

Charting Your Course: A Roadmap to Thriving in the Field of Health

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HSA CAREER GUIDE

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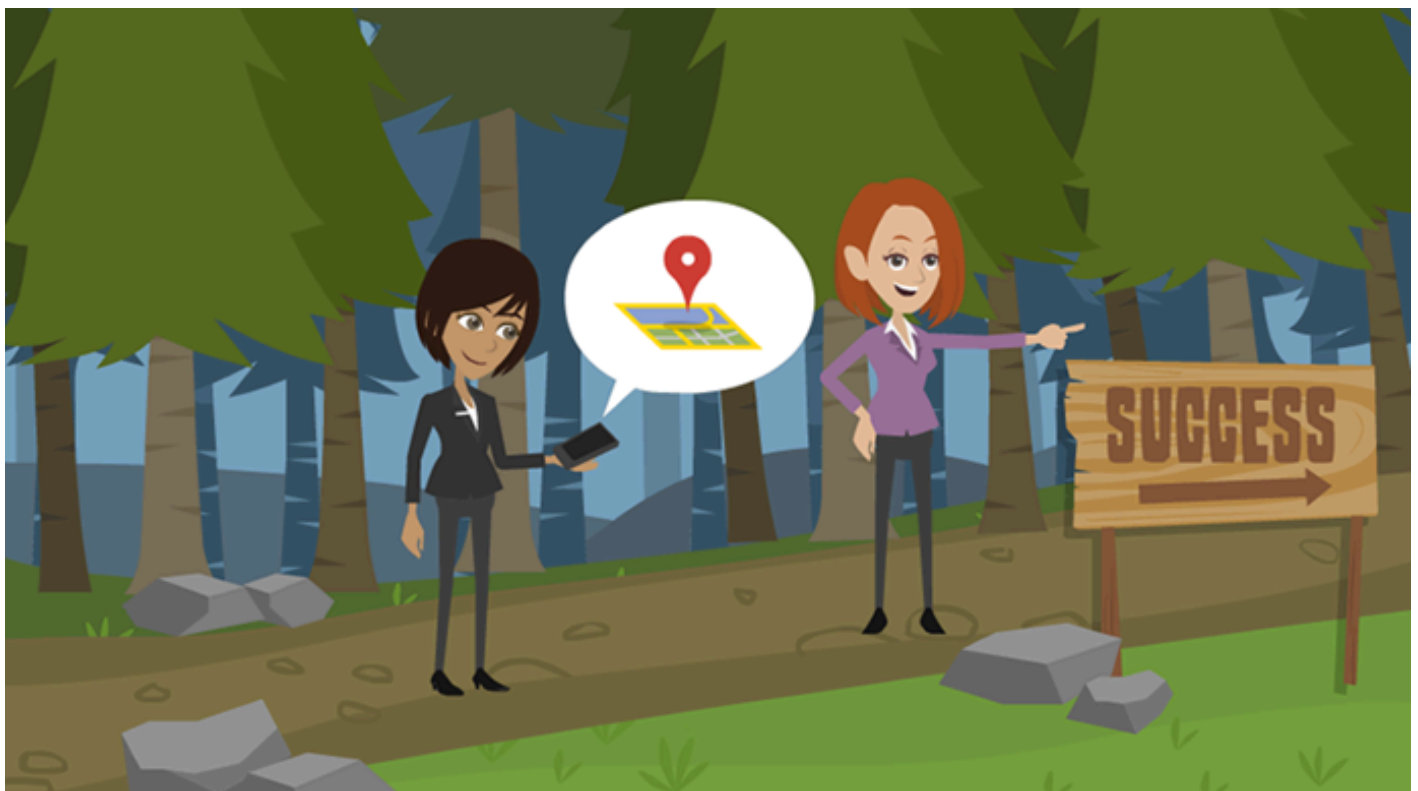
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Introduction

EMBRACING YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

Welcome to *Charting Your Course: A Roadmap to Thriving in the Field of Health!* Whether you are in your first semester, nearing graduation, or long past graduation, this career guide is designed to lead you through the career development process: from building self-awareness, to conducting career research, undertaking a job search, to succeeding on the job. *Charting Your Course* includes relevant, up-to-date information, interactive and self-reflection-based exercises, as well as online resources to help support you to become more comfortable, flexible, and adept at managing your career.



You can access and work through this book at your own pace and in any order you wish, picking and choosing the content that is most relevant to you.

This book is composed of four modules. They include:

Module 1: Understanding Yourself

Module 2: Career Research and Exploration

Module 3: Job Search

Module 4: On the Job Success

By engaging with the content in this Pressbook, you will:

- Develop greater self-awareness of the personal characteristics, external factors, and available resources that contribute to making informed career decisions
- Build your research skills, explore occupational areas of interest, evaluate possible occupations, and set career goals
- Learn the skills necessary to conduct an effective job search, including crafting targeted application documents and job interviewing
- Expand your understanding of factors that contribute to success on the job

BENEFITS OF THE GUIDE

Being prepared and aware of your options is crucial. Career development does matter and can be difficult. *Charting Your Course: A Roadmap to Thriving in the Field of Health* takes you through the steps to help you remain in the driver's seat so that you can:

- Cope with challenging transitions and move forward in meaningful and sustainable ways
- Embrace the unknown by offering positive ways to think about and move through uncertainty
- Increase your self-awareness, including learning more about your strengths
- Find hidden opportunities by broadening your awareness and opening yourself up to new opportunities
- Create a network of people with whom you can share information, inspiration, and opportunities
- Adjust your strategies and apply your skills to various situations to meet labor market needs
- Build a more optimistic foundation for your life

(2020) *On the move: eight ways career development gets you going*. Canadian Career Development Foundation

INTRODUCING JANE CAREER

Navigation: Let Jane help you on your Journey.



Your guide throughout this book is Jane Career, a (fictional) University of West Florida graduate. She will pop up frequently throughout the modules to provide examples and walk you through exercises.

University of West Florida's (UWF) Career Services



To meet the needs of UWF students, alumni, and partners, all services, including scheduled and drop-in appointments, are available both virtually and in person. If you have any questions please contact our office at career@uwf.edu.

- Book one-on-one virtual or in-person appointments for career planning and job search support (including networking, interview prep, and resume/cover letter reviews)
- Register for career-related webinars and events
- Use a variety of online career development tools, such as career assessments, interview prep and networking tools, and career exploration resources
- Review recommended resources including webinar recordings and employer videos



[Handshake](#) is the university-wide job posting system for students and alumni to schedule appointments with career coaches, stay up to date with career events, search for jobs, internships, Co-ops, and more. Handshake will allow you to access job postings and employer hiring events.

To connect with Career Development and Community Engagement, email: career@uwf.edu.

THANK YOU

This work is adapted from "[Centennial College Career Success Guide](#)" by Career Services and Cooperative Education, Centennial College, Modifications: Text , images, and selected content modified for clarity and flow is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)

MODULE 01: UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF IN THE WORLD OF WORK

INTRODUCTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This module will be helpful you:

- Identify and explore your strengths, values, interests, personality traits and career goals
- Decide which career path may fit with your characteristics and goals
- Want to develop a clearer vision of your career future

Having a sense of what you're good at, what interests you, and how you want to contribute are an important part of navigating the world of work. We sometimes call this a process of developing *self-awareness* or building *identity resources*. Developing self-awareness and a strong sense of identity can help you make informed career choices and decisions, and set relevant and targeted career goals, which may help you pivot quickly when a career interruption happens. Self-awareness is ongoing since you and the world around you is always changing. Having ways to reflect and understand yourself in relation to the world and your community are necessary skills to navigate the ever-changing world of work.

The University of Florida is committed to providing learning that leads to purposeful work and meaningful lives. In this module, you will explore what defines productive work for you and some of the steps you can take to help realize your career goals.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Determine your personal definition of career success
2. Understand the value of reflection and self-awareness as an essential part of career planning and decision-making
3. Generate a list of personal characteristics that contribute to your career choices and brainstorm potential occupations that fit within these factors
4. Generate a list of personal factors that impact your career path and planning
5. Draft a career vision through a mind-mapping process
6. Establish action steps in line with your career vision for further experimentation

CAREER SUCCESS

Career success is influenced by our environment and our own personal preferences and experiences.

Think of someone who has what you consider a ‘successful career’.

1. Who is it? How do you know (of) them?
2. How would you describe their career? What are some specific reasons you define their career as successful?
3. What aspects of this person’s career success would you include in your own definition of career success?

What other ingredients would you include in your personal definition of career success?

Example 1 – Hassan’s Career Success

Hassan is an Early Childhood Education student who has considered the questions above.

Hassan’s success? Changing, Adapting, Trying new things, Making a difference, and Inspiring people.

Click on the following tabs to see how he answered the questions:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=27#h5p-1>

Example 2 – Daniela’s Career Success

Daniela is a Business Administration – Leadership and Management student.

Daniela’s success? Advancement, Taking risks, Working hard, Supporting, and Contributing.

Click on the following tabs to see how she responded to the questions:



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=27#h5p-2>



Now it's your turn!

Here is a downloadable and fillable file in pdf and Word format with these 4 questions + one additional question:

- [Questions For Career Success\(.pdf\)](#)
- [Questions For Career Success\(.docx\)](#)

1. Name a person who you believe has a successful career. Who is it? How do you know (of) them?
2. How would you describe their career and what are some specific reasons you define their career as successful?
3. What elements of this person's career success would you include in your own definition of career success?
4. What other ingredients would you include in your definition of career success?
5. How do your experiences, family, friends, community, culture and society influence your own definition of career success?

IDENTIFY LIMITING BELIEFS

We receive a steady stream of messages throughout our lives that influence our beliefs about what our career “should” be and how it “should” look. Some career beliefs can be helpful (for example, a belief that ‘hard work will pay off’ may help motivate you) and some beliefs will limit both your career options and potential. We call the ones that get in the way *‘limiting beliefs’*.

We all carry with us limiting beliefs about careers that we’ve learned from our families, our communities, media, and our experiences. Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, in their bestselling book *Designing Your Life (2016)*, name several limiting beliefs and then offer reframes.

Here are a few:

<i>"Your degree determines your career."</i>	<i>"Three-quarters of all college grads don't end up working in a career related to their majors" (p. x)</i>
<i>"It's too late."</i>	<i>"It's never too late to design a life you love." (p. xii)</i>
<i>"I should know where I'm going!"</i>	<i>"I won't always know where I'm going – but I can always know whether I'm going in the right direction." (p. 39)</i>
<i>"I have to find the one right idea."</i>	<i>"I need a lot of ideas so that I can explore any number of possibilities for my future." (p. 65)</i>
<i>"It's my life, I have to design it myself."</i>	<i>"You live and design your life in collaboration with others." (p. 199)</i>
<i>"I finished designing my life; the hard work is done, and everything will be great."</i>	<i>"You never finish designing your life – life is a joyous and never-ending design project of building your way forward." (p. 219)</i>

Can you relate to any of the limiting beliefs listed above? We all have limiting beliefs about our careers so it helps to notice/identify which limiting beliefs you believe are true. Any time you're feeling absolutely certain about something, ask yourself, "Where did I learn that? Is it true? Is this belief helping me or holding me back?"

In this short video, Strayer University asked what "success" means to you.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=27#oembed-1>

What's Your Definition of Success? The Success Series. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulShj4keKNw&t=2s>

YOUR PERSONALITY, INTERESTS, VALUES, SKILLS, AND STRENGTHS

One common piece of career advice we often hear is to ‘follow your passion’. This isn’t very helpful if you’re not sure what your passion is or the passion you do have won’t pay the bills.

Rather than focusing upon finding your ‘passion’, it is more productive to name and understand your strengths, to gain a better understanding of your personality, characteristics, values, and interests. This may help your career decision process, leading towards a good educational and work “fit”. Finding passion in your paid work, if it happens at all, may develop over time through trial and error. It isn’t something we can discover through one simple online test or quick self-reflection.

The process of building self-awareness for career development typically involves exploring five personal characteristics categories.



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=34#h5p-3>

These five categories are:



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=34#h5p-4>



Now it's your turn!

- Throughout this section, you'll be invited to complete a series of activities that will challenge you to identify some of your personality traits, interests, values, skills and strengths.
 - If you would like, you can record your answers on the **Self-Reflection Career Summary Sheet** available in [.docx](#) or [.pdf](#) formats
- This way, you'll end up with a summary page of what you notice and learn about yourself!

ENJOYABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



One great way to self-reflect is to consider when you felt proud of yourself and were at your best. Those moments when you enjoyed a process and felt a sense of accomplishment, is what we refer to as 'enjoyable accomplishments'. Those situations can be from any parts of your life (work, volunteer, school, hobbies, etc.) and from any time in your life. Take a moment to write down details of three specific experiences that you would define as 'enjoyable accomplishments' (you probably have many – it doesn't matter which ones you choose).

Once you have written your experience "stories", identify a few values, skills, strengths, interests, and personality traits you notice in each story. When you have written them all out, review your notes and ask yourself, *"What common themes keep reoccurring? Which ones feel most reflective of who you are?"*

Here is an example:

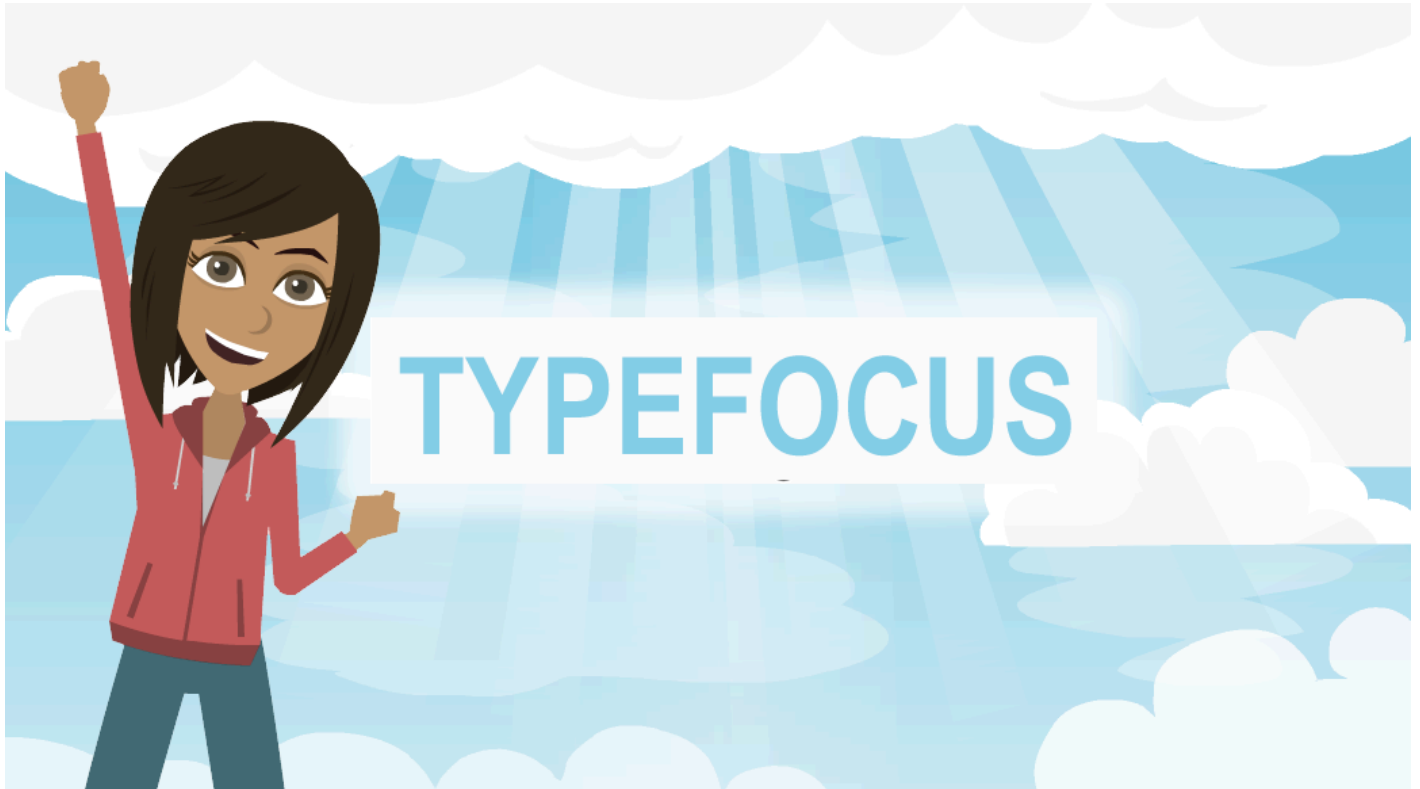
Enjoyable Accomplishment	Description/Story	Values, Skills/Strengths, Interests, Personality demonstrated
Example 1: Eco Club	Story 1: As part of her high school's Eco Club, Jane Career was given leadership responsibilities for the end-of-year hike. She organized the schedule, booked transportation, delegated food preparation to other club members, and communicated the details. On the day of the end-of-year hike, everything went smoothly and her friends thanked her for organizing such a fun trip! Jane really enjoyed both the organizing process and being outdoors with her friends.	Values: nature, environmentalism, professionalism, activity Skills/Strengths: organizing, communication, delegating, leadership Interests: hiking, organizing Personality: take charge, fun, social, responsible
Example 2: Assisting a senior	Story 2: While walking home one day, Jane noticed a man crossing the road very slowly at a traffic light. He was not going to make it across before the light turned red so she rushed over to hold traffic and allow him to finish crossing. Once on the other side, the man thanked her and expressed frustration at his own slow pace. Jane joked that maybe it wasn't him that was too slow, but the light that was too fast! He thought that was pretty funny.	Values: kindness and caring, safety, humor, respect for elders Skills/Strengths: making quick decisions, valuing human connection, communicating one-on-one, reducing frustration and anxiety Interests: people, helping others Personality: live by my values, prefer human interaction but usually one-on-one, responsible



Your Turn!

- Here is a downloadable **Enjoyable Accomplishments Worksheet** available as a [\(.docx\)](#) or fillable [\(.pdf\)](#) that you can fill in and save for your own reference. You can choose to describe any number of enjoyable experiences.
- Writing down your enjoyable experiences and regularly reflecting on your experiences and accomplishments can help you build increased personal insight. Consider experimenting a bit by telling your story to a close friend or family member to see what characteristics they notice.
- Finally, if you are completing the **Self-Reflection Career Summary Sheet - (.docx)** or [\(.pdf\)](#)- go ahead and add the values, skills/strengths, interests, and personality traits you discover from your **Enjoyable Accomplishments Worksheet**.

