

**Reaching Career Goals**

**Point of the Assignment:** To learn how to recognize which kinds of jobs will take you towards your dream job.

Achieving a career goal requires starting with a specific goal (a dream job for which to aim) and a plan for how to get there. In order to create a plan for how to get to the dream job, the plan must take into account where you are currently, what you want, and what skills, experiences, and credentials you need to get there. This plan must also take into account who or what types of institutions will value what you have to offer. Once you have identified the education/training, skills, experiences and credentials you need, then you can explore your options, and chart out a plan of action.

**CONCEPT #1: CHANGING CAREERS**

People, who want to change from one type of job to another, need to change careers. According to Richard Bowles in “What Color is Your Parachute,” (p. 127-129 in 2001 ed.) changing careers or a profession typically involves changing both the occupation and industry. In order to do that, you need to change your occupation within your current industry. Then once you are in the new occupation, then you can change to the new industry. Or, you can change the industry while you are still in the same occupation. Then once you are in the new industry, you change your occupation.

This process involves identifying skills (occupational, or industry knowledge), and seeing how they can be carried over, one step at a time – that is, identifying your **transferable skills**.

	Wants to change <b>FROM</b>	Wants to change <b>TO</b>
<b>Industry</b> ( <i>type of employer</i> )	Corporate	Higher Education
<b>Occupation</b> ( <i>actual job</i> )	Secretary	Teacher

**Option 1:** First, **change the industry** in which you work first, then change the occupation:

	Wants to change <b>FROM</b>	Wants to change <b>TO</b>
<b>Start</b>	Corporate Secretary ↓	
<b>Transition</b> <b>(Change Industry First)</b>	Higher Education Secretary →	↓Teacher
<b>Finish</b>		Higher Education Professor

**Option 2:** First, change the occupation in which you work first, then the industry:

	Wants to change <b>FROM</b>	Wants to change <b>TO</b>
<b>Start</b>	Corporate Secretary ↓	
<b>Transition (Change Occupation First)</b>	Corporate Trainer →	↓ Higher Education
<b>Finish</b>		Higher Education Professor

**CONCEPT #2: DIFFERENT TYPES OF JOBS**

Now, you need to determine how to proceed forward with making, and following through, on your career change transition process. According to the authors of “No One Is Unemployable,” Elisabeth Harney and Debra Angel, there are only four types of jobs: Survival Jobs, Entry-Level Career Jobs, Transition Jobs, and Dream Jobs.

**Survival Jobs** are positions that offer only a means to survive with little or no job satisfaction or opportunity for advancement. They are NOT in your field of interest (industry). Survival Jobs are useful while in school, or for **immediate** short-term employment. You should not stay in a survival job for more than one year, and should avoid moving from survival job to survival job.

**NOTE - TEACHER’S COMMENTS: I make two exceptions to the rule of not staying in Survival Jobs: It IS appropriate to stay at Survival jobs for more than a year, IF:**

1. You find yourself facing extended periods of unemployment due to **TEMPORARY downturns in the** economy and your skill set/marketability is in an industry where there is a TEMPORARY season of a high rate of unemployment, but is expected to eventually pick back up.
  - a. **Good for individuals who:**
    - i. Are well qualified for
    - ii. Find great satisfaction in their field, and
    - iii. **Temporarily** find their market has too many job applicants. Such individuals need to survive while they pursue realistic options.
  - b. This option is NOT good for individuals who:
    - i. Are in markets where their skill set/industry are NOT expected to revive anytime in the foreseeable future and/or
    - ii. Do NOT find satisfaction with their current skill set/industry
  - c. Example: Current economic crisis has forced many who previously enjoyed working in real estate, construction, and/or banking industries to become suddenly unemployed in high numbers. It is assumed that as the economy eventually recovers possibly in a few years, some of these jobs may become more in demand again.

- 2. Survival jobs that truly support you going to school.** These jobs are not that common and should be valued as long as they facilitate your goals.

