in case things do not work out with your first choice.
4. Take action.	This step involves implementing one of your choices and using an action plan containing goals and timelines.
5. Review the decision and take action as necessary.	Career decisions should never be set in stone. You may need to make adjustments

Table 3: Steps to Career Decision Making.

to support the highest possible degree of personal satisfaction and engagement with their work.

Commitment to the completion of goals depends on (a) the importance of the outcome for the person, (b) personal belief that the goal is achievable, and (c) the extent to which others are involved. There are four types of goals:

1. Immediate: something small, simple, easy, that one can do in the next 24–48 hours.
2. Short term: things one can do over the next few days and weeks.
3. Medium term: things one can do over the next few weeks and months.
4. Long term: things one can do over the next few months up to five years.

It is important for career practitioners to consider client goals because they provide an important focus for the career-planning process. Monitoring client goals is also a way to measure and celebrate progress, and as well as to know when the practitioner-client work together is complete.

Career professionals working with individuals to set career goals must pay close attention to personality traits and the motivational levels of each individual. Understanding the beliefs held by the individual is an important place to start. For example:

- Do they believe goal setting will affect their future?
- Do they believe they are worthy of success?
- Do they fear failure based on previous experience?

The following provides a simple outline of the factors you may want to consider and identify when setting your career goals in a step-by-step format.

<b>SETTING CAREER GOALS</b>	
<b>Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
1. Career goal	Start by defining and writing down your goals in order of priority.
2. Benefits and advantages of reaching this goal	Listing these may help to motivate you. Be sure to include potential barriers to achieving your goals.
3. Key steps you need to take	Identifying these steps will help form your action plan.
4. Timeframe	Set target dates and deadlines.
5. Support and resources	What do you need from whom? Time, money, contacts?
6. Outcomes and reflection	Record, for future reference, whether you achieved the goal and what worked or did not work along the way.

Table 4: Setting Career Goals.

#### 4. Job Search Skills

A fourth important factor in career planning is the development of specific job search skills. These are described in Chapter 9 on Work Search Strategies. Very briefly, the individual needs to have the skills and willingness to do the following:

1. Research the company.
2. Develop a networking plan.
3. Create a master résumé.
4. Design cover letters.
5. Prepare for interviews.
6. Negotiate job offers.

#### 5. Action Plans

Once a career decision is made, individuals need to develop an action plan to help them achieve success in reaching their career goals. A SMART action plan includes: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-specific goals (Doran, 1981).

## Career Planning, Knowledge, and Skills

Each career goal should be written down and allow for the inclusion of a detailed action plan for achievement. A workbook format can be used for easy reference, ongoing review, and revision. **Action planning** answers the following questions:

1. What specific steps do I need to take to achieve my goal?
2. Which of the steps are most urgent and which are less urgent?
3. What additional information, resources, or supports do I need?

The more specific the action plan, the more effective it will be in supporting goal achievement. The following table provides an example of an action plan related to a specific career goal.

<b>FORMULATING AN ACTION PLAN</b>			
<b>Short-term Career Goal: Begin a Bachelor of Commerce Degree Program</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Done</b>
1. Complete university application and registration.	Check finances available with family and bank.	June 15	
2. Move into residence.	Make a list of items I will need to take and make arrangements to borrow truck.	August 15	
3. Complete course selection.	Seek the assistance of an academic advisor.	August 15	
4. Purchase books and materials.	See if I can purchase any from my new roommate.	September 1	

Table 5: Formulating an Action Plan.

Action plans are dynamic. They need to be responsive to the changes and demands of life. Ideally they enable personal reflection and the celebration of success. Whether they are quick or time consuming, effective career decisions require the use of analysis, critical thinking, good judgement, and strategy as well as consultation with key stakeholders, particularly family members. When asking clients to set career goals they must be able to identify the people, resources, or organizations that they will need to accomplish their goal.

## 6. Career Management Skills

The sixth critical factor in career planning is the concept of **personal career**

**management** skills. Education or training may prepare an individual for the job market from a technical viewpoint; however, the 21st-century work world requires much more than technical competence. In order to thrive in this diverse world, social attitudes need to reflect the demands of today. Within our communities and fields of expertise, changes are happening so fast that keeping up is almost impossible on our own.

Important factors for continuously directing and managing your career with intention include:

- developing a personal work ethic based on values and principles for authentic living;
- building an image competency;
- understanding how to communicate personal and professional strengths;
- establishing career mentors and supports;
- continually engaging in self-evaluation;
- engaging in ongoing professional development;
- adjusting to life-cycle stages.

Career practitioners play a vital role in supporting clients in applying personal career management skills to future career paths.

### ❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Consider your life as a case study. Use the list above as a guide and record your responses to questions such as: How would you describe your work ethic and the values that support it? Describe yourself in terms of being competent in the career you are considering for yourself. What are your strengths and how would you describe them to someone? Continue on creating your personal responses to the items on the list.

### *Establishing a Network*

Career specialists understand the importance of having their clients establish and maintain networks to enhance their career-building activities. Networking is about making connections, developing leads, and building relationships with individuals and groups of people. The ability to network is crucial for most people to be successful in their career explorations. Networking is an opportunity to gather information, and research prospective employment opportunities. This is increasingly important according to Wright (2007), who suggests that over 75% of all available positions are found via the “hidden market.” By hidden market we are talking about all the positions that organizations do not advertise. The key to finding a good job is your ability to market yourself from a stranger into a known commodity through networking.



Networking for employment can be considered a three-step process (as adapted from Guffey, Rhodes, & Rogin, 2011) whether using the traditional model or the online model for networking.

<b>TRADITIONAL NETWORKING</b>	<b>ONLINE NETWORKING</b>
<b><i>Develop a list</i></b>	<b><i>Join a networking group</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make lists of anyone you are interested in or who would be willing to talk to you regarding finding a job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a professional network by joining one or more online networks. LinkedIn is the leading network.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider who can help you — family, former employers, colleagues, organizations you are a member of, former educators, neighbours, et cetera.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joining is easy: create a username and password, fill in a profile, and add business contacts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider university career centres and alumni offices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some sites are fee-based. Find the one, whether free or fee, that best suits your need.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Make contact</i></b>	<b><i>Participate</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange to meet with the people on your list. Depending on your comfort and knowledge of the individual, this can be done in person, on the phone, or informally via email.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in discussion groups, mailing lists, and social media. Find groups that have the expertise you need.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be professional, organized, and friendly and ask each person if they know anyone who might have an opening for an individual with your skill set.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a relevant blog or Twitter feed for your career interest. Blogs and Twitter are very useful for networking and information sharing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to highlight your skills and have a copy of your résumé available to share.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Quintessential Careers as a starting point for networking tools &lt;<a href="http://www.quintcareers.com">http://www.quintcareers.com</a>&gt;.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Follow up on your referrals</i></b>	<b><i>Follow up on leads</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the people you were referred to by your contacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the connections you find to introduce yourself.</li> </ul>

Table 6: Traditional and Online Networking. (Continued on next page)

TRADITIONAL NETWORKING	ONLINE NETWORKING
<p><b>Follow up on your referrals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You could say something like this: Hello, my name is Samantha Jones, a friend of _____. She suggested that I call you. I am looking for a position as_____, and she thought you might be able to steer me in the right direction.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use Twitter and blogs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Quintessential Careers as a starting point for networking tools &lt;<a href="http://www.quintcareers.com">http://www.quintcareers.com</a>&gt;.</li> </ul>
<p>Table 6 (continued): Traditional and Online Networking.</p>	

## The Professional Career Practitioner

Life seldom runs along a predictable path. The economy, globalization, and company priorities require job skills and career plans that are flexible and adaptable to market needs. Therefore, in addition to guiding clients through the importance of networking, career specialists need to establish networks themselves for the purpose of assembling and using labour market and career information. Professional networking, community networking, and membership in professional associations are effective ways to stay current in the field.

### Professional Networking

The professional networking is composed of individuals within departments and organizations whose primary role is to assemble and disseminate labour market information.

#### Beyond the Basics

by Deirdre Pickerell

*Beyond the Basics: Real World Skills for Career Practitioners*, published by Life Strategies, has tips and techniques for working with diverse clients. It is linked to the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*. <<http://www.lifestrategies.ca/store/proddetail.php?prod=BasicsPrint>>.

- Each provincial government has designated departments that examine labour market information. Hotlines are available to provide you with appropriate contacts in your province or territory.
- Many municipalities gather information that can assist the business sector. This information is often available through the economic development officer in your community.

Of course there are always the hidden gems of labour market information (LMI) that are often overlooked. Liaison officers, counsellors, and university registrars can be valuable sources of LMI and are able to provide you with information regarding educational trends. These trends are often reflective of labour market needs and changing demographics.

### Community Networking

Regardless of where you live in Canada, there are individuals who will have an understanding of the trends affecting the labour market. Consider individuals who are responsible for recruitment, government departments, schools, and career counselling agencies to get involved with regarding emerging trends.

### Professional Associations

The third and final consideration for staying current is to belong to a career practitioner organization. These organizations can range in scope from a community network to provincial agencies or societies and national organizations. For more information on career-related professional associations, see Appendix B.