ONLINE CAREER TESTS



You may have completed online career tests in the past. Online career tests should never replace self-reflection and research, but they can offer insight into ourselves as well as occupations that we may want to consider exploring. **Beware though – never let the results from a career test alone dictate which career path you decide to take.** You are much more complex than that! However, there is some value to try taking a few tests for **additional** information about yourself.

Below, we've listed a few free assessments that you might want to consider. Each one is looking at something a bit different so doing all of them will give you a variety of information.

- **ViaCharacter:** <https://www.viacharacter.org/>
- **Truity:** <https://www.truity.com/test/type-finder-personality-test-new>
- **Personal Values Assessment:** <https://personalvalu.es/personal-values-test>

- **Holland Codes:** <https://www.roguecc.edu/Counseling/HollandCodes/about.asp>

Some of the assessments listed above provide ideas of occupations that fit with your personal characteristics. Note the occupations listed that you're curious to learn more about – you can revisit them in Module 2 where you can research occupations and career paths that fit within both your personal characteristics and circumstances. If there are suggested occupations generated by these assessments that don't fit within your current path or your long-term goals, don't panic! Career assessments aren't perfect nor do they take into account the whole you. Look at the themes or occupation clusters that came up in your results and consider why you got the results you did.

YOU, THE WORLD AND YOUR CAREER CHOICES

Career decisions are not made in isolation, but rather any number of outside influences may impact your career trajectory. Each and every career and life decision we make is influenced in some way by the people and cultures around us. Choosing a career path is not only based upon your personal characteristics. Other factors, such as your personal circumstances as well as the types of opportunities and needs you notice in your environment, play a part as well. As we outlined in the introductory module, the labor market is continuously changing. It is crucial to stay up to date on business trends in order to better position yourself for success within an ever-evolving working world.

Ask yourself:

- **What needs am I observing in my community?**
- **Where do I see opportunities?**

PERSONAL FACTORS MAY INCLUDE:

Location

Location can have a big impact on your career decisions. Certain jobs require living in a specific region, or you may find that employment opportunities are more available in a particular city or country. Think about your preferences in terms of where you want to live, how close you want to be to family, friends, and which locations can support your desired lifestyle. If you are determined to work remotely, be sure to get that in writing!

For many of us, close family and friends have a huge influence on our career choices. They may have strong opinions about what is the 'best' career path for you. Consider their opinions and how much weight you should give to their observations. Keep in mind, it might be difficult to carve your own path if you don't have your family's full support.

Culture

Your culture may influence your career journey as well. Cultural expectations carry a strong message about acceptability, directly impacting expected education and career choices. Furthermore, your cultural background may effect your value system. *Do you evaluate a career choice based upon its perceived prestige, earning potential, or personal fulfilment?* Consider the cultural influences that may play a role in your career path.

Financial Situation

Your own and/or your family's financial situation may also be a factor that influences your career path. You might be interested in a career that requires lengthy and expensive training and you would need to consider what kind of financial support is available to you. Your personal financial needs may also be taken into consideration when you are making decisions about your career. Will the earning potential of the chosen field match your financial requirements? How important might this aspect be for you in a few years' time?

CAREER MIND MAPPING



A *mind map* is a visual representation that connects information related to a central topic. In this case, we are focusing on areas of career interest. Creating a mind map allows you to compile all your activities, interests, and ideas on a given topic in one place, allowing you to generate more ideas and notice themes in a visual way.



Adapted from Brooks, Katherine 2009.

You Majored in What? Mapping your path from Chaos to Careers. Plume.

Create your own Career Mind Map by following the instructions below:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=46#h5p-5>

- Clear your mind of any preconceived ideas or judgment. Remember that this activity is about you, so you can't make any mistakes- as long as you're being honest with yourself!
- Take a large sheet of blank paper, pencils and/or pens (using different colors may help you be more creative with this activity).
- Consider your **favorite** activities, educational courses, significant people, meaningful events, jobs, hobbies and so forth. Write down these favored items as they come to you. It may look chaotic -that's okay. Just let the ideas flow and write down a few key words to represent your thoughts.
- When you've run out of things to write, start thinking about things you'd like to try! Write these ideas down, too.
- Now, look over your mind map and consider your preferences. Think about what you liked, specifically in terms of the items you wrote down. For example, if you liked your experience playing on a soccer team you might make a note that you enjoyed the teamwork aspect of the experience or the competitive atmosphere. List as many specific aspects of each item that you enjoyed most.
- The next step is to start noticing themes. Do any of your past experiences connect to any others? Can you identify a few themes or threads in your map? If yes, connect different entries on your map and write down basic themes below on a separate piece of paper.

CAREER MIND MAP QUESTIONS



Look at the themes from your Career Mind Map and respond to the following questions:

Download the

- [Career Mind Map Questions \(.pdf\)](#) or
- [Career Mind Map Questions \(.docx\)](#)
- *Which themes are taking up a large portion of my mind map?*
- *Which areas on the map do I want to develop further in my life?*
- *What areas are irrelevant or less relevant with regards to my career goals?*

Jane's Career Mind Map



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=46#h5p-6>

Let's look at Jane's map. After drawing her map, where she used different colors that helped her identify main themes (all her favorite experiences were written in purple), she could clearly see 3 areas of interest: Administration, Animals/Vet related careers and an Outdoor/environment theme.

Jane's early experiences such as helping her dad in the family business, assisting a school receptionist (who was also a mentor), a customer service position in retail and volunteering at the library led her to choose a career in office administration. She had been considering an alternative career as a Vet Technician, but reflecting on her negative volunteer experience in this field helped her determine that this was not a viable option. Drawing this map helped Jane see another theme that hadn't emerged in other assessments: outdoor/environmental. Upon further reflection Jane realized that she would prefer to keep it as a hobby or maybe consider looking for an administrative position in a related industry.

PERIODIC CAREER REVIEW

You've had an opportunity to complete several exercises related to developing greater insight into yourself in your career. Since you're always growing and changing, it helps to have a list of questions you can periodically come back to in order to reassess what you're learning about yourself vis a vis your career development.



Your Turn!

Spend some time considering the questions below. Write down your responses. Review periodically – perhaps annually – to monitor changes including new interests and new personal insights.

You can download and store your responses in a folder on your computer so that you can easily retrieve and revisit them.

- *How am I using my talents?*
- *In what ways am I engaging in activities I enjoy?*
- *Am I living the life I want to live?*
 - *If yes – how?*
 - *If no – what is one thing I could adjust to move me towards the life I want to live?*
- *What (or who) is supporting me in moving in a positive direction?*
- *What do I see ahead of me on my career path?*

This process is never complete; it is an ongoing, lifelong process. Finding ways to check in with yourself and reflect (in whatever way works for you – be it answering the questions above, journaling, talking it through with a friend, etc.) allows you to be self-reflective and make adjustments to move you closer towards the life you want to live.

"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be."

— Douglas Adams, *The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul*

Adapted from Niles, Amundson & Neault (2009). *Career Flow: A Hope-Centered Approach to Career Development*, Pearson.

CAREER RESILIENCE TIPS

You are on an exploration of self discovery, determining your personal career trajectory. There will be road blocks, and sudden detours. Try to embrace the journey. There is much to learn from the process alone. Sometimes a new trajectory will lead to an amazing opportunity!

Here is a short list of “motivators” to consider when navigating your career quest.

Curiosity



Curiosity:

Learning more about yourself means staying curious. While going through the activities in this module, what piqued your curiosity? Anything you want to learn or explore further?

Flexibility



Flexibility:

As you reflect on yourself within the world of work, be open to new possibilities that might present themselves! How can you bring more flexibility to your life and career?

Optimism



Optimism:

What gives you hope about your career future? What do you look forward to? When you imagine negative outcomes, what strategies might help you to move through the tough times?

Persistence**Persistence:**

There is no perfect career path for any of us and as we figure out what works for us, we will be faced with challenges (crises of identity, disappointments, etc.) that make it hard to keep going. Who can you reach out to help you through these difficult periods?

Risk-Taking**Risk-Taking:**

We go into our jobs, educational programs, hobbies, volunteer work, etc. not knowing 100% if it will work out. Starting something new takes courage – you learn about yourself, develop new relationships, and build experience. What could you try that you're not 100% sure will work out?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is important to take a step-by-step approach as you determine your career trajectory.

In this module, you:

- Crafted your own definition of career success through personal reflection
- Generated a list of personal characteristics by reflecting upon your 'enjoyable accomplishments'
- Completed one or more online career assessments
- Brainstormed career themes through the mind-mapping process
- Established action steps in line with your career vision for further experimentation, reflection and self-awareness



UWF – CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- If you would like some personalized support with making choices and setting goals for your career, you can meet with a Career Coach in Career Services. To book an appointment, go to [Handshake](#).
- For additional career-related resources, go to [Career Development and Community Engagement](#) and read about all the resources that are section.

MODULE 03: JOB SEARCH

3.1 Introduction and Learning Outcomes

This section may be helpful if you:

- Already have a good understanding and awareness of your skills
- Are seeking resources such as job search sites and social media
- Would like to learn about the hidden job market
- Would like to learn how to create a strong resume
- Would like to create a networking pitch in order to market yourself to employers
- Want to improve your job interview skills

INTRODUCTION

Once you're satisfied that you've completed enough career research, you can move on to the job search stage, developing strategies and tools to help you stay motivated and engaged. This stage can be daunting as jobseekers often feel alone and vulnerable. It's hard to "put yourself out there" and face the very real possibility of rejection. Leveraging feedback from mentors, employment advisors, and professors can go a long way to support you during your job search.

With an open and positive mindset, the job search phase can be an exciting chapter in your life. It's where the "rubber hits the road" and you can begin to test out your career ideas and ask for constructive feedback from others.

Learning Outcomes

In this module, you'll learn how to:

1. Recognize the importance of the hidden job market
2. Explore online job sites in order to apply for positions

3. Develop effective in-person and online networking skills
4. Write an impressive resume and cover letter that will get past screening technology (applicant tracking systems)
5. Utilize [Big Interview](#) to practice for job interviews, including video interviews
6. Build a professional portfolio to present to prospective employers
7. Develop strategies of when and how to disclose limitations and request accommodations
8. Recognize job ads that could be fraudulent
9. Integrate career resilience approaches to help you deal with setbacks

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Before beginning your job search, it's essential to know which positions you plan to target. This will help you when encountering a job post.

- Does this job advert fit with your targeted occupations?
- Do the main duties and responsibilities of the role appeal to you?
- What qualifications are required for the position?

Identifying which sectors you plan on targeting can also be helpful to your search.

- If there are a variety of potential sectors, which ones appeal to you most?
- Have you identified targeted companies as ideal employers for a particular position?

Making use of a variety of job search approaches and staying active and engaged will only lead to more employment opportunities. Take the time to come up with a job search action plan that will allow you to leverage your existing network, make industry-related contacts, and expand on your employment opportunities.



Did you know that up to 80% of available jobs can only be found in the hidden job market?

The *hidden job market* is a term used to refer to employment opportunities that are not publicly advertised or posted. These positions are typically filled either by internal candidates within the company or via network referrals, recruiters or friends.

You can access the *visible job market* with your resume, cover letter and through an interview. However, accessing the invisible or hidden job market requires networking, which may involve activities such as using social media, informational interviews and attending professional events.

The percentage of jobs that are hidden depends upon the industry and the level or type of the job. For example, in some IT companies, entry-level positions are posted online, whereas more senior or specialized positions tend to be “hidden”.

Accessing the hidden job market requires perseverance and creativity. Job seekers who use strategies to access the hidden market face less competition. Take a look at the diagram below. The triangle on the left shows how most job seekers look for jobs and the triangle on the right shows how most employers prefer to hire. It's clear that job seekers using conventional methods are not investing their time as wisely as they should.

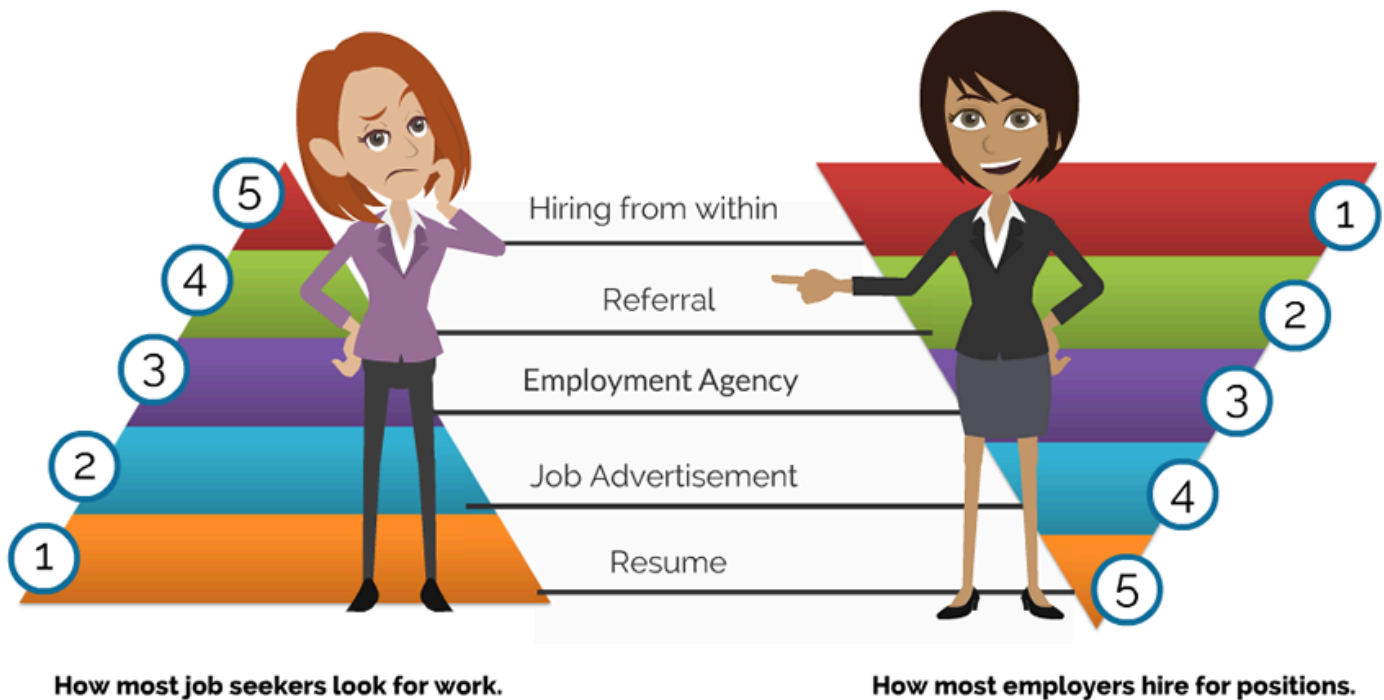


Figure 3.1 How most job seekers look for jobs and how most employers prefer to hire.

[Adapted from What Colour is Your Parachute?](#)

Bolles, R. N. (2009). *What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*. Toronto: Ten Speed Press: p. 9

DIVERSIFY YOUR JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES



Employers are hiring from multiple channels to source qualified candidates, and job seekers should do the same. Try to think outside of the box to network and tap into hidden job markets by diversifying your job search activities.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What job search strategies have I been using in the past? How effective were they?
2. What are some new strategies that I could use to be more successful in my job search?

Making use of a variety of job search approaches will yield greater results. Possible strategies include:

- Social Media
- Employment Centers
- Staffing Agencies
- Recruiters
- Networking
- Job Search Sites
- Company Websites

- Professional Associations
- Email Campaigns
- Job Fairs

Online Job Search Sites

The process of looking for a job today is vastly different than it was even 10 years ago. Today's job seeker needs to effectively navigate a multitude of online job sites. Even though many positions are filled through networking, online job postings remain a popular job search strategy.

There are various types of online job search sites:

- **Job search engines:** These are platforms that pull jobs from various employer websites or job boards. Examples include, but are not limited to: Indeed, LinkedIn, and ZipRecruiter.

- **Company websites:** Employers often post opportunities within the company on their website in an **Employment or Careers** section.

- **Social media sites:** Social media websites may post job postings through an embedded job section (e.g. LinkedIn) or via posts. (e.g. Twitter).

Some of these sites are easy to navigate and some are less so. While each of these sites is a little different, here are some basic guidelines that will help you use them effectively:

- Find a reputable website with postings that are relevant to your job target(s)
- Keep your profile up-to-date
- Customize your resume and cover letter for each position
- Sign up for job alerts- many sites will allow you to save one or more job search parameters and sign-up for email notifications when posted jobs match your search
- Follow recruiters, organizations as well as employees that interest you to find out about job openings via social media

Track your Job Search



A job search is a part-time job in itself! It can be helpful to set some structure for yourself by setting short and long-term goals. For example, you may determine that finding a summer “survival job” is your short-term goal while your mid-term goal may be to volunteer and network in your chosen field.

Just as you would in a paid job, it may be helpful to set up a weekly schedule or routine to provide structure for your job search. Completing tasks on a daily to-do list can create a sense of satisfaction and progress. Setting weekly benchmarks for submitting a certain number of job applications or connecting with a certain number of LinkedIn contacts may also be an effective motivator.

Supporting your mental health especially during a vulnerable period is important. Promoting self-care can take many forms -it’s personal to the individual- whether it’s reaching out to friends, getting lost in a book, video games, meditation or taking a long bubble bath. This may be something you’ll want to log as well to signal that, this too, is an important component in the job search.

To stay organized in your job search, you may wish to keep track of the applications that you have submitted. **A Job Search Log** whether online or paper allows you to record the application date, posting, organization name and any contact people or notes associated with the application. Should you receive a request for a job interview or want to check in about the status of your application, you’ll have the details at your fingertips for reference.

