

Workshop #8: Workplace Planning (developing and advancing your career plan)

The term “workplace planning” means the process of developing and implementing your personal “Career Plan.”

Workshop Topics

1. The Career Plan
2. What If I Can’t Decide on a Career or Have a Dream Job?
3. The Job Action Plan

In addition to the discussion notes listed below, more content on each these topics can be found in “Part II: Workplace Planning” of the Make It Work: Disability & Competitive Employment book available at <https://wid.org/wid-e3/employment-empowerment/>.

Discussion Notes

1.) The Career Plan

(For a clean copy of The Career Plan described below, go to Appendix D in the “Make It Work” book.)

A “Career Plan” is a statement of direction regarding your future, along with an outline of the tasks and timelines necessary to reach your goals. It builds on your likes and dislikes. Your “Career Plan” will help you outline how to get from where you are now to where you want to be in the future. Without a plan, the future is often left to chance and when things are left to chance there’s usually a greater chance for failure. So, increase your chances for success by building, updating and following a “Career Plan”. Also, know that plans are just that. They are guesses or projections about what should be done or accomplished. Plans get changed all the time. As you move forward, new circumstances and opportunities arise which suggest the need to change or modify your plan. So, as you build your “Career Plan”, always be ready to update and improve it.

Your career plan is to the story of your work life.

As with any good story, and we want yours to be a great one, it should always be guided by the necessary parts whenever writing a full and complete story. All good stories should attempt to answer the questions represented by: who, what, where, when, why and how. These single word questions constitute our guide on how to build your career story.

As you begin to formulate your career plan or the story of your “work life”, try to answer these basic questions.

1.) "Who?"

Answer this question about yourself, "Who am I? Reflect, think deeply, and study yourself. For example, when you have free time, what do you first think about doing during that free time? What are the fun things you like to do? Think about questions like these and then list your interests, activities, hobbies, and sports. Once you've created this list, try to identify from these activities the key elements or qualities which represent the reasons why these things appeal to you.

Things I like to do -- interests, activities, hobbies, sports, etc.	Which parts most appeal to me & why
1 collect old things	1 learn history
2 swimming	2 be near the water
3 playing basketball	3 physical activity
4	4

And, on the other side of the coin, here are the things I don't like to do.

Things I don't like to do -- Interests, activities, hobbies, sports, etc.	Which part(s) don't appeal to me & why
1 writing	1 spelling and grammar
2 sports	2 being clumsy
3 meeting new people	3 feeling shy
4	4

Next, consider the question about yourself, "Who am I?" Begin to think about the qualities you have or want to develop in yourself. Let's first look at identifying some of your good qualities.

Good Qualities -- Qualities I have that I like about myself	Ways of improving
1 I like to solve problems	1 Take more science or math courses
2 I like to play video games	2 Invent video games
3 I get good grades	3 Ask for extra credit
4	4

Now, let's go negative on your qualities. What are the things about you that you don't like and may want to work-on and improve?

Not so Good Qualities -- Qualities I don't have which worry me	Ways of improving them
1 Afraid of change	1 Try new things & talk about it w/others
2 Don't speak well in public well	2 Join "Toastmasters Club"
3 Can't make friends easily	3 Read a book about making friends
4	4

2.) "What?"

Answer this question about yourself, "What's my situation?"

What are both your assets and liabilities or strengths and weaknesses? What education opportunities, work resources or experiences do you already have that strengthen your situation as a job applicant? What are you missing or needing to improve in order to get become a desirable job applicant?

What's my situation right now?

List your assets or strengths (education, work, volunteer activities).	What makes you proud about it?
1 Sing in the church choir	1 I like giving to others
2 Getting my college degree	2 Am completing my educational goals
3 Had two summer internships	3 Gained workplace experience I can mention
4	4

And, the negative is...

List your liabilities or weaknesses (lack of education, work, volunteer activities – be sure to include your emotional fears and anxieties)***	What's can I do about this?
1 Failed a course in college	1 Take it again & improve grade
2 Never had an internship	2 Make a plan to get one
3 Not sure anyone would hire me	3 Talk about it with people you trust
4	4

3.) "Where?"

Think about the ending of your work life story – where do you want to be when you retire? Dream, dream, dream! As you see the pathway forward, all the way until the end, develop your dream in increments of 5 years. Where do you want to be after the first 5 years of working? In 10 years? In 15 years, etc.? What kind or type of success would make you proud? With your future goals in view, the overall picture of where to begin and how to progress will become clearer.

Possible Dream Jobs	Where should I be in 5 years?	Where should I be in 10 years?	Where should I be in 15 years?	Where should I be in 20 years?	When I retire?
1 Educator	Teacher	School Principal	Area Supervisor	Educational Consulting Firm	State Superintendent
2 Pilot	Regional Airline Pilot	Major Airline Pilot	Pilot Trainer	Airline Supervisor	VP for Airline Operations
3 Business	Regional Sales	National Sales	Start Company	Have Successful Company	Chair of Board
4					

4.) "When?"