### Staying Current

Some experts suggest that approximately 10 to 15% of your time should be spent on keeping current in your field. Staying current with labour market trends is especially challenging for the career practitioner as the labour market is in continual flux.

Two methods of monitoring and analyzing labour market trends include the Trend Evaluation and Monitoring Approach (TEAM) and Trend Tracking.

*TEAM Approach.* This approach is a method used to identify emerging issues and early signs of social, political, economic, and technological change. It is based on three levels of participation:

1. Volunteer Group of Monitors: The members of this group regularly review publications for articles suggesting changes that might affect the

### CareerWise

by Riz Ibrahim

*CareerWise* in ContactPoint is a weekly roundup of news and views in the career development field. By putting together some of the most interesting articles on career counselling and career development each week, *CareerWise* aims to keep practitioners current, enrich their work — and save them time. Past issues are archived on the site. A French edition called *OrientAction en bref* is published biweekly.

<<http://contactpoint.ca/careerwise/>>.

ContactPoint and *OrientAction* are provided by the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC).

organization. Summaries of these articles are written and forwarded to the analysis team.

2. **Analysis Team:** A small group of people chosen for their diverse backgrounds and analytic skills meet regularly to try to put together the segments of information from the monitoring group to see how the information can be of benefit to the organization.
3. **Senior Management Committee:** The results of the analysis team's discussion are written up and sent to the senior management committee as well as to each of the volunteer monitors. The senior management committee reviews the material provided and decides which items will be brought to the attention of specific managers of the organization.

*Tracking Trends.* There is a multitude of labour market data available to researchers in Canada. Trend tracking is a way of systematically taking this information and turning it into usable and applied information. The minimum daily requirement for keeping up in one subject area is:

- reading the newspaper,
- watching or listening to a news show,
- reading a weekly news magazine,
- reading a monthly magazine in your own field of expertise,
- subscribing to relevant RSS feeds and content-curation services such as Academica and CareerWise.

We recommend incorporating trend tracking into your daily routine. By using information sources you have already identified, you are already tracking labour market trends!

## Summary

Career planning is a dynamic process that helps individuals create a vision for their work future, to provide a process for adapting to change, and to prepare them for creating innovative career strategies and managing career decisions throughout all stages of their career journey. Labour market information, program requirements, occupational requirements, and many other aspects of career planning are constantly changing. As a result, it is more important than ever to remain up-to-date with the latest facts. Reading newspapers, reviewing websites, and staying in touch with one's networks are ways that ensure that the information used for making decisions is the most current and accurate available. Career development practitioners also need to stay current with emerging resources to make the time spent with your clients both effective and efficient.

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## Glossary

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**Action planning** is a process that helps one focus his or her ideas and to decide what steps are needed to achieve a particular goal. It is a statement of what one wants to achieve over a period of time.

**Career planning** is an ongoing process through which a person sets career goals and identifies ways of achieving them. Through career planning, a person evaluates

his or her own abilities and interests, considers alternative career opportunities, establishes career goals, and plans practical developmental activities.

**Decision making** is the process of mapping the likely consequences of decisions, working out the importance of individual factors, and choosing the best course of action to take.

**Goal setting** is a two-part process of deciding what one wants to accomplish and then devising an action plan to achieve the result one desires.

**Job search** is the act of looking for employment.

**Labour market** is the arena where those who are in need of labour and those who can supply the labour come together. The market is in a constant state of flux, dependent on changing external influences.

**Occupation** is a group of similar jobs or types of work sharing similar skills, education, knowledge, and training.

**Personal career management** is the lifelong, self-monitored process of career planning that involves choosing and setting personal goals and formulating strategies for achieving them.

**Self-discovery** is the process of achieving understanding or knowledge of oneself.

**Skill segmentation** refers to dual labour markets, which consist of various sub-groups with little or no crossover capability. The labour markets are divided into the primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector generally contains the higher grade, higher status, and better paid jobs that require specific skills, with employers who offer the best terms and conditions. The secondary sector is characterized jobs which are mostly low-skilled and require relatively little training. There are few barriers to job mobility within the secondary sector.

## Discussion and Activities

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### Discussion

How has the Web changed career planning and job searching for individuals and career practitioners? In your opinion, is the change positive or negative? Provide examples.

### Personal Reflection Questions

Like the individuals we work with, career practitioners need to keep up-to-date on new strategies, exemplary practices and be aware of opportunities for professional growth. What steps will you take to stay current?

### Career Practitioner's Role

1. List three professional associations that you could join. Explain the purpose of each.
2. Why is it important to intentionally manage one's career progress? What are some ideas you have for managing your career? What resources or support systems do you have at your disposal? If limited, how would you go about finding them?
3. Consider your role as a professional career practitioner. What issues might you face with clients as you engage them in the self-discovery process? What have you learned about yourself that will help or hinder your effectiveness as a career practitioner?