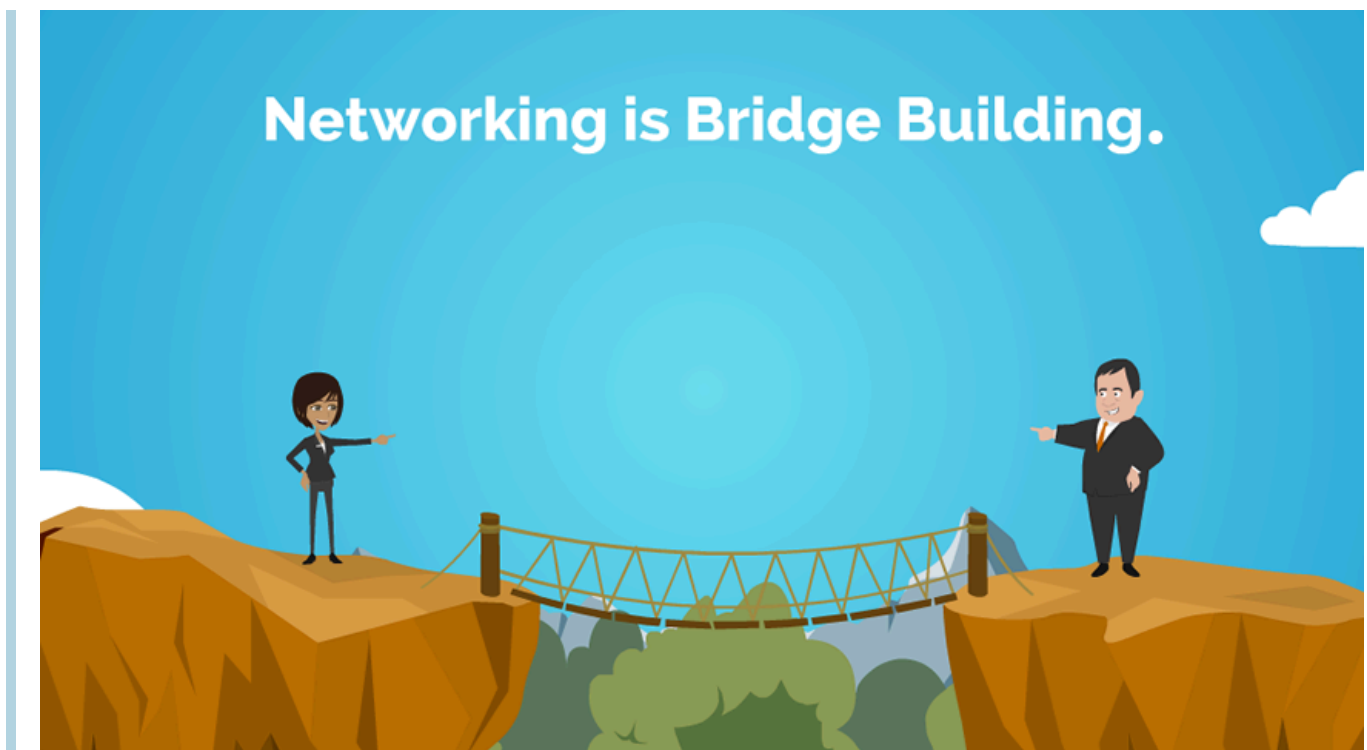
Table 3.2 Job Search Log

Job Search Log					
Company/Organization	Contact	Email/Phone	Position Title	Date Applied/Connected	Follow-up
Epcot	Mickey Mouse	Mickey@gmail.com	Cartoon Icon	Feb 10, 2023	

Create a simple Excel Job Search Log to keep track of your progress.

NETWORKING

When an employer is looking to hire, often their first step is to consult their network. It feels safer to hire a candidate who has been referred by someone they trust rather than from screening a stack of resumes from unknown applicants. Therefore, the best way to increase your chances of getting a job is to get to know more people who work in your industry.



WHO'S IN YOUR NETWORK?

List people from all the various areas of your life who may be helpful in your job search. Refer to the diagram below (Figure 3.2) for ideas. While these connections may not have jobs to refer you to, they may have information or connections. This information may help guide you to others, including professionals, in your field.

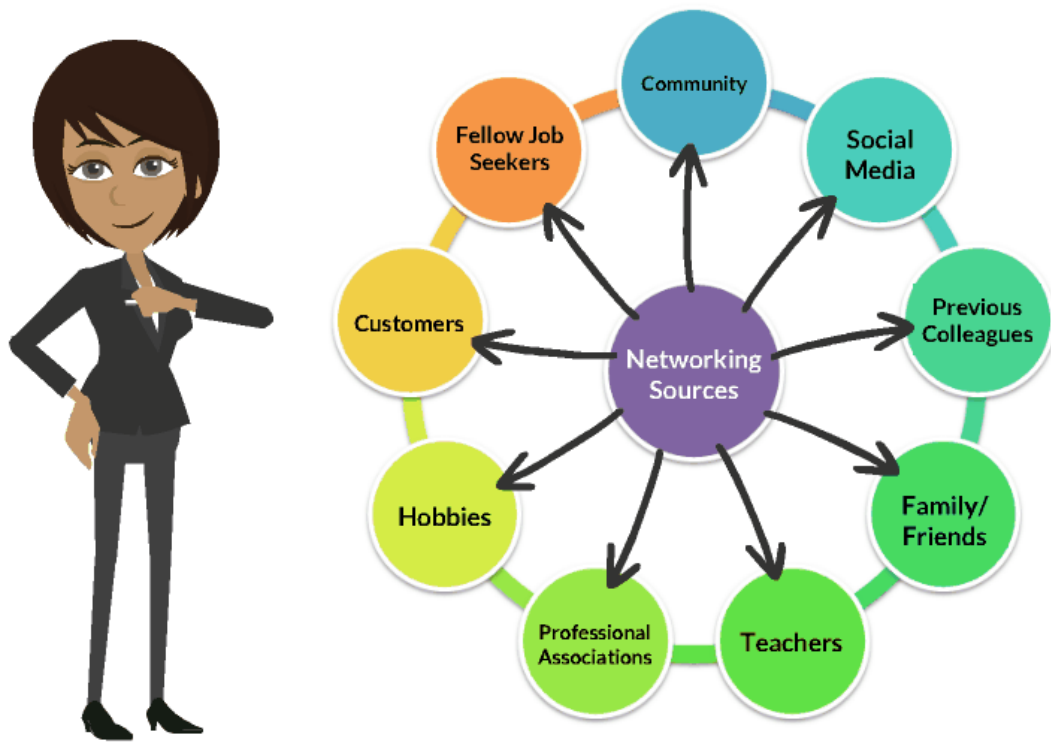
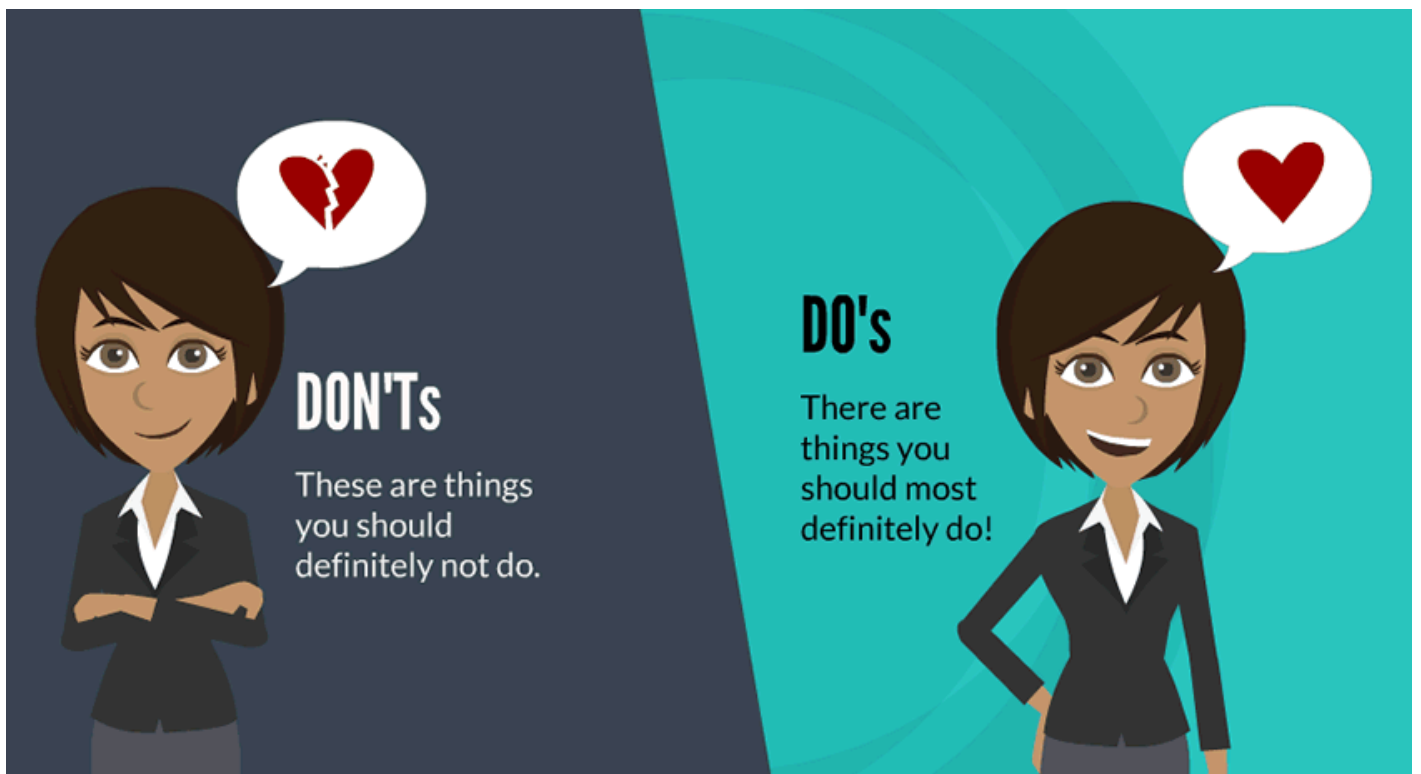


Figure 3.2 Who is in your network?

Networking Do's and Don'ts



- **Do** make sure that you are prepared for your job search. Have as clear an idea as possible of what you are looking for and have a resume on hand.
- **Do** let the people in your network know that you are looking for a job and provide as many details as you can. Your network can't help you if you don't communicate this information to them.
- **Do** get out there and make new connections. The more people you have in your network, the more opportunities are available to you.
- **Do** regularly connect with your contacts to provide information, invite them to an event etc. You don't want to be known as someone who only reaches out when you need something.
- **Do** create a networking business card to build a professional image. It will make it easier for you to exchange contact information with prospective employers or leads.
- **Don't** forget that networking is a two-way street. Always look for opportunities to support your network.
- **Don't** stop networking after you get a job. Remember, the best time to build your network is when you don't need it, so that it's there when you *do* need it!

Elevator Pitch

Since you never know when you might meet a potential employer, you need to be ready to introduce yourself and make a positive first impression. Your professional verbal introduction is often referred to as an *elevator pitch* – a reference to it needing to be concise enough to deliver while riding between floors on an elevator. An elevator pitch can be used during cold calling, networking and interviews.

Here are some tips to help you create an elevator pitch that you can use to impress an employer!

- Keep it concise (about 30 seconds)
- Customize your speech to your audience
- Practice your pitch out loud
- Get feedback from an employment advisor, career counselor, professor or professional contact
- Convey confidence
- Be prepared with a plan to follow up

Using the tips above and the following structure as a guide, write your own elevator pitch!

Step 1: Provide a background of your experience, education and skills.

Jane says, *"Hi, my name is Jane. I'm about to graduate from the University of West Florida with a Healthcare Administration degree. I've spent the last two summers working in the Administrative Office of Malka Hospital."*

Step 2: Tell the listener about what is it you have to offer and connect it to why it's relevant to them.

Jane continues, *"I'm looking for a full-time position where I can apply my experience and skills in administrative management. I've spent the past 3 years working on patient records and I noticed that your company is currently re-evaluating your online portal system."*

Step 3: Clearly state what you would like from the listener.

Jane says, "I would love to meet with you to discuss your plans and perhaps offer you a fresh perspective."

Networking Card



Once you have your elevator pitch nailed down (and remember, you will customize it for each prospective employer), you can easily create your networking card. Networking cards are essentially business cards for job seekers. They look like traditional business cards, but instead of including company information, they list your contact details and highlights your skills and experience. You can hand them out to people you meet while networking. It is often awkward to hand someone your resume at a social event, so your networking card is a great alternative.

Here are some tips that will help you make the most of this tool:

- Keep your networking cards clean and crisp. Nothing says sloppy like a dirty business card.
- Always keep your networking cards with you. You never know where you might find a new contact for your network.
- List all of your contact information. Include your name, phone number and email address. If you have been building your online presence, you can also include your website, blog and social media handles. Consider using a

QR code.

- Focus on your key skills. You don't have much space so just list the skills and experience that strongly relate to your target position.
- Pay attention to the layout. Don't let your card get too text-heavy. Sometimes less is more.

Your networking card alone isn't going to get you a job, but if you use it effectively, it is one of the small details that will help you stand out from the crowd.

Figure 3.3 Sample Networking Card



Administrative Professional

Jane Career

Advanced certificate in MS Office

2+ years of administrative experience

careerservices@centennialcollege.ca

linkedin.com/in/janecareer

Resources for obtaining a networking card:

- [Vistaprint](#)

- [Staples](#)

ONLINE PERSONAL BRANDING

In today's job market, your online presence can be just as important as your resume and interview skills. Since most employers will check your social media sites before offering you a job or interviewing you, you need to make sure that your online presence projects a professional image.

Social media also gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your skills and expertise, connect with other professionals in your industry, and access the hidden job market. It's important that you take the time to develop and update your profiles regularly and use these sites strategically to build your network.

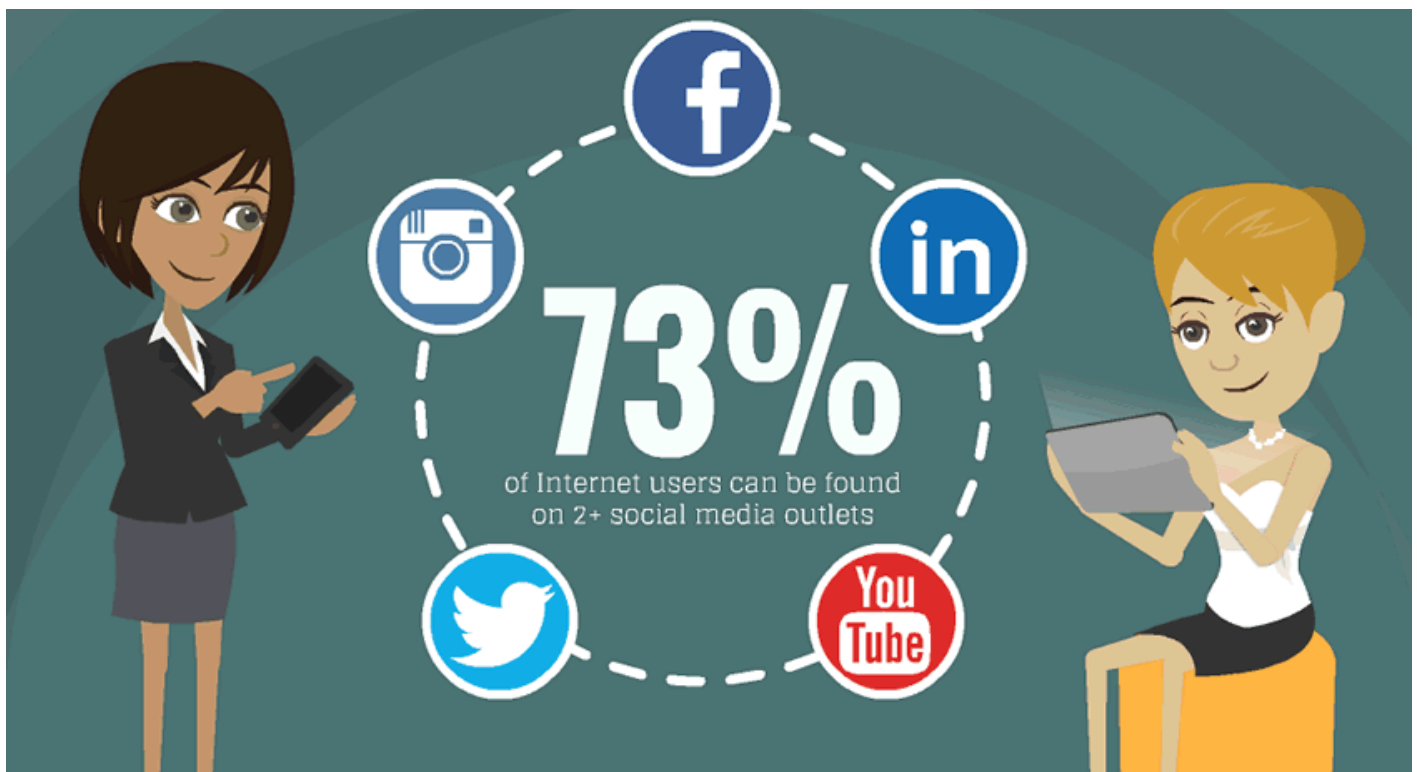


Table 3.1 Social Media for Job Search

	LinkedIn	Twitter	Facebook
Profile	Include a bright, clear headshot as a profile photo. Include relevant keywords in your profile.	Include a bright, clear headshot as a profile photo. Make sure that your profile presents you as a competent professional.	Don't put anything on your profile that you would not want an employer to see. Include job-related information on your profile.
Making Connections	Personalize every invitation and request that you send out. Join relevant groups and participate in group discussions.	Follow people who work in your industry and interact with them. Create goodwill by replying and retweeting.	Find relevant Facebook groups for people working in your industry. Pay attention to where your friends work.
What You Post	Post relevant articles, best practices, recent changes, and useful websites. Update your profile often and keep your status updates fresh.	Don't post anything that should be kept private. Make your tweets relevant to people who work in your industry. Use hashtags so people can find your tweets.	Facebook is less formal than other social media, but you still make sure that your posts present you as competent and professional. Keep self-promotion to a minimum.
Giving back	Assist your contacts whenever you can. Respond to requests, provide recommendations and make introductions.	Reply and retweet to promote your contacts. Follow people who follow you.	Keep your eyes open for any opportunities that interest your friends and forward them along. Congratulate your friends on any accomplishments.
Security	Be careful when connecting to people who you don't know. Pay attention to your privacy settings.	Remember that Twitter is a public forum. Pay attention to your privacy settings.	Be careful when accepting friend requests from people who you don't know. Pay attention to your privacy settings.