**Entry-Level Career Jobs** are positions that allow you to begin a career path within your career field. The level of entry will vary based on your experience, education and current network, as well as what is available in the industry and local job market. Every industry offers entry-level positions through support departments such as the mailroom, food service, security, grounds keeping, building maintenance, general office and telemarketing, etc. Internships offered through training programs are also a good source of entry-level jobs. These jobs are fairly easy to secure, due to high turn-over. They also allow for career advancement. You should use an entry-level career job to begin building a professional network, find a mentor, and prove you are the type of employee the company needs so you can advance.

**NOTE - TEACHER'S COMMENT:** Remember that volunteer work is usually considered valid work experience. Sometimes entering a new field requires volunteering your time so that you can gain real-world experience. Many employers would be happy to accept "free labor", so your odds of getting in are much easier than when competing for a full-time career-level position with full paid salary. My first actual work experience in higher education was when I volunteered as a "peer mentor" for the Re-Entry (students over 25) Center at the university, and also completed my Public Relations internship at this office. This experience gave me something to put on my resume, and references for graduate school.

Also keep in mind that you can sometimes gain your entry-level work experience by volunteering to work for your family or friends. Many training programs may instruct students to practice the skills they are developing on family or friends. Doing so can give you an opportunity to build your professional portfolio and list such experiences on your resume. Sometimes working for free for family or friends may even be required before gaining your first internship or entry-level job as it can show potential employers that you do have some experience. When I became a qualified Myers-Briggs administrator, the first thing I did was practice on my family and friends.

**Transition Jobs** are positions that you hold as you move from your entry-level career job to your dream job. Transition jobs are always in your career field. They are always a step beyond the last position you held, or they teach a new skill you need to pursue your dream job. Moving into a transition job is generally the result of planning, hard work and networking. – It seldom just happens by accident.

**NOTE - TEACHER'S COMMENT:** Some of my transition jobs came in the form of graduate internships where I had my first experiences in academic advising and teaching. Then I received my first professional-level job just before receiving my Masters degree, working with university admissions. Like other people, I was able to teach part-time before becoming full-time. People who want to teach in higher education, usually need to start off part-time before they receive

enough experience and networks to be considered for full-time, permanent positions.

**Dream Jobs** are positions that match your interests, utilize the skills you love to use, and help you attain your personal goals. They are jobs that are fun for you. Somewhere along the way, many people trade their dream jobs for something less than what they really want. Some people never learned how to get there, and others allowed themselves to be distracted by other things while in the process of pursuing their dream job. Often, however, that dream job is still achievable.

### **CONCEPT #3: MISSION/VALUES ALIGNMENT WITH INSTITUTION**

Part of finding that dream job also involves ensuring that you align yourself with organizations/institutions whose goals and values are consistent with your own. Because even if you get the right title, if there is not a good cultural fit, the job could be more of a nightmare than a dream job. Even within an industry, there can be tremendous differences in what various companies/institutions value and strive to achieve.

#### **Examples:**

- 1) **Higher Education:** There are some colleges that pride themselves on being very selective in only pursuing the “brightest, and highest-potential, and high pedigree” high school seniors who graduate at the top of their classes. Yet, state supported schools were founded on the concept of “open access”, meaning everyone should have access to higher education regardless of their backgrounds. In addition, there is even a tremendous difference between what a state-supported university and a state-supported community college will value. A state university will want to pursue the highest-quality local students that are academically prepared for college life. Yet since the community college prides itself as being “the gateway to access to higher education” they may feel that their mission is to help underprepared students succeed in college, and consequently pride themselves on pursuing people from underprivileged backgrounds.
- 2) **Corporate America:** Many companies such as banks may be more conservative, valuing financial soundness, stability and earning your money through old-fashioned hard work. This organization will want to follow the proven paths of success. Yet a computer software developer may value innovation and being at the forefront of change. This organization will welcome risk-taking opportunities in the name of progress.
- 3) **Church:** One church may feel its mission/purpose is to support in-tact traditional families and wants to see them stay that way. Therefore they may focus their energies on providing programs that promote healthy family life, and therefore not want to have programs that support the needs of adult singles. Whereas another church may feel its mission is to feed homeless people in the inner cities. Therefore most of its efforts will be to support inner-city life. This idea of values mission conflict also includes differences in theology or fundamental belief systems.
- 4) **Non-Profit Organizations:** One non-profit organization may be devoted to finding homes for homeless animals, and other could have a mission of raising money for

college scholarships or building new hospital buildings, etc. Therefore, they will be devoted to pursuing very different audiences as potential donors.