### Activities

1. Review local labour market trends that appear to be impacting your role as a career practitioner. Consider the following questions:
  - (a) Is this a one-time event/circumstance?
  - (b) Is this a sequence of events/circumstances? And,
  - (c) Do these events/circumstances have social, political, and/or economic significance?

For each, write down the trend and identify the potential impact on yourself and your current role.

2. Compare the advantages and disadvantages of locating labour market and job listings from big board sites such as monster.ca.
3. Identify your talents, personality traits, interests, motivators, values, knowledge, skills, and experience relative to finding meaningful work. In an email to your instructor, describe what kind of career, company, position, and location would best fit with your self-analysis.
4. What type of salary can you expect for your chosen career? Visit Working in Canada at <<http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca/>> and select your occupation based on the kind of employment you are seeking now. If you live in Alberta, also visit the Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) website at <[www.alis.alberta.ca](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/)> to compare provincial norms to the national rates.
5. Searching the job market: To keep current you will need to become familiar with the kinds of information available. Your task is to consider a position you would like to have and then clip or print potential job advertisement(s)/ announcement(s) from the following: (a) the classified section of a newspaper,

- (b) a job board on the Web, (c) a company website, and (d) a professional association.
6. Case Study: As a career practitioner you are considering a one-year exchange with a practitioner in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Before you make the decision to move forward, you decide to apply your career management research and networking skills.
- (a) Write down some of the questions that you would have about:
- the actual exchange,
  - the city of Winnipeg,
  - living/accommodations,
  - family needs/resources,
  - the job responsibilities,
  - the impact on your professional career.
- (b) Identify potential contacts that might be helpful in the transition (e.g., Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce).
- (c) Prepare five questions you would ask each of the potential contacts on your list.

## Resources and Readings

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### Resources

#### Web Resources

##### Labour Market Information

Alberta Employment and Immigration (2009). Making Sense of Labour Market Information <<http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/LabourMarketInfo.pdf>>.

British Columbia — Labour Market information

<[http://www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca/labour\\_market\\_information.html](http://www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca/labour_market_information.html)>.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) — Labour Market Information <<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/lmi/publications/index.shtml>>.

“Labour Market Bulletins provide an analysis of the local labour market and an assessment of local employment-related events.” HRSDC offices across Canada provide information such as local occupational and industrial trends, wage data, and training information. This information is also available through the HRSDC website.

##### WorkinfoNet — Directory to Resources

Alberta Learning Information Service <<http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca>> (English only)

Manitoba WorkInfoNet <<http://mb.workinfonet.ca/>> (English and French).



## Career Planning, Knowledge, and Skills

Ontario WorkInfoNet <<http://www.onwin.ca>> (English and French) — many resources but some links may no longer be active.

### Career Related

CareerWise from ContactPoint: Weekly roundup up news and views in the career development field. <<http://contactpoint.ca/careerwise/>>.

Service Canada: Training and Careers <<http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/>>.

Links to tools for Career Navigator and Blueprint for Life/Work.

Alberta Learning Information Services: Self-Assessment Tools <<http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/cp/cpt/planning-tools.html>>.

Careerinsite: career planning <<https://careerinsite.alberta.ca/careerinsite.aspx>>.

Ontario School Counsellors' Association has a page of self-assessment tools <<http://www.osca.ca/en/students/help-with-career-choices/self-assessment>>.

Quintessential Careers (a plethora of articles and career tools on decision making) <<http://www.quintcareers.com/>>.

### Job Search Sites

National Job Bank <<http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/>>

Hot Jobs in Canada <<http://www.hotjobscanada.ca>>

Career builder <<http://www.careerbuilder.com>>

Monster <<http://www.monster.ca>>

Snag a Job <<http://www.snagajob.com>>

### Decision Making

Decision-making Worksheet <<https://career.berkeley.edu/plan/DecisionMakingWorksheet.pdf>>.

Make Decisions — Visualization Exercise <<https://career.berkeley.edu/plan/VisualizationExercise.stm>>.

Career Decision making — University of Waterloo <<http://www.careerservices.uwaterloo.ca/resources/CareerDecisionMaking.pdf>>.

Understand the what and how of making a career decision: Florida State University <<http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/individual/index.html>>.

### Goal Setting

Goal-Buddy.com <<http://www.goal-buddy.com/>>.

Goal-setting Guide <<http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/goal-setting-tutorials/smart-goal-setting>>.

University of Victoria. Motivation and Goal Setting Work Sheet <<http://coun.uvic.ca/learning/motivation/goals.html>>.

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