PITFALLS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

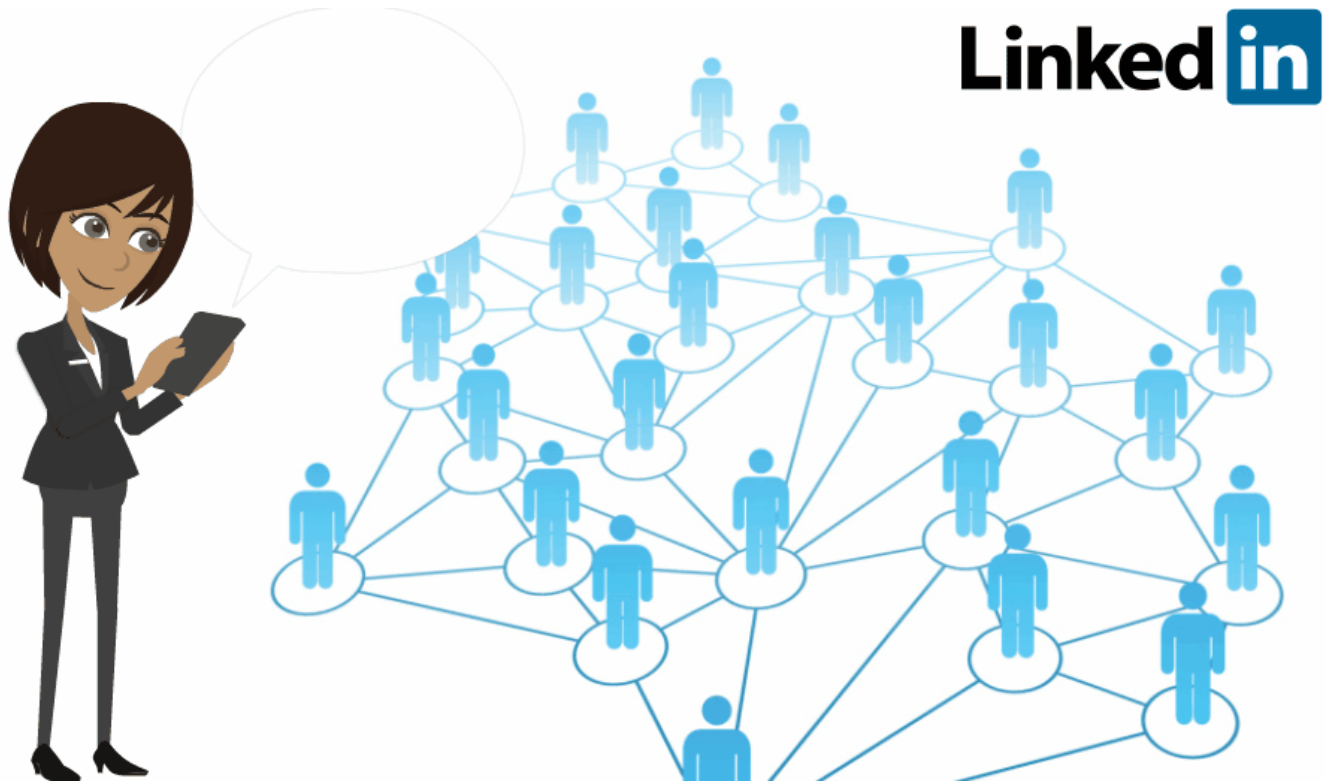
While social media has opened many doors for job seekers and career changers alike, it also has some pitfalls that could lead to damage to your professional reputation.

Avoid the following:

- Bad mouthing a previous or current employer
- Posting inappropriate pictures
- Leaving your privacy settings as 'public'
- Allowing your friends to make unflattering comments about you
- Making discriminatory comments

"What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas; what happens on Twitter stays on Google forever!"
– Jure Klepic, Digital Strategist/Marketing Executive

Creating your LinkedIn Profile



Most job seekers have a profile on LinkedIn but few use it strategically. Sometimes making small changes to your profile can make a huge difference in the quantity and quality of contacts you're able to make.

Here are some tips that will help you build a stronger profile:

Choose your photo carefully: People are more likely to connect with you when you have a good quality photo. Your profile picture should be a clear headshot. A good photo to use is one in which you look both approachable and professional. Consider using a photo in which you're smiling.

Put some thought into your headline: Your headline gives you one line (120 characters) to describe your roles and strengths. You may use your official job title or come up with something more creative. Consider including keywords that recruiters might be using as search terms.

Create a compelling summary: Your summary (2000 characters max) gives you more space to be creative. Find a way to effectively communicate your value to employers. What is unique about you? Focus on your most marketable skills and consider including your major achievements or value proposition.

Build your "Experience" section: The experience section is formatted to resemble a resume. Again, remember to consider your target position(s) and to highlight the skills and experience that would be most attractive to potential employers. Embed media files wherever appropriate.

It takes time to build a strong LinkedIn profile, but you may be surprised by the doors that it can open for you. The key is to update your profile regularly and to be consistent with your social media efforts.



Now it's your turn!

Job Search Campaign

To get an employer's attention, it can help to try a unique approach. One effective strategy is to reach out to key decision-makers. The purpose of a job search campaign, whether it is conducted through email or social media, is to get the attention of people in a position to make hiring decisions. If you impress them and present yourself as a person who can solve their problems, they may invite you in for an interview. Here are some recommended steps to launching an effective job search campaign:



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=117#h5p-11>

Step 1: Conduct research on companies of interest

Before contacting a hiring decision-maker, it's important that you learn as much as you can about their company. Review their website content and search for additional information about them in the media or on professional organization websites. You should also identify whether they have any current job postings.

Step 2: Make a list of people who you want to target

Identify the key decision-makers at your target companies. Choose people who are in departments that are of interest to you and that are in senior enough positions to be able to have some influence. Avoid the human resources department as they will often invite you to simply apply online. Research on social media and read industry publications to locate people whom you would like to connect with.

Step 3: Acquire contact information

Whether it's an email address or social media connection request, you need to be resourceful to acquire or make contact. Some email addresses will be easier to find than others so you may need to be resourceful. Consult social media, industry publications and conduct Google searches. You may be able to guess their company email address by copying the format of email addresses of other employees within the same organization.

Step 4: Create your pitch

This is the most important part. You will need to grab the employer's attention. Focus on their needs and how you would be able to meet them (for this you will have to research the company.) Keep it brief and have a clear next step (e.g. that you'll call them to follow up.) You could use the Elevator Pitch you created from the previous exercise, with some minor adjustments, when writing your email pitch.

Step 5: Follow up

Many people won't respond to your email campaign, but some will. Don't be afraid to call them to follow up. Be persistent, not annoying. They're busy, but if you're pleasant and you offering them something that they need, they may be receptive.

Sample Message:

September 7, 2023

Dear Mr. Martin,

My name is Jane Career and I will be graduating in April with a degree in Healthcare Administration from the University of West Florida. My strong management skills as well as the industry contacts that I made through my internship at Malka Hospital could benefit you particularly during this busy flu season.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person or virtually to chat about potential opportunities at your company. I will follow up early next week to inquire about setting up a meeting.

Thank you and I look forward to connecting.

Yours Truly,

Jane

RESUME



Your resume is one of your most important self-marketing tools. It's typically your first point of contact with potential employers and it's the main document interviewers refer to when comparing candidates. A strong resume presents your skills and experience in a manner that demonstrates that you're the best fit for the job. The following sections will provide you with detailed information you'll need to create a resume that's appropriate for your unique situation.

Take a look at the resume advice on [Florida Shines](#).

RESUME DO'S AND DON'TS



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- **Do** proofread your resume
- **Do** ensure you use a professional email address and voicemail message
- **Do** customize your resume for each position

- **Do** include relevant unpaid experience
- **Do** quantify your achievements
- **Do** be consistent with your formatting and verb tenses
- **Do** make an appointment with an employment advisor to assist you with your resume
- **Don't** lie on your resume
- **Don't** clutter your resume with too much text
- **Don't** include a vague statements
- **Don't** include personal information such as your photo, birth date, marital status, or religious beliefs



Department of Health Sciences and Administration

UNIVERSITY *of* WEST FLORIDA

The University of West Florida offers assistance with resumes. You can sign up with a [Career Coach](#), explore the [Career Development Guide](#), or check out the [My Resume](#) section of [Big Interview](#) to access a [Resume Curriculum](#) with [brief video lessons](#) and a [Resume Builder](#). Click [here](#) for more information.

COVER LETTER



Many job seekers don't spend enough time on their cover letter. While some employers ignore cover letters, others carefully read through them. Since there is no way to know whether a prospective employer will read your cover letter, it's advisable to spend time creating a compelling document.

A well-written cover letter can:

- Reveal the person behind the resume
- Convey passion for the position and the organization
- Demonstrate that you've done your research

Draw clear connections between the job requirements and your experience.

WRITING A COVER LETTER

The following headings will assist you in drafting your cover letter:

Your Name & Contact Information (you may use the same header as you used on your resume)
 Date
 Contact's Name (if not in the job ad, research to determine the person's name)
 Contact's Title
 Company Name
 Address, City, Province, Postal Code
 Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. (Contact's Last Name):
If no name or title – use Dear Hiring Committee:

INTRODUCTION: Explain what motivated you to write the letter. Name the position/job posting for which you are applying and how you heard about this particular employment opportunity. You can refer the employer to the attached resume in this paragraph or in the final paragraph.

BODY: Carefully explain how your skills match those needed for the job. Use action verbs (e.g. planned, organized, completed) to describe your skills as they relate to the job. When responding to a job ad, make sure to address all the listed requirements. This will make it easier to match your skills to the job- both for the resume scanning technology and the human who will eventually read your resume.

Include a paragraph outlining why you would like this job and why you'd like to work for this specific organization. Explain how this particular opportunity matches your goals and interests. Mention something you have learned about the company during the course of your research. This is your chance to expand on how your skills and past work experience will serve the role and the organization. It will also provide evidence that you have done your homework.

CLOSING: Use an appropriate closing to pave the way for an interview by suggesting a meeting to further discuss your qualifications. You can refer to your attached resume here if you have not mentioned it earlier. **Always thank the employer for their time.**

Sincerely,
Signature Here
Your Name

Recipe for a Compelling Cover Letter

- Make sure your cover letter is focused and no more than 1/2 to one page in length
- Customize your cover letter for each position
- Strategically integrate keywords from the job ad
- Leave plenty of white space for easier reading
- Communicate your enthusiasm for the position
- Proofread your cover letter and ideally ask a trusted advisor or friend for feedback
- Keep a copy of each cover letter

ONLINE APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS



When you approach an employer about a job opportunity, they may advise you to complete an application on their website. Many companies use online applicant tracking systems (ATS) to streamline their recruitment process because it is cheaper and easier than handling it manually. However, for the job seeker it can feel like your application has fallen into a black hole... You spend a lot of time trying to get it just right, but rarely hear a response back from the employer.

Here are six tips that will help make your online applications stand out:



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OPTIMIZE YOUR RESUME FOR APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS



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(2021). *How to beat applicant tracking systems in 2021*. Jobscan. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHWjfwb0TaE>

Practice optimizing a resume and cover letter for an applicant tracking system using the AI tool provided by Jobscan.co.

- Go to <https://www.jobscan.co/>
- Copy and paste a resume and job posting to the [Jobscan](#) Tool. Upload your resume
- You will need to copy and paste in the advertised job description
- Run a scan: Which missing skills are suggested by the AI tool?
- Add the missing skills keywords to the resume and rescan to see if you are able to increase the match rate

PORTFOLIO

Your resume and cover letters are the primary tools you'll create to demonstrate that you are a strong candidate for the target position. If you want to stand out even more to employers, you may also want to consider creating a portfolio. In certain fields, portfolios are more common. Be sure to do your research to determine if your field is one of them.

A portfolio is a collection of professional and academic documents that showcases your skills, experience and provides the employer with a clearer picture of what you have to offer.

Here are some tips that will help you build a compelling portfolio:

- Present your portfolio in a binder. Keep it neat and use plastic report covers to protect your documents.
- Showcase your personality. Format your portfolio in a way that reflects who you are as a professional.
- Include a table of contents. This will allow you to quickly flip to relevant documents.
- Introduce your portfolio during the interview. Make sure to ask whether this is something the interviewer would like to see.
- Keep your portfolio updated and targeted to the job and employer. You never know when you might need it.
- Include experiences and reflections from your extra-curricular activities, pertinent volunteer experiences, field placements, co-ops, internships and academic learning.

Portfolio Materials to Consider Including:





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- Certificates
- Publications
- News Articles
- Organizational Charts
- Records
- Degrees
- Training Certificates
- Work Samples
- Writing Samples
- Evaluations
- Awards
- Performance indicators
- Photos
- Transcripts
- Company Information
- Reference Letters
- Thank You Letters

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

An online portfolio is a curated electronic version of what is described above. The benefit of posting a portfolio online is that it gives employers access to peruse your accomplishments at a time convenient to them.

Examples of sites offering online portfolios:

- **LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/)
- **Weebly:** [weebly.com](https://www.weebly.com/)
- **Wix:** www.wix.com
- **Behance:** <https://www.behance.net/>
- **Format:** <https://www.format.com/>
- **Coroflot:** <https://www.coroflot.com/>
- **Carbonmade:** <https://carbonmade.com/>
- **WordPress:** <https://wordpress.com/>

INTERVIEWING WITH CONFIDENCE



Your ability to perform well during a job interview is essential to your career success. It's rare for a job candidate to be offered a position without being interviewed first. It is competitive to get to the interview stage, so it's important that you take advantage of the opportunity and prepare well.

The following sections will provide you with information and tips on how to prepare for an interview:
Before the Interview:

- Research the position, the department and the company to identify the skills, values and accomplishments to highlight during the interview.
- Map out the location of the interview, or in the case of a virtual interview, test out the interview software and set up in an indoor location with appropriate lighting, no background noises, and so forth.
- Review your resume so that you can speak confidently about your experiences and skills.
- Update your portfolio (if applicable).
- Prepare a professional outfit.
- Formulate answers to the most common interview questions and practice your answers out loud with a friend or an advisor.
- Prepare a list of questions you would like to ask the interviewer, including questions about the post-interview process. **For example:**

- When is the company planning to make their decision?
- How they will contact you?
- Does the interviewer have any follow-up questions?

During the Interview:

- Arrive 10 minutes early (or log in 5 mins early)
- Bring extra copies of your resume, your business card, a list of your references, pen, paper, and a portfolio of your work if you have one.
- Be respectful, polite and personable to everyone in the office.
- When you meet your interviewer(s), make eye contact, be friendly, and don't sit until asked to do so.
- When answering questions, try not to fidget, avoid over-using 'um', 'ah', and 'like', maintain eye contact, ask for clarification when necessary and keep your answers succinct.
- Provide detailed responses with examples while connecting your skills and experiences to the job.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and a positive attitude while avoiding strong negative words like *'hate'*, *'dislike'*, and *'refuse'*.

Asking Questions

The interviewer may invite you to ask any questions you have towards the end of the interview. Not only will this give you the opportunity to learn more about the agency, it will also demonstrate your interest and intelligence. Here are some thoughtful questions to consider:

- If I'm hired, what's the most important thing I should accomplish in the first 90 days?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What's your favorite part of working here?
- How would you describe the company's values?
- Do you recommend that I read or review something that would help me have a better understanding of the agency?

After the Interview:

- Evaluate your performance by reflecting on what you did well and what you could improve on at your next interview.
- Send a thank-you email to your interviewers within 24 hours.
- Notify your references that they may be called. Send them some information about the job and company you have interviewed for and the skills you would like them to highlight.
- Continue with your job search.

Common interview mistakes

- Lack of preparation
- Arriving late
- Messy appearance
- Conveying a lack of confidence
- Negative attitude and/or a lack of enthusiasm
- Inconsistency (e.g. between your resume and your interview responses)
- Failing to listen

RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are some tips regarding the best way to answer interview questions:

- Elaborate on your skills and knowledge by providing concrete examples of how you've used them in the past. Explain how your knowledge is relevant to the job.
- Although your education may be relevant to the job, make sure to provide examples from a variety of experiences, including work experience, volunteer work, or extra-curricular activities since these may offer evidence of your transferable skills.
- Employers are not only looking for someone who has the skills and experience needed for the job. They are also looking for a candidate with a positive attitude, works well with others, adaptable, learns quickly, reliable, and works hard.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=133#oembed-1>

Celeste, A. *Star Interview Method Explained*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUePf1m4TvQ>

The Star Method

The **STAR** interview technique is a common method for answering behavioral interview questions, such as how you handled specific situations.

The acronym **STAR** stands for:

Situation: Explain where, when, with whom, and what your role was so that you provide context for the listener.

Task: Outline what you were tasked to do or the problem you needed to solve.

Action: List the actions you took in this situation – Be specific, don't expect them to guess what you did.

Result: Emphasize the result of your actions so that the interviewer can see that the actions you took were successful.

Interviewers ask behavioral questions because they believe that past behavior is a strong predictor of future behavior. By having some **STAR** stories ready, you won't have to come up with examples on the spot. You can illustrate through past examples that you would perform well in the target job. **The key is to anticipate which skills the interviewer is most likely to question.**

Here is an example of how Xin Ja answered a behavioral interview question:

Interviewer:

"Xin Ja, can you provide an example of a time when you were able to successfully solve a problem?"

Xin Ja:

"Sure! I worked at *Gavi's Fast Food Restaurant* last summer as the lunch-hour manager and during a particularly busy lunch hour several customers complained that the system of lining up to pay was confusing. **(SITUATION)**

As the lunch-hour manager, it was my responsibility to resolve customer complaints and make sure we were providing fair, fast and friendly service. **(TASK)**

I wanted to make sure this problem was resolved quickly and effectively so I listened to the feedback from customers and then sought out solutions from the customer service clerks. In order to address the issue, I bought floor markings to show customers where to line up for each cash register. **(ACTION)**

During subsequent high traffic periods, there were no customer complaints about line-ups. The customer service clerks told me that their stress was reduced because they no longer had to manage conflict in the line. Our store served a higher number of customers on a daily basis because we were able to serve customers more efficiently."

(RESULT)

How to Anticipate Interview Questions

Imagine how well you would perform at interviews if you knew what they were going to ask ahead of time. You would be able to craft appropriate responses and deliver them flawlessly. It would also eliminate the risk of you having that 'deer in the headlights' look when asked a question you didn't expect. The good news is that you don't need a crystal ball to know which questions to anticipate.

Here are some tips to help you figure out the kinds of interview questions you can expect:

Tip #1: Become familiar with some standard interview questions:

- You should always be ready to respond to questions such as:

"Tell me about yourself."

"What makes you a good fit for this job?"

"What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

"What interests you about this job?"

"What do you know about our company?"

Tip #2: Review the job description:

- Make a note of what is emphasized in the responsibilities and requirements sections.
- Try to anticipate the types of questions that the interviewer might ask to determine whether or not you possess those skills.
- Remember that employers are usually more interested in hearing examples that demonstrate your skills than hearing you make general statements stating that you have the skills.

Tip #3: Consider the personality traits and soft skills required for the job:

- In addition to your experience, the employer is trying to determine whether or not your personality is the right fit for the position.
- Imagine you were the hiring manager. What type of candidate would you be seeking? Be ready to provide examples that indicate you possess those key personality traits.

Tip #4: Research the organization:

- By learning more about the organization, you can get a deeper understanding of their priorities. This will help you anticipate questions that they may ask to determine if you are the right fit for their organizational culture.