**Application:** If your values or your own personal life mission are inconsistent with those of the organization for which you work, you will likely not be happy or successful in your job. For example, you may want to work with college students, but prefer to work with underprepared college students. However if you go to work for an Ivy League college, you will likely find that your passions and talents are under appreciated. Instead, you will likely find yourself in constant conflict with your superiors over what needs to be done or how it should be done. People facing such conflicts will often find themselves “beating their head against a brick wall.” Or, most people, instead of recognizing a bad fit for what it is, will spend their energies trying to change the organization. Instead, such people should take the time to realize that they are not a good fit with this organization and to take the time to find a place where they do fit based on values and mission. If they do not, they may likely eventually be fired or asked to resign due to “personality conflicts.”

**Assignment Application:**

**To help you figure out how to achieve your dream job, you need to determine a path for getting there – that is, identifying your Survival, Entry-Level Career, and Transition Jobs.**

But before you can identify your Survival, Entry-Level Career, and Transition jobs, you first need to determine your Dream Job. Then, your Dream Job will help you to determine your choice for your Survival, Entry-Level Career, and Transition. So let’s start with your Dream Job first:

**What is your “Dream Job”?:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you don’t know, then work with any Dream Job you can think of for the sake of completing this assignment. However, do NOT use something that involves fame or luck [rock star, published author, etc.], because these types of dream jobs do not lend themselves to doing this assignment.)*

What is the Industry (type of employer) for your Dream Job? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Occupation (title) of your Dream Job? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, consider what types of jobs (*list 2-5 examples*) you can start with to get you there. (This process may require that you do some research into this occupation or industry to discover what your options are.) Don’t forget to consider volunteer jobs and internships for entry-level.

**Entry-Level Career Job** \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Entry-Level Career Job \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

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Entry-Level Career Job \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Once you have determined a way to begin, try exploring some possible options (*list 2-5 examples*) for transition jobs. (This process may require that you do some research into this occupation or industry to discover what your options are.)

**Transition Job(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Transition Job(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Transition Job(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Education/training, skills, credentials, and experience needed for this position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, should you have difficulty getting started, or need to work for a few months while looking for something that suits your needs; you may need to acquire a survival job for a season. **What could you do on a short-term basis as a way to make ends meet?** To help you identify survival jobs, **think of only jobs which you could get immediately without needing additional training.** (You should already have the necessary skills, abilities, credentials and experience for these jobs).

Survival Job \_\_\_\_\_

Survival Job \_\_\_\_\_

Survival Job \_\_\_\_\_

Survival Job \_\_\_\_\_

**Application of Values/Mission Alignment:**

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Give an example of a time when you (or someone you know), tried to work at a job where there was a conflict of values/mission. What ultimately happened with this individual? *(If you can't think of your own example, ask someone you know who has been working for many years. – They will likely be able to provide an example.)*

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Next, you are going to identify your own personal interests, values, preferred audiences (what types of people you work best with). Use the information you have learned about yourself thus far in this class to help you with this part.

What are your:

- 1) **Interests:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) **Values** (what is most important to you) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) **Audience** (what type of people do you want to work with?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

With this information listed above, what should you look for in a potential organization to ensure you will have a “mission/values” good fit? In other words, **what characteristics should these organizations possess?**

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### **Test your understanding:**

**What is the main point of this assignment?**

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**Why were you expected to do this exercise?**

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**What type of person would need to do this exercise?**

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**How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?**

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**Reflection:** (*Write down your response after completing this assignment.*)

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Bowles, R.N. (2001). *What color is your parachute?* Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Angel, D.L. & Harney, E.E. (1997). *No one is unemployable.* Hacienda Heights, CA: WorkNet Publications. (*Refer to WorkNet Solutions website [www.worknetsolutions.com](http://www.worknetsolutions.com) for more information on how to order this book and other career related materials.*)