Tip #5: Research salary information:

- Never attend a job interview without having a general idea of the salary range for the position. Check the [US Department of Labor](#) for reliable salary information.

Prepare for Virtual interviews with Big Interview Questions

University of West Florida's Big Interview

One tool to help you practice your interview skills is the [Big Interview](#), a web-based mock interview program available to students at the University of West Florida that allows you to practice hundreds of industry-specific interview questions. It gives you the opportunity to record, review and retry your responses.

A webcam and microphone are required

Virtual interviews – either synchronous or asynchronous- have become much more common. While virtual interviews are often conducted in real time, this type of communication requires certain considerations and adjustments.

Here are some tips to help set you up for success:



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=133#h5p-27>

- **Test your Technology.** Make sure you have a stable internet connection, a working webcam, and a microphone. If the onscreen image is grainy, or you're experiencing an echo, consider investing in a mini webcam with a built-in microphone.
- **Set up your Interview Space.** Find a room with optimal lighting. Once settled, eliminate all distractions by turning off your TV, cellphone, and close nearby windows to minimize background noise. A neutral background or a blank wall works well to ensure that you are the focal point of the conversation.
- **Monitor your Body Language on Camera.** Sit up straight and demonstrate good posture. This will help you to present a positive impression and convey a confident and professional image.
- **Maintain Eye Contact.** Look into the camera as often as possible. This will give the interviewer(s) the sense that you are engaged and not distracted.
- **Speak Slowly and Clearly.** This will allow the employer to hear and understand you despite any wi-fi delays or microphone malfunctions.

CHALLENGING INTERVIEW SCENARIOS



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How your unique story can get you hired. TED series. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wY7Tn-JW9No>

In this section, we will debunk several interview myths and help you navigate challenging situations that may occur during an interview. When you're invited for an interview, it's safe to assume that the employer has read your resume and believes that you meet the required qualifications. **You've passed the first big hurdle, so feel confident and believe in yourself!** Visualize yourself doing the job. Share your unique stories of accomplishment. You may feel like you're not good enough or qualified enough to get the job or that there are others more qualified than you. Reframe your struggles and turn them into strengths.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=135#h5p-28>

ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Know Your Rights – Discrimination in the Interview Process

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects job applicants from employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and age. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recommends against employers asking questions about personal characteristics that fall within these categories. Employer use of this information to discriminate against applicants or employees can result in legal actions taken against the company.

Sample questions include:

- Are you a U.S. citizen?
- Is English your first language?/What language do you speak at home?

- How old are you?
- Are you pregnant?/Do you plan to become pregnant?
- Where do you go to church?/What religion do you practice?
- Where were your parents from?

If you are asked one of these questions in an interview, do not answer it. Instead politely question why they need that information and, if comfortable, remind the interviewer that those are legally protected characteristics and cannot be used to determine eligibility for a position. It is perfectly acceptable to state, *"I do not feel comfortable answering that question"* when asked a protected question.

We never want to assume that someone is discriminating against us, but it does happen. If you feel like you have been discriminated against in the hiring process by an individual or organization, please contact the EEOC: <https://www.eeoc.gov/contact-eeoc>

Resources

- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) – A U.S. site that provides a wealth of information including individual fact sheets on suggested accommodations by disability
- [Lime Connect](#) – Opportunities for students with disabilities

ACCEPTING OFFERS & HANDLING REJECTION



Did you know that you can negotiate your job offers with employers? Accepting an offer may include: confirming the starting dates, salary negotiation, and other terms of the employment contract.

A survey by Salary.com revealed that:

- 67% of job seekers never negotiate their salaries
- 7% of women attempted to negotiate their first salary,

while 57% of men did

- Those who negotiated were able to increase their salary by an average of over 7%

Here are some tips to help you negotiate job offers. Prior to sending a written offer, employers may contact you by phone to negotiate details including start date, terms of employment and salary rate. When the potential employer provides the details, inquire as to whether the employer can send you the details via email.

- **Confirm before the deadline.** Write an email with a clear subject conveying that you appreciate the offer and indicate your willingness to accept it.
- **Present your research.** Research the salary range for the position on [salary.com](https://www.salary.com) to provide context
- **Start with a higher salary rate but be prepared to be flexible.**
- Don't forget to clarify **benefits and other relevant compensation**

Dear Ms. Landes,

Thank you for getting in touch! I'm very excited for the opportunity to work at *Becca's Healthcare* as an Office Administrator. With 3 years' experience in coordinating office operations, I'm certain that I will achieve great results for the organization. Before I sign the offer, however, I would like to discuss the base salary. According to my research, the average salary for comparable positions in the Office Administrator area is in the \$20-\$35/hr range.

I would like to discuss the possibility of moving the offer closer to \$28/hr. Again, I am thrilled to have been offered this position. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,
Jane Career

CHOOSING FROM MULTIPLE OFFERS

Are you feeling indecisive or guilty when determining which offer suits you best? You can also use the multiple offers as an opportunity to negotiate your salary.

Here are some factors to help consider when making your decision.



Below is an example of declining an employment offer while maintaining professionalism:

Dear Ms. Tausig,

I'd like to thank you for the offer of the Administrative Assistant role at *Ari's Health Club*. I enjoyed meeting the interview panelists and was really looking forward to contributing to innovation at *Ari's*.

After much consideration, I have decided to continue my job search. It was a pleasure working with you in the application process. I wish the team the best as they continue to set standards of excellence in the industry. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further.

I look forward to connecting on LinkedIn and hope you'll accept my invitation.

Best Regards,

Jane Career

Handling Rejection



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Jiang, J. *What I learned from 100 days of rejection*. Ted Series. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZXgApsPCQ&t=2s>



Self-reflection

Over the course of your job search, you're likely to face rejection. In the video, Jia Jiang adventures boldly into territory so many of us fear: rejection. By seeking out rejection for 100 days — from asking a stranger to borrow \$100 to requesting a “burger refill” at a restaurant — Jiang desensitized himself to the pain and shame that rejection often brings and, in the process, discovered that simply asking for what you want can open up possibilities where you least expected.

- What did you learn from Jia Jiang's story?
- Keep reaching out and be bold in your job search campaign. You'll learn, grow and find the job that's perfect for you.

Stay motivated with these five tips:



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<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=139#h5p-30>

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS



When you're looking for a job, you're regularly communicating with people whom you don't know. This makes you particularly vulnerable to scams and identity theft.

Here are some tips to protect yourself :

- Only apply to companies that appear legitimate
- Don't be too quick to give your personal information
- Don't post personal information on online job sites
- Be suspicious of unsolicited job offers
- Never pay any money to get a job
- Watch out for offers that sound too good to be true
- Trust your gut

MODULE 3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter you have learned:

- The importance of accessing the hidden job market
- How to network effectively – including connecting with people you know as well as establishing new contacts
- To use an “elevator pitch” while networking
- How to conduct an email campaign
- To create a social media presence to attract potential employers
- How to navigate online job posting sites to apply for jobs
- How to tailor your application materials based on the information provided in the job ad
- Elements of effective resumes, cover letters and networking cards
- How to assemble a professional portfolio to present to potential employers
- How to prepare for, perform during, and follow-up on job interviews
- Recognize potentially fraudulent job ads and job offers

MODULE 02: RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION

2.1 Introduction and Learning Outcomes

This module may be helpful if you:

- Want to learn more about the career paths you are considering (this is most of us!)
- You are trying to decide between several career options
- Feel unsure about your goals and the steps needed to achieve them

INTRODUCTION

In this module, you will learn strategies for researching occupations that you are curious about and that interest you most. Career research may help you understand the day-to-day realities of a particular occupation, get a sense of the trends in a particular field, understand if the career path is a good fit for you, and finally, allow you to be effective in your job search. Although it's often overlooked or skipped entirely, conducting career research is an essential component of your career journey.

What is career research?

Career research isn't just about discovering possible career paths you might want to pursue. The process also encompasses learning about job prospects, salary ranges, typical day-to-day responsibilities, and any necessary required qualifications. By conducting career research, you'll get a better sense about whether a particular occupation is a good fit for you, set more realistic career goals, build a network of people you can learn from, and utilize a focused and strategic job search. Some information can be found online and other information you can only acquire by actively connecting with others. We will discuss both of those approaches within this module.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Conduct career research and exploration
2. Identify various types of information and strategies to gather applicable data
3. Use and analyze the Decision-Making Matrix to discern career fit and preference
4. Set career goals relevant to you by using the SMART method
5. Write a set of action steps for your own personal career development

RESEARCHING CAREERS



There are many types of information that will help you gain a better understanding of the occupation you are researching:

1. **Labor Market Information (LMI):** This data will inform you about current job prospects as well as offering future predictions. It will also give you information on salary expectations, where certain jobs are typically located, which industries hire for this occupation, and trends to watch.
2. **Day-to-day reality of the job:** It's easy to think about a work in general terms. A job can *sound* really interesting but when it comes down to what you would be doing every day and the environment that you'd be in, it may not suit your preferences. For example, becoming a Forensics Expert might sound really cool but through learning what a typical day might look like, you'll get a better sense of whether you'd enjoy the job in the long term.
3. **Qualifications needed:** The sooner you can find out about necessary qualifications required to work in a particular field, the earlier you can get working on those qualifications. There might be additional qualifications and/or certifications required for specific occupations that are not covered in your academic program. Once you get this information, you can begin obtaining additional credentials and experiences (part-time work, volunteer positions, experiential learning opportunities or summer employment in a related field) to build your expertise and set yourself apart from other candidates.
4. **Lifestyle:** Not only is it important to educate yourself about the labor market, day-to-day responsibilities, and training needed, but it is crucial to consider the type of lifestyle people in this position experience. A musician might sound like a pretty cool job, but are you prepared to work a lot of evenings and weekends?

5. **Fit with self:** If you completed Module 1, you will have spent some time clarifying your strengths, interests, values, and personality traits. As you learn more about an occupation and career path, look at how it aligns with your preferences, goals, and strengths.

Is there any other information that's important for you to research? Think about what matters most to you and make a note so that you can explore further when you're doing your research.

ONLINE CAREER INFORMATION



There is *a lot* of career information out there and it can be hard to know what is reliable and what isn't.

Below are some useful websites where you can find job opportunities. **A word of caution, if the opportunity seems to good to be true, verify the opportunity to ensure it isn't a scam.**

JOB SITES

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [ZipRecruiter](#)
- [Monster](#)
- [CareerBuilder](#)



If you are a University of West Florida student, you can access additional password protected resources via [Handshake](#).

John C. Pace Library

There are books that can be very useful for career research as well and the [library](#) has them! All you need to do is [Ask A Librarian](#).

TAKE ACTION



Doing online research can provide useful information. However, sometimes you will need to look deeply into a particular career path to determine whether this is a direction you want, or should, pursue. At that point, you will need to connect directly with people. Talk to individuals in the field, get involved in the industry, to determine what working in the field is really like.

In this section, you will be introduced to five active methods for career research and exploration:

- Informational Interviews
- Job Shadowing
- Volunteering
- Joining professional associations and organizations
- Work experience

To get you motivated to talk to people in professional fields of interest, watch this advice from Designing Your Life:

DESIGN YOUR LIFE: GOOD NETWORKING IS LIKE ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS



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Designing Your Career: The Networking Reframe. Stanford Life Design Lab. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8cfh6WdHn0>

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a conversation with someone who has knowledge in a field of interest. During an informational interview, you can ask questions intended to help you better understand the field. This is an effective method of learning and networking simultaneously. These interviews do **not** involve job requests, but rather are a way to converse, network, and obtain insight of a particular industry.

- **Who should you contact?** Consider beginning with professors, instructors, family, friends, neighbors, peers, colleagues, mentors, and so forth.
- You can also locate people on LinkedIn who have jobs in an occupation of interest.
- If you are a UWF student, consider [The Big Interview](#) to help you hone your skills.

Here is an example:

During Jane's first semester in the Health Sciences and Administration program, she decided to learn more about the field as well as which work environments would suit her best.

She arranged an informational interview with a woman, Magda Lawd, she discovered on LinkedIn. Magda is an alumni of the same program Jane is currently in. Magda works as a non clinical manager at Malka Hospital. Jane asked Magda the following questions:

1. *Could you tell me about your own career path?*
2. *What led you to this position?*
3. *What do you like most about your job?*
4. *Can you tell me about a typical day/month on the job?*
5. *From your perspective, what are some of the challenges you see working in this field?*

6. *What do you envision for the future of this field e.g. trends? What skills will become more important?*
7. *Considering your knowledge of the industry, what further reading or research would you suggest I undertake? Are there any association or professional organizations you'd recommend I get involved with?*
8. *Is there anyone else you would suggest I speak with?*

Jane is respectful of Magda's time and thanks her for the insights and advice she has provided. That night, Jane sends her a thank you note:

Hello Magda,
I wanted to thank you again for your time and advice today.
Speaking with you gave me a much more realistic view of what working as a nonclinical manager is like in a hospital setting. It has given me a lot to consider and some goals to pursue as I get closer to graduation.
I wish you all the best and look forward to staying in touch.
Kind regards,
Jane Career

You don't always need to have a formal informational interview to learn more about an occupation. Strike up conversations with people you meet to ask what their job is like, what kind of qualifications they need and what they enjoy about their work. You'll likely find that most people enjoy talking about themselves!



Example:

Daisy recently attended a family friend's wedding anniversary. She got into a conversation with Josh, a health clinician. Daisy thought his job sounded interesting, but she also learned that he worked a lot of late evenings. Josh told her that most, but not all, health clinicians would involve some late evening work. Now Daisy can consider what impact the hours and travel required would have on her family, social life, hobbies, and other life commitments and decide if this would be a career to investigate further.

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is an activity where you visit a place of work and observe someone working in your field of interest, usually for a half- or full-day. By getting a chance to observe someone doing a job, you can get a better sense as to whether it appeals to you. You also get a chance to talk to the person doing the job and ask the same types of questions you could ask in an informational interview.

Volunteerism

A great way to experience an area of interest is to find volunteer work in that area. This has the added advantage of direct experience you can add to your resume and connects you to people in your field. Some fields are better suited to volunteering than others. Even if your field doesn't have many volunteer opportunities, consider looking for a conference in your field of interest.

Interest Groups and Professional Organizations

By joining groups and organizations (either in person or virtually), you have the opportunity to share information and learn from others with similar interests. Even if the other members in the group don't work in the field, they may have information that may prove helpful. It also gives you an opportunity to improve your knowledge, learn about developments in the field, and engage in a community within your field of interest.

Work Experience

Part-time work, field placements/internships/co-ops, and summer jobs can be extremely beneficial when determining whether to pursue a particular field of interest. These experiences may require that you apply through a formal program, meet certain criteria which can involve a significant time commitment. However,

these experiences often provide access to professionals working in an area of interest. Work Study on campus is yet another way to get experience in a field of interest and learn more about a particular career.

DECISION-MAKING

Now that you have gathered information about a prospective career, you might be ready to make some decisions about which steps to take next. For many people, making decisions is difficult. It means giving up options and worrying about alternative roads not taken.



Your Turn!

Let’s start by reflecting upon how you made past career decisions. Some people tend to make decisions on a whim while others spend considerable time researching possibilities.

Use these questions to guide your reflection on past decisions:

- How have you made past career decisions?
- What did you consider?
- Who influenced your decisions?
- What approach did you take?
- In what ways has your approach to your career decisions been effective?
- What have you learned about making career decisions differently in the future?
- What do you need to do to make these changes?

Example:

Decision-Making Self Assessment Question	Sample Answer
How have you made past career decisions?	I decided on my program because I did a co-op once in high school, in a childcare setting, and liked it so I thought Early Childhood Education would be a good fit.
In what ways has your approach to your career decisions been effective?	I knew I was going into a field that I enjoyed because I had experience in the field which helped me see it from the inside.
What have you learned about how you might want to approach career decisions differently in the future?	Well, other than doing a co-op in high school, I didn't do additional research: for example, what salary could I make and whether there are jobs out there. I didn't look at any other programs. So, the next time I need to make a career decision, I'll do a bit more research and make sure to look at a few more options.
What would you need to do to make these changes?	I would consult online resources for finding salary and labor market info. I would do more brainstorming and searching for related occupations. Also, I'd talk to people who work in the fields I'm considering.

We often think about a career decision as a one-time, huge decision. In reality, we make career decisions all the time with a lot of opportunity to adjust and adapt as we learn more about ourselves and the world of work.

Some decisions you may currently be considering, include:

- *Should I pursue further education?*
- *Which program should I choose?*
- *What career area or occupation do I want to pursue?*
- *What industry and job title would best suit me?*



Decision Making Matrix Exercise

Use the chart below to guide your career decision making process. The factors listed could be replaced with other, more important considerations, such as income, prestige, length of education/training and so forth.

- List between 3-5 career options (these could be programs, career paths, specific jobs, etc.) of interest that you have been researching,
- Look at the 5 factors below and after carefully researching each factor, assign a number on a scale from 1 to 10.
- Going through this process may help clarify the option that is best for you right now.
- Pay special attention to the option with the highest score. However, you may decide that a particular option feels like a better fit, regardless of the score.

Table 2.1 Decision Making Matrix						
Occupation /Factor	Labor Market /Job Search	Day-to-Day Job Reality	Lifestyle	Qualifications	Fit with self	Total
	1-Poor work prospects 10-Lots of job opportunities	1 – This job doesn't suit me 10- Extremely suitable job	1-Doesn't fit with my lifestyle 10-Good fit	1-I don't have any related skills or experience 10- I have all the skills and experience necessary	1- Poor fit with my interests & values 10 – Excellent fit!	
Option 1						
Option 2						
Option 3						

Table 2.1 Decision Making Matrix						
Occupation /Factor	Labor Market /Job Search	Day-to-Day Job Reality	Lifestyle	Qualifications	Fit with self	Total
Option 1						
Option 2						
Option 3						



Decision Making Matrix Exercise

After you calculate your totals, consider whether:

- The final results make sense?
- Do the scores reflect your feelings about your potential career path?

Sometimes you will need to do more research in a specific area to explore various other possibilities.

You should also test the “winning” occupation:

Take a moment and close your eyes. Imagine yourself working in your chosen profession job.

- Where are you?

- What are you doing?
- Who are you with?
- What are you wearing?
- Do you like what you see?

Jane Career's Decision Making Matrix Example

Jane is talking to a prospective student who is curious to know how she made her decision to go into Office Administration.

Here are all of Jane's options with her score totals. Office Administration received the highest score with 39 points, Vet Technician was next with 31 points and Environmental Technician was last with 28 points.

Table 2.1 Decision Making Matrix

Occupation /Factor	Labor Market /Job Search	Day-to-Day Job Reality	Lifestyle	Qualifications	Fit with self	Total
	1-Poor work prospects 10-Lots of job opportunities	1 – This job doesn't suit me 10- Extremely suitable job	1-Doesn't fit with my lifestyle 10-Good fit	1-I don't have any related skills or experience 10- I have all the skills and experience necessary	1- Poor fit with my interests & values 10 – Excellent fit!	
Vet Technician	8	2	5	6	10	31
Environmental Technician	5	5	5	4	9	28
Office Administration	5	7	9	8	10	39



HOW TO MAKE QUICK DECISIONS

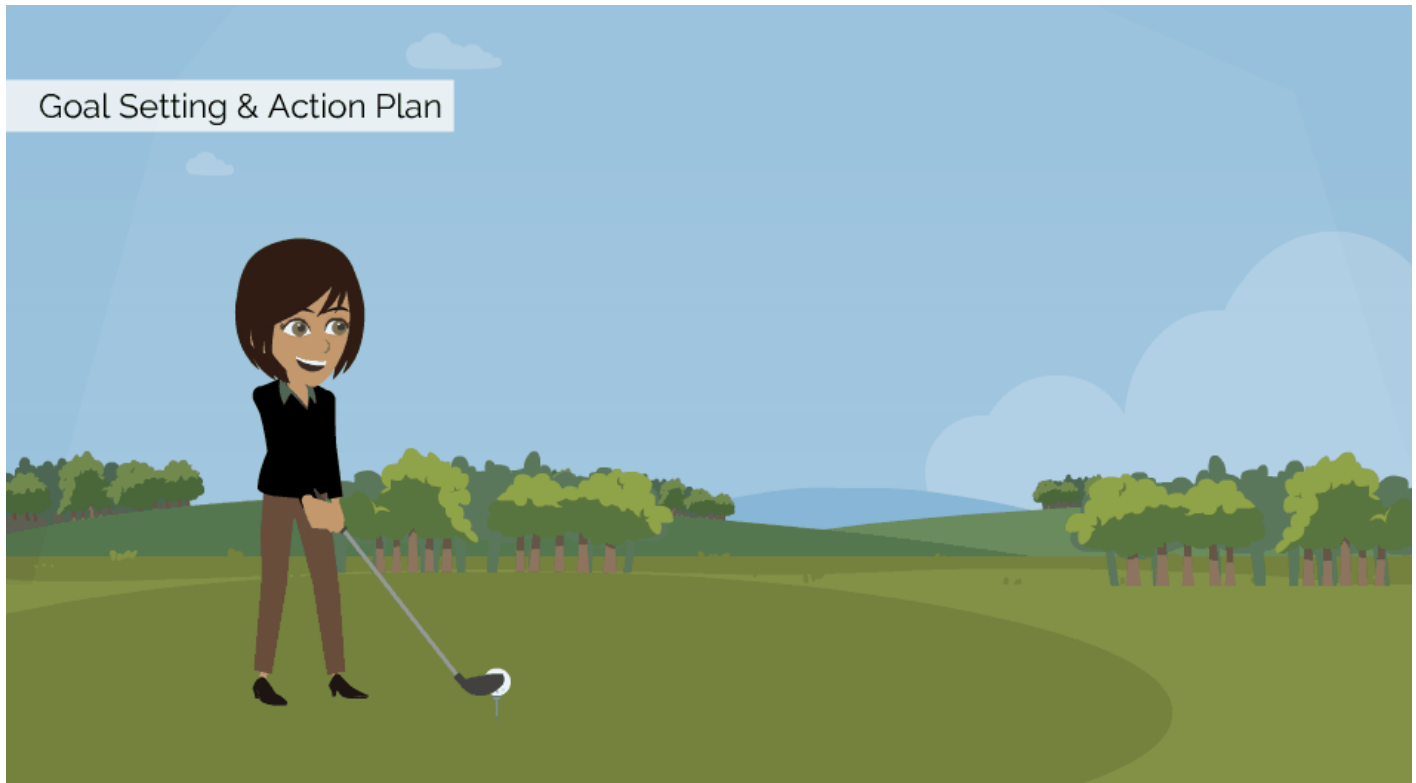


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How to make faster decisions. The Way We Work, a TED series. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTIUiN6inIQ>.

In a world of endless reviews and options, it's easy to become paralyzed by indecision. Investor and writer Patrick McGinnis shares the dangers of "FOBO" — the fear of better options — and how to overcome it.

SETTING GOALS & BUILDING ACTION PLANS



Setting career goals and a set of action steps to achieve them is a great way to stay motivated while experiencing the ups and downs of your career. Be open to adapting your goals as you learn more about yourself and the world of work. Even though you may still be exploring other career options, it's a good idea to set some goals and lay out the action steps required to achieve them. Setting goals and creating an action plan allows you to identify alternative scenarios and actions that can be used to take advantage of unplanned opportunities.

When setting goals, it's important to list each step toward meeting that goal as this will provide more clarity and momentum and this will keep you motivated to stay on track to reach your career target.

You want to make sure that each goal is SMART:

- **S**pecific (detailed, clear, not very big or general, state exactly what's expected)
- **M**asurable (quantifiable, concrete, observable progress toward achieving this goal)

- **Achievable** (realistic, attainable, barriers could be overcome)
- **Relevant** (supports other goals, makes sense)
- **Time-bound** (has a specific target date or deadline)

Make sure that your career goals consist of all 5 SMART components.



Check Jane's "SMART" goal below and then work on applying the same approach to your own goal.

- **Jane's career goal:** Office Manager
- **My career goal is:** _____

Table 2.2 Jane's SMART Goal Example

	Jane's Example	My Goal
Specific	I want to gain more experience in my current role and work up to an Office Manager position.	
Measurable	I want a salary increase of between \$10,000 – \$15,000.	
Achievable	I will look for promotions within my current organization to gain managerial experience.	
Relevant	It will be a natural and timely progression of my career.	
Time-bound	I want to move into a managerial position within the next 2-3 years, which gives me time to gain more experience and to look for opportunities.	

- Jane's SMART goal then becomes:
Goal #1: To become an office manager within the next 2-3 years with a salary increase between \$10 -15,000 per year, possibly within the same organization.
- Having reviewed the creation of Jane's SMART goal above, create your own SMART chart for yourself.

ACTION PLAN

Now that you've set several goals, you can reflect on the actions you can take to achieve them. Breaking down your goals into feasible action steps makes achieving your goal more manageable. Make sure to set a target date for your actions so you can monitor your progress.

Some of the actions may include:

- Learn more about a particular job through informational interviewing
- Research the labor market using online resources
- Explore professional development options
- Learn about the certification process for a particular field

Use the table below to set up an action plan for yourself, repeat for every goal you have.

Jane Career's SMART Goal example

Goal #1: To become an office manager within the next 2-3 years with a salary increase between 10 -15, possibly within the same organization.

Table 2.3 Action Plan				
Action	Step 1	Step 2	Resources	Target Date
Obtain a Project Management Certification	Research different educational programs, preferably online	Sign up for classes starting in September	Online research; Check with other colleagues who have this certification	The end of the next year

**Action Plan Exercise**

Having made your goal SMART, you can set up the action steps to attain your goals by creating a tangible Action Plan.

LOOKING FORWARD

By now you've completed in-person research, accessed online resources, reviewed pertinent books, completed the decision-making matrix and even outlined some actions steps. What's the next step? Does this mean that you're finished with career research and exploration?

It's important to never stop your career research and exploration. Keep setting new goals!

JUMPSTART YOUR CAREER: HEAR WHAT EMPLOYERS HAVE TO SAY

Here is some great advice from employees working in the field of healthcare.

Check out the following videos on YouTube:

- [UWF-Health Sciences & Administration](#)
- [Field of Healthcare](#)
- [I Wish I Knew This Before | HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION](#)
- [HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION Q&A | Answering Your Questions!](#)
- [Healthcare Administration Jobs NO ONE Talks About](#)

Practical Experience

If you are just starting your journey at the University of West Florida, there are a lot of opportunities you can take advantage of that will support you in your career exploration. You can access a wide variety of opportunities that will allow you to develop your employability skills while complementing your classroom-based education with practical experience.

These experiences will also be helpful in widening your perspective and learning about various career options:

Table 2.4 University of West Florida Resources	
Experience Opportunity	Who to Contact
Focus 2 Career	Online, interactive, self-guided career & education plan
Executive Mentor Program	Prepares students for successful careers in business
On-Campus Part-Time Jobs	UWF Students Jobs
Tutoring and Learning Resources	Provides free academic support services to all students enrolled at the University of West Florida.
University Commons and Event Services	Foster student skills and support student success

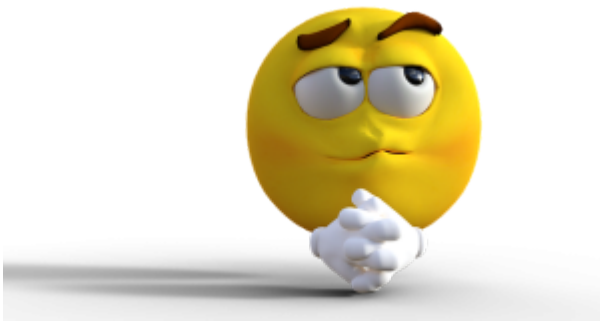
Entrepreneurship, Side Hustles, and the Gig Economy

In past generations, many found a company to work for and then stayed in the same job or company for decades. But today, we rarely stay in the same job (let alone on the same career path) and we don't rely on a single income stream. The tools and resources are out there for us to do express ourselves, and more of us are harnessing an entrepreneurial spirit — even if it's something we do alongside a traditional job.

CAREER RESILIENCE TIPS

Some of you may have a very clear idea of what you'll do after graduation and others may have no idea. Either scenario is just fine. For most of you, life after college may be filled with uncertainty and continuous career exploration, which can be a lot of fun! Try to embrace the fact that the world of work is constantly changing and so are you.

Here are some helpful characteristics that you may want to develop further to be able to take advantage of uncertainty and unexpected, "chance" events on your career journey:



Be curious

Being curious may lead to new opportunities. You may research new ideas and/or a new activity. Stay curious about the world around you because it will help you learn more about what you like and don't like. This will help you notice opportunities you didn't even know existed!



Flexibility

It's important to remain flexible about your career plans. Are you open to new ideas or are you adhering to your original plan, no matter what new information you come across? Set career goals that can be adapted and changed as you gain experience and knowledge. Stay open to possibilities!



Remain Optimistic

Are you feeling hopeful about the future? Feel hopeful and confident that things will work out in your career will increase your chances that you'll take the action steps needed for those goals to be realized. Remember that not every action will work out (and it isn't all in your control!) but keep taking action and trying alternatives and you'll get to where you want to be.

**Be Persistent**

Doing career research and exploration can be energizing but it can also be a lot of work. Take a break when necessary so you have the energy to continue. Not everyone you contact will get back to you. Not all the information you gather will turn out to be accurate. Keep going!

**Take a Leap**

No matter how much research you do, you will never know for sure if a career decision is going to work out. Don't wait to be absolutely certain. Take a chance on a career path or job that seems to meet many of the criteria you're looking for and where you see potential opportunity.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Congratulations on completing Module 2: Research and Exploration!

In this module you have learned:

- Why career research is so important
- How to locate useful career information through online research
- To utilize active methods of career research and exploration such as informational interviews
- To use the Decision-Making Matrix to help you make career decisions
- To set SMART career goals and plan action steps
- To utilize UWF resources to stay engaged in continuous career research
- To identify the personal characteristics that can help you take advantage of uncertainty and unexpected “chance” events on your career journey

By engaging with the content and exercises in this module, you’ve had the opportunity to begin the process of research and career exploration. Make sure that you continue this process throughout your studies at UWF and beyond as the world of work is changing and you want to be able to keep up.

MODULE 04: ON THE JOB SUCCESS

4.1 Module 3 Chapter Summary

This module could be helpful if you:

- Secured a job offer and would like to learn how to put your best foot forward in your new job
- Would like to learn about workplace culture, employer expectations, and professionalism
- Want to understand more about workplace health and safety and your rights as an employee
- You are looking for resources on performance evaluations, work-life balance, leaving a job, and career resilience

INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this because you have landed a job, Congratulations! If you are here because you want to be prepared for your next job, Well done! Starting a new job and navigating a workplace can be exciting but also nerve-racking. The following sections will help you orient yourself and provide you with resources and tools to support you both on the job and as you progress in your career.

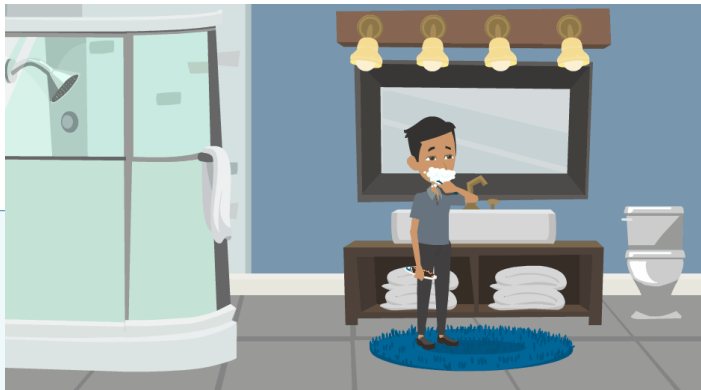
Learning Outcomes

In this module, you will learn how to:

- Recognize the expectations of your employer and identify the actions you need to take to meet those expectations
- Review workplace characteristics, including dress, communication, time management, and conflict resolution
- Identify your rights and responsibilities as an employee by knowing where to find more information on employee rights, discrimination, accommodation, and health and safety
- Review the purpose of a performance evaluation, how to prepare for it, and how to conduct yourself in the meeting
- Recognize the steps you can take to maintain a positive relationship with past employers
- Identify methods to reduce workplace stress, contributing to a healthier work-life balance
- Learn about career resilience and its connection to on-the-job success

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEW WORKPLACE

Your first few days in a new job can be exciting, nerve-wracking or everything in between. It can feel like the first day of grade school all over again! You'll meet new people, learn new tasks, routines, and absorb lots of new information. Doing all this while also trying to create a positive first impression can be daunting. Self-awareness and planning ahead can help you feel more confident.



Preparing for your First Day

Before you begin your first day, be sure to check your job offer for any relevant instructions or find out from your manager or HR contact about:

- Your hours of work and whom you report to
- Whether working remotely is an option (This is often handled during the negotiation process)
- Paperwork that you need to complete prior to your first day
- Training required prior to your first day
- Where you can park and if there are staff passes
- How you access the work site and any security protocols
- The company dress code and/or safety equipment required

If there are any other questions you have which will help you feel more confident or knowledgeable on your first day, feel free to ask. Good communication and a proactive attitude will help you set a positive first impression.

Checklist:

You're getting prepared for your first day and you want to do everything you can to feel confident and make a good first impression on your employer and co-workers.

Here are some steps you can take to prepare for your first day at work:

- **Read everything you can about the company:** If you understand the company's priorities and goals, you'll be better able to contribute towards them and support your team's goals.
- **Review the job description:** Read over the requirements and responsibilities of the position and refresh your knowledge in any areas that may be weaknesses for you.
- **Plan your outfit:** You should be able to get a sense of the company dress code from their website or social media accounts. Plan an outfit that is appropriate and have everything laid out the night before. If you're unsure about the dress code, it's generally better to be more formal than casual. Avoid heavy perfumes or scents as many workplaces do not allow them due to allergies.
- **Plan your route:** Plan out exactly how you will get to work. If possible, travel the exact route the day before to make sure that your time estimates are accurate. You don't want to be late on your first day, try instead to be 5-10 minutes early.
- **Get a good night's sleep:** You are more likely to do a great job when you're well rested. Make sure that you get to bed early the night before.

What to Expect on Your First Day

You've done everything you can to prepare for your first day, but what can you expect once you begin? Everyone's first day on the job is different – whether working remotely or on-site- but here are some common experiences new employees face:

- **You will meet a lot of new people and hear many new names.** There's a good chance that your manager or a co-worker will take you on a tour where they will introduce you to everyone. Don't worry about remembering all the names- there's so much new information coming at you. Smile, shake hands and convey as much warmth as you can muster. First impressions count!
- **Not everything will be ready for you.** Don't become frustrated if your work area is not yet fully set up or if there are no orientation materials available. Try to be patient and flexible. Find alternative ways to get your work done.
- **People may want to get to know you.** You might be a little overwhelmed at the beginning as co-workers express their interest in getting to know you. People may be coming at you with a variety of agendas. The best approach is to be friendly and open to everyone, while remaining observant. It's also possible that employees may be withdrawn and not as friendly initially. Don't despair- in all likelihood they'll warm up as they get to know you.
- **You might be thrown into it.** It's not uncommon for employees to start performing their job on their first day. Ideally, you would receive training, but many companies don't have the resources to invest a lot of time into training for some roles. As a new employee, you're allowed to make some mistakes. Do your best and take initiative by asking questions or problem solving independently.
- **You will likely meet with your manager.** Within your first week, you'll probably have a meeting with your manager to discuss the responsibilities and priorities of your job. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions and demonstrate your eagerness to working hard.

Orienting to your New Work Environment

During the first few days, you'll be learning and absorbing many aspects about the organization—including its values, priorities, structure, services—and about your manager and co-workers. In many workplaces, you'll learn this, in addition to your role, priorities and expectations, from your supervisor, a co-worker assigned to you or at a staff orientation. Many employers are well aware that comprehensive onboarding programs from the get-go can help make new employees feel welcome and as if they belong and tend to lead to greater long-term satisfaction, improved job performance and retention.

However...don't be disheartened if there is no formal staff orientation or no guidance from your supervisor or colleagues. In this case – while is by no means an ideal situation- it will be up to you to proactively figure out how to do your job. Consult your job description, watch and learn from co-workers in the same role and ask questions. If a colleague is open to having you job shadow for a day or two, that may be something you could request from your supervisor.

Details

During the first week, sorting through the details regarding the following will help you settle in and feel more at "home" at work:

- Pay schedule and process for submitting timesheets and attendance
- Benefits and safety requirements
- How to treat overtime or lieu time
- Notifying someone if you are late or sick
- Being allowed to take vacation or other forms of time off
- Times and length of lunches, breaks and whether you're allowed to leave the worksite
- Location of the lunchroom, washrooms and any responsibilities in shared spaces
- Location of mailboxes and supplies
- Location of safety areas such as first aid stations, sanitizer stations, emergency exits, and the meeting area in case you need to evacuate your work area
- Whether you can personalize your work area and what personal items are acceptable
- Where to store personal items, such as your coat and bag
- How to use the telephone, database or other systems
- Information about relevant codes, passwords for gates, computers and/or printers, copiers

During your first few weeks

- Introduce yourself to more people to get a better sense of how the office operates
- Further familiarize yourself with company lingo and workplace customs
- Clarify your responsibilities

- Increase your company knowledge (mission, values, priorities, competitors, etc.)
- If your workplace is unionized, feel free to reach out to a union steward, a staff member who represents the union members for your work area

Benefits of an Organizational Chart

There's no magic map to help you orient to a new workplace, but an organizational chart may be the next best thing! Your employer may give you an organizational chart that shows who does what, where each person fits into the organization, and who reports to whom.

You can use the chart to:

- Help you remember co-worker's names and titles
- Discover employee roles and how they fit into the organization
- Learn about the type of work others do, and how it relates to what you do

Some organizational charts show everyone in the organization. Others only show people in upper management positions. If you are not sure where you fit in the organization, ask your supervisor to explain.

When you understand who does what, you get a better understanding of who you should go to for answers to your questions and approvals. This person is usually your direct supervisor.

Maximize your first year on the job

After several months, your manager and peers will expect you to be more confident in your role. You may find it helpful to chart specific milestones over the course of your first year in order to stay on track. Your plan can be broken down into 3, 6, 9 and 12-month blocks. For each block you should set up specific and measurable goals related to understanding and excelling in your role, meeting goals, developing industry knowledge and specific skills. You'll likely need to modify your plan as you progress as some factors may shift over time.

Meeting (and exceeding) the demands of your role is an essential aspect of workplace success. However, don't overlook the importance of relationship building with your team and other co-workers to build a positive reputation in your field. Technical or job-specific skills are only piece of your career success. Developing skills in collaboration and teamwork are also highly valued and essential to getting things done.

Activity

Ask three people you know to reflect and describe their first day at a new job. You could ask your friends when you're hanging out, talk to your neighbor, someone in your household, or even ask an instructor. If you have had a full-time, part-time or summer job in the past, reflect upon your own experiences as well.



Here are some questions you can ask:

1. What was your first day like?
2. What are some things you did to prepare for your first day?

3. What was unexpected?
4. What tips do you have for me when I start my new job?

Summarize their answers and reflect on what their experiences and advice mean to you. Based on this reflection, answer the following questions.

1. What can I expect on my first day?
2. How can I prepare?

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS AND DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL

Nobody expects you to understand everything on the first day. When you are new to a job, your manager understands you'll make mistakes. However, there are some basic expectations that your manager will most likely expect.

What you are expected to do:

- Show up on time.
- Show up to work every day for your designated shifts unless you have a valid reason to be absent. You would need to follow the protocol for reporting time off.
- Return promptly from any break and stay until the end of your shift.
- Maintain a professional appearance.
- Treat everyone you encounter with respect.
- Be focused while you are at work; avoid being distracted by personal business.
- Complete your assigned tasks within the specified time.
- Demonstrate support for the company's overall goals.
- Be committed to providing excellent customer service.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and enthusiasm.
- Respect the authority of your manager.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=153#h5p-31>



Many employees start out behaving well but begin to break the rules as they become comfortable in the workplace. Don't fall into that trap. Your inability to meet these basic expectations may cost you your job.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT

As a professional, you must learn to take responsibility for your own career development. The working world is very different from a college or university environment where there may be professors or staff looking out for you. Managing the transition from one environment to the other can be challenging, particularly for those with limited experience in the workplace, but it's a necessary process. Understanding the need to take responsibility for charting your own path early in your career can save you a lot of headaches later on. Taking personal responsibility for your process does not mean you have to do it alone- in fact mentorship and support from family, friends and your wider network will remain crucial supports along the way.

Below are some professional development skills that are important when it comes to the workplace. You needed many of these to land the job but now that you're in the position, developing and refining these skillsets further will give you a big advantage to your overall success. There's no way to control the order in which you'll learn these skills and often you may be dealing with a workplace issue well before you feel ready to do so successfully. However, remember you've made it this far and you have the tools to improvise and learn as you go.

Mindset

One of the most essential components to success is the development of a positive, optimistic and growth mindset. As someone who may be starting out on the bottom rung in an organization, this approach will help you develop humility, an openness to learn, a strong work ethic, adaptability and other helpful traits for the workplace. Reflect on people in your environment who are respected- admired even- and consider their attitude. Try to model or adapt their approach to suit your own personality.

It's easy to become frustrated when learning new things or trying to navigate a new work environment.

Remember, frustration can be viewed as a conflict between what you expected versus the reality of the situation. Reality is often a let down, but if we try to anticipate that many aspects of a job may be different from what we initially expected, our frustration may diminish. Adopting a long-term positive perspective may also help us take a different view of the situation. This too shall pass.

Impression management

Impression or reputation management is an important area over which emerging professionals must learn to exert some control – particularly in their first year on the job. Impression management involves a concerted effort on your part to positively influence how people view you. In a workplace context this refers to qualities and behaviors that make you a person of integrity but also and a positive contributor to the team or organization. Finding opportunities to manage how you present yourself that will elicit positive responses from other people is a natural human desire both in life and in the workplace. Positive responses could include: getting a raise or promotion, attracting allies, and/or receiving a bonus. This is about putting the most positive light on your skills, abilities and qualities. When starting a new job, you're under the microscope and co-workers will be observing and monitoring you, determining your skills, your "fit" in the workplace and whether you have the ability to work as a team player.

However, it's important to acknowledge that presenting a professional image may be more challenging for some. Managing your personal traits may not be enough to present a professional image. Belonging to a particular group may come with certain preconceived stereotypes and dealing with bias is something that can present a challenge. For example, younger employees may be seen as less credible or less responsible than older workers.

In recognizing your place as a new hire and thus an outsider to the organization, you may consider holding back on any criticism lest it be perceived as an attack on the organization. Putting in your dues by learning the details of your job as well as your role within the wider organization will help boost your credibility. In many respects actions speak louder than words. Therefore, focus on building a track record of completing projects on time, demonstrating a willingness to work hard, and conveying gratitude to colleagues who help orient you. When faced with a challenge, do your best to independently explore possible solutions.

Honing Job-specific Skills

Invest the time to learn the skills you need to do your job well. In some roles, the content or systems you rely on to do your job effectively may change and you'll need to stay current. Be sure to keep tabs on any developments that impact your position, whether it involves changes within the role, within the company or external factors- such as, public opinion. Attend conferences, join associations, register for webinars, and attend lunch and learns. This will help keep you aware of changes in your role and sector.

Refining your Transferrable skills

Your job will probably offer you the opportunity to further develop transferrable professional work skills. Transferrable skills are just as they sound: skills you bring/transfer with you to virtually any job. These skills include: time management, setting priorities, multi-tasking, drafting emails and proposals, presenting, participating in meetings, working in a team, influencing, and advising. Finding opportunities to diversify and deepen your transferrable skill sets will stand you in good stead as you progress in your career.

Training and Development

Employers expect that you will require some training as you progress in your role. They will be impressed if you continue to build upon your expertise. Be sure to register for trainings that are offered by your employer. Inquire about special projects, committees, and initiatives in the workplace which could further stretch your skills. Also consider volunteer opportunities outside of work to build your skill sets. These kinds of opportunities may be especially beneficial to your career development if your current job is not one which you're interested in pursuing, as they provide exposure and a track record in another area of interest. Consult with your supervisor to determine which skills you'd benefit most from developing and ask if they would be willing to support you in

developing these skills. Be clear that the benefits of your skills upgrade is not just to yourself but to the organization or department as a whole.

Networking and Friendships

Creating and maintaining positive relationships with co-workers leads to greater satisfaction at work but also to the possibility of advancement. When beginning a new position, you're meeting a group of people with whom you may end up spending a large portion of your day. It's no wonder then that many popular tv series revolve around workplaces. Your new co-workers are determining whether you are trustworthy, friendly and dedicated to your job. Are you someone they can come to for advice or a laugh? Both are important. Finding your place in this new ecosystem involves navigating a variety of personalities and agendas.

Building workplace friendships can have a tremendous positive effect on our emotional well-being and productivity on the job. Studies have demonstrated that employees with friends at work tend to focus better, get sick less often and stay longer in their role. On the flip side, feeling lonely on the job and a lack of connection with co-workers can lead to diminished focus, lower productivity and lowered drive to succeed.

Get to know as many of your colleagues as possible, even if many of the connections are relatively superficial. Networking can take the form of a simple "Good morning" greeting in the hall, lobby, or elevator. Casual chats before or after meetings can also promote stronger bonds with co-workers. Working social events such as holiday parties can also provide opportunities to connect informally. If your organization has volunteer programs or charity events, feel free to take part. These events provide an opportunity to give to the organization while further networking with co-workers. Participate in team-building activities and be open to socializing with your co-workers when you can (for example, during breaks or at lunch.) This is a great way of learning more about the job culture and developing a sense of belonging to the organization.

Remember, most people like to talk about themselves. Consider engaging new co-workers on "safe" topics such as parenting, children, pets, or sports. Offer friendly and appropriately personal information to show that you too have a life beyond work.

Develop Organizational Savvy

As a new employee, it's difficult to know how to navigate the organization to get things done and develop professionally. However, it's important to be aware that workplace politics and company priorities can be complex and may shift over time. Learning more about how best to maneuver through these topics is an important skill to hone as you progress in your career. Over time you will determine which battles are worth fighting and which are best abandoned, who the influencers are and how best to build collaborations to influence certain initiatives.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE CULTURE?

Organizational culture involves the values, beliefs, attitudes, and systems that influences the employees' behavior. Workplace culture plays a significant role in determining employers' expectations. Understanding these expectations is essential to your work success. During your job search, you may have identified organizations and workplace cultures where you feel best positioned to thrive. However, it's important to acknowledge that for a variety of reasons you may need to accept a position at an organization that is not your optimal "fit".



Many organizations will make hiring decisions based upon a candidate's "fit" within the organizational or workplace culture in order to maintain the status quo. Some research has indicated that this practice may actually harm the company's bottom line as hiring people with the same perspective can stifle growth and competing ideas. Diverse teams can work well together to come up with innovative solutions to problems, which might not have been achieved if the employees were too homogeneous.

SIT BACK AND OBSERVE

Understanding the values, beliefs and unspoken norms in your organization will help smooth your ability to navigate your new environment. You will gain an understanding of the values, guiding decisions and how processes are run. Give yourself time to observe and uncover workplace expectations- your patience and perceptiveness will pay off in time. When starting a new job, it's best to be reserved and professional until you become accustomed to your new workplace.

There may be unwritten rules on taking breaks, calling in sick, and scheduling time off. Observe co-workers as well as your supervisor and try to emulate their behaviors. Do colleagues arrive early or stay late and, if so, how early or late? Do people tend to socialize with each other in the morning, at lunch or after work? What types of behaviors or approaches get rewarded? Are there any ethical considerations to keep in mind? How would you characterize the general atmosphere in the workplace? Is it boisterous or calm? Upbeat or stressful? Is there a particularly important overarching mission which your co-workers support?

Here are some useful tips and scenarios:

Scenario 1:

Supervisor:

"Look Jane, I know that you've been working very hard on this project, but I would prefer if it was finished by the end of the week. You might want to consider staying late or postponing your other projects. See what you can do."

Jane:

"I will see what I can do. I am very busy with other work and I can't work late this week... I will let you know how it's going."

On seeing her boss's non-verbal reaction Jane thinks *"Oh, I guess that didn't go too well. She/he really wants me to finish this project by the end of the week deadline."*

Jane says, *"Sure, I will make this project my priority to finish it by the end of the week."*

Scenario 2:

Supervisor:

"Jane, this report looks great, but some numbers seem a bit off. Would you mind reviewing it again?"

Jane:

"Ok, I will see when I have time."

On seeing her boss's non-verbal reaction Jane thinks *"Uh-oh, I see the look on his/her face – not very encouraging. It looks like I really messed up here. Maybe I better change my response."*

Jane says, *"Sure, I will get right on it. I don't know how I could have overlooked these mistakes!"*

- **Be aware that many organizations have flat organizational structures:** In recent years, there has been shift away from traditional hierarchy, and moved towards teamwork. It's becoming more common, for example, for a director to solicit feedback from an entry-level employee. It's expected that you form collegial relationships with your managers and co-workers.
- **Understand that organizations have their own "style":** For example, the dress code may be more relaxed or you may be encouraged to call the company president by their first name. The best approach is to watch what everyone else is doing and follow their lead. Adopting a casual approach still requires that colleagues demonstrate respectful behavior.
- **Know that you are responsible for a particular process and/or outcomes:** In many jobs, your manager will tell you what they expect from you right from the start. They may not care how you do it, but you'll be held accountable if you're not meeting expectations.

- **Recognize that employers value initiative:** In today's fast-moving environment, managers value proactive employees. If you see a problem, instead of rushing to alert your manager, use your judgment and try to determine if it's something that you can solve on your own. Once you're comfortable with your work priorities and time management, think about whether there are any projects or resources that you could work on to benefit your team and add to your accomplishments. Remember that individual contribution is valued even in contexts where you're expected to work in a team.
- **Project a positive attitude:** Being a positive team player is often valued just as much as being competent in your job. No one wants to be around negative people and being positive plays a major role in both the hiring process and in assessing job performance. Instead of complaining, offer possible solutions.

Take a moment to watch this 3 minute video clip about work culture. The video was created by SHRM



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=157#oembed-1>

Why Workplace Culture Is Everyone's Responsibility. SHRM. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P95eeEPCmlQ&t=1s>

PROFESSIONALISM

WHAT TO WEAR

Most workplaces have policies regarding dress code and professional appearance. It's a good idea to dress formally until you get a better sense of what your co-workers wear. As you become familiar with the environment, you can reflect a more individualized style that also conforms with workplace expectations.

**Other points to consider:**

- Avoid flashy or revealing clothes that are considered distracting
- If safety gear is required, make sure to follow protocol
- Don't forget to maintain proper personal hygiene

- Avoid wearing perfume or cologne as co-workers may be sensitive or allergic to scents

Body Language

Non-verbal communication, also known as body language, is integral to creating a positive first (and subsequent) impression in the workplace.

Some key aspects of non-verbal communication include:

Personal Space. An individual's cultural background can influence their comfort zone when it comes to personal space. Many people are most comfortable maintaining an arm's length of space between each other when talking face to face. In others cultures, it's acceptable to stand closer. Pay attention to cues from co-workers and be aware that standing too close can make the other person uncomfortable. At the same time, standing too far away can give the impression that you aren't interested in communicating.

Shaking Hands. Previous to 2020, people used to shake hands- but now there are many exceptions. Due to COVID, many employees still engage in some form of social distancing. Be respectful of your colleagues' wishes, and remain true to your own comfort level. Some people don't shake hands for religious reasons. Others are just uncomfortable with the practice. A firm handshake isn't always necessary. A small wave, along with eye contact and a smile, is sometimes appropriate.

Eye Contact. When greeting or conducting a conversation, direct eye contact indicates that you're engaged and alert. Avoiding eye contact may convey that a person is lacking in self-confidence or is unfriendly. Staring or maintaining constant eye contact for long periods, however, is to be avoided.

Body positioning. Be aware of your body positioning: crossed arms or fidgeting can give the impression of being bored or angry. Remain aware of your facial expressions. Adjust your body language to the situation and the person. Monitor the person you're speaking to for their nonverbal cues.

Communication

Verbal communication is a complex and nuanced process. Communication styles are strongly influenced by culture, gender, age as well as individual factors. Most workplaces value direct, clear communication while at the same time also valuing a polite, indirect approach. It can be a difficult balance to maintain between being straightforward and remaining diplomatic.

As you prepare to communicate in the workplace, make sure that your language reflects who you are as an emerging professional. Communicating effectively can help you to fit in to a new workplace. The language you use and the attitude you convey will provide your co-workers with a better understanding of who you are as a fellow employee.

Two factors that will help build effective communication include:

Language proficiency. Having a good grasp of English- or whichever language you need to do your job- will help you complete tasks more efficiently and communicate with clients and team members.

Professional communication and etiquette. There is an expectation in all workplaces that you will adhere to basic communication practices from responding to emails within an accepted time window to maintaining confidentiality when it comes to sensitive information. In addition, developing an understanding of the industry

specific terms or jargon, enunciating clearly and using respectful language are all important aspects of effective communication.

Small Talk: “Talk at work is not confined to talk about work.”

Socializing and developing friendships are an integral part of workplace culture. Use small talk to connect with co-workers.

- Be open to informal conversation with others e.g. Join your co-workers for coffee or lunch.
- Some “small talk” or conversation is expected and shows you care about your colleagues. However, it’s typically considered impolite to ask directly about personal matters such as political affiliation, age and income. If a co-worker shares personal details then it’s up to you to set boundaries you’re comfortable with. If you feel uncomfortable, feel free to change the subject.
- Become aware of cultural differences and do your best to educate yourself on a variety of perspectives.
- Socializing for a few minutes when you arrive at work, leave for the day, over coffee or lunch breaks is acceptable. Engaging in long conversations during office hours is not.
- Listening is an undervalued skill. It is also essential to building rapport. Paying attention to the underlying emotion behind a comment and your own emotional response is an important awareness to develop.

Speaking Up

- Participate actively in discussions and meetings. It’s OK to ask questions for clarification or offer your ideas. It shows that you’re interested and want to be actively involved. You may feel more comfortable asking clarifying questions until you have a better grasp and can offer your own suggestions later on.
- If a particular discussion topic or project involves your area of expertise and you think you may be able to offer a better solution, suggest it as tactfully and politely as possible. Remember, you’ve been hired for what you bring to the table.
- Employers typically appreciate if you ask questions when you’re unsure about instructions or protocols, rather than stumbling ahead and potentially making an unnecessary mistake. Asking questions is one way to demonstrate to your team that you’re keen to learn and develop professionally.
- Speak up immediately if you have concerns about a given task. You can refuse a task as long as you have a valid reason, such as that you think it’s unsafe.

Email Communication

Effective verbal and written communication are key to success in both finding and maintaining a job. Your emails should be written in a professional format and style. Be sure to only use your business email for company business and use your personal account for personal communications. Your business email and inbox contents are the property of your employer.

Guidelines when communicating in professional settings via email with employers or co-workers:

- Make sure you have a clear subject line that is specific enough for the recipient to easily refer back to it at a later date.
- Begin your email with a proper salutation such as “Hi Ahmed” or “Dear Ahmed” and finish with, for example, “Thanks, Bob” or “Regards, Bob”.
- State the purpose of your email in the first couple of sentences.

- Be clear, concise and to the point.
- Do not use text language such as “u”- you, “r”- are, etc. This is not accepted as proper business communication.
- Use correct spelling and proper grammar, including punctuation and capitals.
- Use your spelling and grammar checker.
- Use bullets and numbering to make it easier to read when including many points.
- DO NOT USE ALL CAPITALS – it implies that you are screaming at the recipient!
- Use **bold** or *italics* to emphasize key words, phrases or actions.
- Read your message out loud before you hit the send button; proofread your message as you would a business letter. You may want to reach out to a trusted colleague for feedback if the email is particularly important, although pay attention to any issues related to confidentiality.

Activity

Example of a poorly written email message.

From: Prieto, Marcella
To: VXZ Technologies Full Staff List
CC:
Subject: No subject
Importance: Highcan someone give me the deadline details for the ABC project?Marcella Prieto
Electronic technologist

Here is a list of the problems with the email message above:

- It's being sent to the entire staff list when it would be more effective to send the email to only those who can answer the question.
- As the question is aimed at 'someone', it is unclear who should be responding.
- There is no subject line so recipients won't know what the email is about without opening it.
- She hasn't capitalized the first letter of the sentence.
- The email comes across as rude because there is no salutation or appreciation of future efforts from her co-workers.
- She gives no timeframe for when she needs an answer.

WORKING WITH YOUR MANAGER

The person who has the most influence in your career and growth satisfaction on the job is your manager. Your manager plays a significant role, providing you with opportunities for skill development- including approval for training(s). Your manager's recommendations can impact decisions about raises, promotions, and job references. This will influence upper management's opinion of you. Their managerial approach will likely set the tone for the way you approach and complete your work. Managers play an incredibly powerful role over those whom they manage.

Given that a manager's power, authority and their ability to strongly influence your job satisfaction, it's essential that you prioritize your relationship with your boss. To do so you'll need to have a positive and mutually productive relationship. Of course, there may be situations where, try as you might, you may find it impossible to develop a positive working relationship. It's important to know when it's best for your mental health to leave a job before a negative situation spirals further.

The traditional hierarchy of the manager/employee relationship has been shifting in recent years to one which acknowledges the benefits of an equal partnership. There is increasing recognition that this relationship can be more of a two- way street with the employee contributing value to the organization and team and the supervisor contributing resources to support the employee in meeting job and career growth goals. Both are working cooperatively to meet the organization's broader goals. However, this is a trend and may not be the reality you encounter in your workplace.

THE "IDEAL" BOSS

Most of us have a mental picture (or experience) of a bad boss. But what is your vision of the "perfect" manager? A good boss might be someone who inspires the team, has confidence in their team members' abilities, and is concerned about the job growth and career development of each employee. A good manager is knowledgeable, competent, fair, appreciative, responsive, caring, trustworthy and approachable. They provide clear instructions, are open to feedback, accepting of different perspectives, provide constructive feedback, demonstrate integrity, maintain confidentiality and provide helpful advice.

- Your supervisor can open doors for you or make sure they stay firmly closed. Your relationship is too important to be left to chance.
- If you think of your manager as your most important internal customer, you'll want to offer exceptional customer service whenever you can. Being professional and resourceful not only gains you positive feedback from your supervisor, it can also open up opportunities and increase your job satisfaction.

Understanding your Manager

Your relationship with your manager is too important to be mismanaged. A cooperative relationship will lead to greater job satisfaction and the possibility of more growth opportunities. Take the time to observe and note your manager both as a person (their qualities, characteristics) and also in their role (their priorities, pressures). You can achieve this through observing their interactions with you and others.

Your Manager's Personality and Approach:

Consider your manager's strengths and weaknesses.

- How would you describe your manager overall? (e.g. easygoing, detail-oriented, creative, dis/organized, consultative, overwhelmed, bureaucratic)
- What is your manager's work style (e.g. collaborative, meeting oriented, hands-on, independent, flexible, deadline-driven, detail oriented, big-picture oriented, creative)?
- How do you and the team feel about your manager?
- Where is your manager most efficient? What is his/her weakest point?
- How transparent is your manager with forwarding relevant information to you and the team?

Your Manager's Role and Responsibilities

Just as you have stresses and pressures in your role, so too does your manager. Having empathy and understanding can go a long way to better understanding your manager's goals. Take time to step back and consider the scope and demands of their role:

- What does your boss do? What are his/her responsibilities?
- What are his/her stresses and pressures?
- Who does your supervisor report to? What pressures might they face as a result?
- How does your work contribute to your supervisor's objectives and success?
- What are some wider objectives or concerns they may have in their role?

You might feel frustrated to hear that proactively taking responsibility for meeting your manager's needs is something you should pay attention to above and beyond your day-to-day job responsibilities. However, even

though it is not expressly written in your job description, learning how to maintain a collegial working relationship with your manager is one of the most important skills you can learn. This will go a long way towards creating a harmonious and positive working environment. It's well worth the investment!

Taking into account the larger context of your manager's personality, responsibilities and concerns-how should you approach your work and communication with your manager so that the relationship is a collaborative and successful working relationship?

Consider creating a confidential running list of observations as you learn and discover more about your manager. You might document what frustrates them, motivates them and impresses them. Brainstorm how you might work differently to impress them or prioritize certain projects to help them do their job more efficiently.

Some common ways to enhance your relationship with your manager:

- Remain willing to go above and beyond when possible
- Be flexible in the face of changing priorities and assignments
- Convey your interest in the organization's mission
- Respond professionally to feedback, as opposed to defensively
- If you encounter a problem, try to offer a feasible solution
- Try to solve problems independently before reaching out for support
- Respect your manager's authority
- Stay accountable and own up to mistakes or errors in judgement
- Participate actively e.g. speak up in meetings, embrace new projects
- Minimize the need for supervision by e.g. proactively providing updates
- Seek out ways to contribute to areas that are a priority for your manager
- Be resourceful: reach out to team members for support or feedback

Conflict Resolution

When people are working together closely, conflicts are inevitable. Conflicts can occur as a result of differences in beliefs, values, opinions, and actions. They can occur for a wide variety of reasons including hiring decisions, rumors, new policies, a change in a management style or company priorities.

It's important to bear in mind that conflicts are not always a bad thing. They can offer a team the chance to learn others' points of view, grow and innovate. So, it's not always the conflict itself that's the problem. It's how the co-workers involved handle the situation.

When conflicts remain unresolved they can lead to stress, diminished team morale, staff departures and lost productivity. Emotions may continue to run high until the nature and impact of the conflict is dealt with in a way where all involved feel heard and supported. Some larger workplaces and unionized environments have an in-house dispute resolution process to handle conflicts. This can be extremely beneficial especially in cases where

an informal approach hasn't worked. Where no internal mechanism is available, a neutral third-party may be brought in.

Bridge-building Conversations

A productive and bridge-building conversation following a conflict can repair wounded feelings and lead to greater mutual understanding. Bear in mind that the words you use and the questions you ask are important to consider carefully (For example asking *"Why would you say that in the meeting?"* is very different from *"Can you explain to me what motivated you to say that in the meeting?"*) You have an opportunity to take an emotional situation and turn it into an opportunity to learn from a colleague or supervisor.



Remember that bridge-building conversations require both parties to take turns speaking and listening. Expressing how a situation made you feel and what you were thinking is as important as taking in what the other person is saying by gently questioning, rephrasing and affirming what you're hearing.

Below are some tips to help you manage a conversation about a conflict in a way that maintains a positive working relationship:

- Listen carefully without judgement; you do not need to agree

- Choose your words carefully so as not to inflame the situation
- Stay as calm as possible and listen to the other side of the story
- Avoid suggesting that you're right and the other person is wrong, remain open and respectful
- Try asking open-ended questions to learn more about the other person's position, rather than stating your case
- Restate what you heard the person say, to let them know you were listening and to avoid misunderstandings. This can have a very affirming effect
- Focus on solving the problem, not blaming the other person
- If you're not able to resolve the conflict you may choose to speak with your supervisor or HR department

This information on conflict resolution is just a starting point. Learning how to resolve conflicts effectively is a skill that takes time, commitment and experience. It has been researched and written about extensively. We encourage you to continue to learn and practice your conflict resolution skills by accessing professional development courses/workshops, reading books on the subject, and consulting online resources.

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYEE

The following provides some basic information about your rights in the workplace but is not intended to replace legal advice. Consult a lawyer or employment advisor for specific legal advice pertaining to your situation.



When you accept a job, you'll be asked to review and sign an employment contract. This is a legal agreement entered into and signed by you and your employer, whereby you both agree to fulfill the contract terms. It may include a variety of information such as salary, employee and the employer's responsibilities and rights, vacation time, sick time, termination etc. Your rights are also dependent upon the conditions stated in your employment contract, employer benefits, union contract and employment status (casual, part-time, co-op, contract, full-time permanent). Make sure to read your contract carefully to know your rights and responsibilities.

THE US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Click [here](#) for a summary of the laws from The US Department of Labor to protect your rights as an employee. Here are 2 more useful sites you may wish to explore:

- [US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)
- [Labor laws and worker protection](#)

SAFETY ON THE JOB



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

[Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#) – is to protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job. It outlines general health and safety regulations workplaces must follow. You have the right to know about hazards on the job. Your employer must tell you about anything that can hurt you so that you are able to work safely.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION



After a few months of working at a new organization, your employer may sit you down for a performance evaluation. A *performance evaluation* is a review and discussion about your performance of assigned duties and responsibilities. This is the time when your manager will bring up any concerns or problems that they have with your performance or behavior in the workplace. This is also an excellent opportunity for you to address any challenges that you've faced. Your manager will also likely help you develop a work plan for the next six months to a year.

Here are some tips to help you prepare for your performance evaluation:

- **Make a list of your accomplishments and challenges:** Your manager is going to want to see examples of this. If you take the time to identify them ahead of time, you'll be better able to communicate the value of your contribution.



- **Be formal:** Your manager may be treating the meeting casually, but it isn't. Your performance evaluation becomes a part of your file in human resources and it's reviewed whenever managers are considering promotions and pay raises. Treat your performance evaluation as you would any important meeting with your manager.



- **Be open to feedback:** Your manager is going to give you both positive and negative feedback on your performance. Although criticism can be difficult to hear, you need to listen in order to improve. It's important that you're open to feedback and that you make an effort to learn from constructive criticism.





- **Be proactive:** Don't just sit there quietly through your performance evaluation. Actively engage in the process. Discuss your accomplishments and show your enthusiasm when setting your goals for the upcoming year. This is also an opportunity to ask questions and express your concerns.



- **Take action:** Your performance evaluation doesn't end when the meeting's over. Take the feedback that you received and make an effort to improve upon any weaknesses that were identified. Going forward, make it a habit to ask your manager for feedback whenever appropriate. In addition, keep a copy of your work plan handy and review it on a regular basis to make sure you stay on track.



Your Performance Evaluation is also a good time to review your goals:

- Which goals were met/exceeded/not met?
- How does this relate to your future work goals?
- What goals should be set for the next year or work period?

Many employees become nervous when they learn that they'll be having a performance evaluation. However, if you're properly prepared, it can be a positive experience that helps you grow professionally.

LEAVING YOUR JOB ON GOOD TERMS



As you progress in your career, you'll inevitably leave jobs to move on to new opportunities. You will want to make sure that you manage this transition in a way that will allow you to maintain a positive relationship with your employer. Here are some tips that will help you leave your job the right way:

- **Provide proper notice.** You can make the transition for both you and the employer as smooth as possible by providing at least two weeks of notice. Check your contract to see if you are required to give more than two weeks.
- **Tie up loose ends.** Make an effort to tie up any loose ends before you leave, in order to minimize the impact on your co-workers. You should consider keeping in touch after you leave.
- **Give them all the information they'll need.** There may be particular information that your replacement will need to know in order to do the job effectively. This could include information about particular clients, tricks of the trade, passwords, or even knowing where certain items are located. Make sure that you pass all of this information on to the person who will be replacing you in your job. If a replacement hasn't yet been hired, then leave detailed notes.
- **Be appreciative.** It may seem like a long time ago, but try to recall how happy you were when you were offered your current job. This position allowed you to grow and mature professionally so that you could progress in your career. Be grateful for the opportunity and do what you can to show your appreciation.
- **Leave your contact information.** You can save your employer and co-workers a lot of headaches by

leaving your contact information so that they can follow up with you as needed. You may be able to give them a solution that would take them days to find on their own. By providing your contact information, you demonstrate that you still care about the organization.

The way that you behave in the last few weeks of your job will determine your employer's impression of you. It's important that you demonstrate respect and professionalism until the very end. If you don't, you never know when it might come back to haunt you.

Don't forget to keep in touch with your former employers or colleagues for future references and networking. LinkedIn is a good tool to use to stay connected.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE



ARE YOU IN BALANCE?

A moderate amount of stress improves our efficiency and mental sharpness. How do you know when your everyday juggling act is no longer a motivating challenge? Are you harming your health and sense of well being?

Here are some signs:

- You feel like you've lost control of your life
- You often feel guilty about neglecting your other obligations
- You frequently find it difficult to concentrate on the task at hand
- You're always tired

Video Activity

What does work-life balance mean to you?



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=184#oembed-1>

3 rules for better work-life balance. TED series. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c_xYLWOx-g&t=1s

Tips for Staying in Balance

Take control – there are ways to help bring yourself into balance!

At Work

- Schedule brief breaks for yourself throughout the day. Your productivity and effectiveness will increase if you take even a ten-minute break every two hours and overall, you'll get more accomplished.
- At the end of each day, set your priorities for the following day. Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have available.
- Only respond to email several times a day. Then, close your email program to avoid being distracted.
- Make a distinction between work and the rest of your life. Protect your private time by turning off electronic communications. Don't be available 24/7.

At Home

- Create a buffer between work and home. After work, take a brief walk, do a crossword puzzle, or listen to some music before beginning the evening's routine.
- Determine which household chores are critical and which can be done by someone else. Let the rest go.
- Exercise. Even if it's only for 15 minutes at a time. It'll leave you feeling more energized and refreshed.

In Your Community

- Make choices. Social, community and volunteer obligations can pull us in many different directions. Choose the ones that are most fulfilling and learn to say "no" to the rest.

RESILIENCE AND SUCCESS



When facing a difficult task, are you usually able to accomplish your goal or are you more likely to give up? We all face challenges, stress, and change in our lives and in our careers. Building our resilience can help us to recover and adapt to difficult situations.

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." — Maya Angelou
Herrity, J. (2023) 52 Thought-Provoking Quotes on Managing Change Effectively, Indeed, Retrieved from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/quotes-on-managing-change>

Your resilience and your belief in your own capacity to deal with various adverse situations can play a significant role within your career success.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND VIDEO

1. What factors do you think contribute to career success?
2. Watch the video below and reflect on your formula.
3. Would you change or add anything to it?

The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://pressbooks.uwf.edu/besuccessfulhealthcarecareerguide/?p=194#oembed-1>

Achor. S. *The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance*. Ted Series. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXY_kBVq1M&t=1s

How would you build resilience?

The table below outlines the factors that contribute to career resilience. You can build your resilience by developing the positive factors (in the right hand column) and reducing negative factors (the middle column). For example, if you approach your goals in a flexible way, changing your path as you learn more about yourself and the world of work, you're more likely to be resilient when faced with unexpected stresses.

Think about each factor and whether you tend to land more on the positive or negative end of the spectrum. Mouse over the terms below and/or select the "+" button below the table to view the definitions.

Table 4.2 Summary

Factor	Negative	Positive
Future Focus	Hopeless	Hopeful
Expectations	Naive	Realistic
Responsiveness	Blaming	Reflecting
Goals	Fixed	Flexible
Readiness	Unprepared	Strategic
Social Position	Isolated	Supported

Source: Thomas Staunton: [Exploring Building Resilience in a Careers Context](#)

Source: Blog of Tom Staunton <https://runninginaforest.wordpress.com/2015/01/26/exploring-building-resilience-in-a-careers-context/>

When reflecting on your future career goals, write down what the following factors mean to you. What actions can you take to increase your resilience?

Below is how Jane filled out the table:

Factor	What it Means for me?	Action
Hopeful future focus	I would like to be an office manager one day	I will start picturing myself in this role and talking to my network about my career aspirations
Realistic expectations	It might take me a few years to accomplish this goal	Info interviews and find a mentor for additional guidance
Reflecting attitude	What can I do to increase my chances? What I have already done?	Write some success stories to reflect upon my accomplishments
Flexible goals	I might decide to do something else later or even change my career. Be open to new ideas, Jane!	Do research into other areas of interest such as fashion
Being strategic	To plan in advance to prepare for the future	Think about possible professional development courses to take
Have social support	My network -people who can support me in my career	Attend administrative professional conferences



Career Resiliency Tips

Curiosity



Start a new job with curiosity and observe how the business operates. Ask questions during the onboarding period. Curiosity also means showing genuine care for your co-workers. Spend time in conversation to get to know your colleagues better.

Flexibility



Being flexible can help you adapt to a new workplace culture. Go with the flow. Are you an employee with flexible attitudes who can take on new challenges on short notice?

Optimism



Show up at work with a positive attitude. Being optimistic at work will help contribute to your career success.

Persistence



Starting a new job also involves a steep learning curve. Keep learning. Find mentors. Being persistence will help you master the required skills necessary for your job.

Risk-Taking



It takes courage to join a workplace, especially one in an unfamiliar country, and to meet new colleagues and clients. The uncertainty during your probation period can cause anxiety. Embrace the uncertainty.

For more assistance, feel free to make an appointment with the [Career Development and Community Engagement](#).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Congratulations on completing Module 4!

In this module you have learned:

- How to prepare for your first day of work
- Likely employer expectations
- Workplace culture
- How to dress, communicate, manage time, and resolve conflicts in a professional manner
- What your rights and responsibilities are as an employee
- The importance of workplace safety
- The purpose and process of a performance evaluation
- How to maintain positive relationships with past employers
- How to promote work-life balance and reduce workplace stress
- Reflect upon your own resilience and its impact on your career success

Resources

Please note: This is a partial resource list and do not claim to be the most authoritative on a given topic.

Companies & Organizations to Research & Assist your Career Journey

[Glassdoor](#)

[Indeed](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Ziprecruiter](#)

[Monster](#)

[CareerBuilder](#)

[SimplyHired](#)

Disability

[The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

[JAN: Job Accommodation Network](#)

[U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission](#)

Employment Rights

[Wages and the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)

Job Scams

[Better Business Bureau](#)

[Federal Trade Commission](#)

[Consumer.gov](#)

[ID Watchdog](#)

Workplace Culture

[Indeed](#)

[Gallup](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Workplace Health and Safety

[U.S. Department of Labor](#)

[OSHA](#)

[World Health Organization](#)