Answer the question, "When should I get started?" Remember, time flies by. Before you know, it will be tomorrow and you will be finishing school and, if you don't start implementing your plan right now, you'll not only lose precious time, you'll also increase your anxiety and fears about this important subject. Your plan will be your coach and guide. And, your fears will begin to melt away because you have a plan and are acting on it.

Tasks needed to be completed	On this date I will (fill in the step to completion)	On this date I will (fill in the next step to completion)	Date to be completed
1 Summer Internship	By March 1 Apply	April 1 Check-in	Start Job June 1
2 Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services	By June 1 Research Completed	July 1 apply	Sept.1 get intake appointment
3 Write Resume	By Sept. 1 draft	Oct. 1 Reviewed by Career Center	Nov. 1 Master resume completed and will adapted for each job application
4			

5.) "Why?"

Answer these two important questions about yourself, "Why do I want to work?" and "Why don't I want to work?" Let's begin by listing the reasons why you want to work. What's your motivation? Is it to accomplish certain things in your life? Is it to help a cause that's important to you? Is it for power, prestige or money? Is it to impress certain people? Try and discover what your underlying motivation might be for you to work. If you don't want to work, or are somewhat negative or fearful about working lets list these items as well. Does work scare you? Are you just a tad lazy? Or, is it more fun not to work and just play? With these basic facts revealed, talk to someone you trust about your feelings and see how they hold-up, or evolved or advance with some more thinking and consideration. Dig deeply into your feelings and discover what the basic truths are about you and working. Deal with these feelings early-on, especially "the not so good ones", as they will trip you up if you don't address them right away.

Why I want to work?	And, why is this so?
1 To make money	1 Have a house, car, family, kids
2 Serve or help people	2 I feel good when I help people
3 Make changes	3 Save the environment
4	4

Why I don't want to work?	And, why is this so?
1 Fear of rejection	1 I'm afraid of failure
2 Just like to party	2 I'm still immature about life
3 It seems hard	3 I've not identified work that would be rewarding and motivating
4	4

6.) “How?”

How can I make this all, happen? This last step in the career plan process is to make an actual plan to get a specific job. Remember, your career plan is a living plan which should change and evolve as time passes, so you won’t be finished updating it until you retire.

Pick job to go after	Qualifications required	Missing Qualifications	Plan to get missing Qualifications	Networking activities to get job	Time, place & effort to apply and interview for specific jobs
1)Entry Level accounting job	Degree in accounting. Internship in accounting. Knowledge about a specific type of accounting.	Internship in accounting.	Apply to five (5) accounting firms for that summer internships.	Visit accounting firms for an informational interview. Attend area accounting events/conferences.	Apply for five (5) internships at (federal government, state government, company X, company Y, & nonprofit X by December.
2)Starter job in the aviation field	Customer service skills. Knowledge about the industry. Knowledge about aviation science.	Knowledge about aviation science.	On-line courses.	Meet professionals in the field to learn more about opportunities and pathways to employment. Attend career fairs in the field	Complete three (3) informational meetings by December. Go to Air Show and meet people in January.
3)Starter job in medical field.	Specific field’s medical license.	More education.	Work at doctor’s office in administration. Volunteer at area hospital.	Talk to your doctor about opportunities. Talk to various specialists you meet while volunteering at hospital to learn what they do.	Make appointment with doctor and have your questions prepared. Volunteer at hospital this summer.
4					

2.) What If I Can't Decide on a Career or Have a Dream Job?

No dream jobs come to mind? Are you sunk even before you get started? Well, of course you're not. Most people starting out don't know what their dream job might be. Only 5-10% of students getting out of school know what they want to do for their careers. That's why the questions and planning exercise we did above can be helpful. For the 90-95% of us who don't know what we want to do for a career, answering the first five "career plan" questions above gives us some hints as to what types of jobs to explore or seek out for a test drive. In addition, if you are within the majority of new job seekers who just can't find their passion, don't worry, instead of worrying about finding it – relax and let it find you.

Dream jobs can take time to reveal themselves. Instead of looking for that perfect fit or dream job, the right answer might be to pick job which is mildly interesting and good enough for now. You never know where it might take you. While it may not be the right door, it's a door and what lies beyond it may prove revealing. It will surely give you more experiences and new opportunities to find your way.

Additional strategies that can help you find dream jobs are:

- Pay attention to what people are doing for a living. Look around you, at your parents, family and friends -- what do they do for a living. If what they do seems mildly interesting to you, ask them questions about what they doing.
- Talk with career counselors about jobs. Listen to what they tell you and think carefully about what they suggest.
- Surf the internet. Google key terms about what you might like to do or general words about qualities in work that appeal to you and see what appears. Explore the links that emerge, to see what you can learn or discover about jobs and fields that you may have never heard about. Use the power of the internet for career exploration. In addition check this out:
<http://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html>
- And, of course, networking is a great strategy to use for exploring careers. Whenever you find a job that might seem interesting to you, try and get to talk with someone who is doing that kind of work.
- Volunteering or taking summer jobs or internships with organizations that seem interesting to you are other ways to further test your interests. The added advantage of this strategy is that you become known to the organizations (make sure it's as a good worker) and this direct experience with you.

Don't let your uncertainty hold you back. Get a job, any reasonable job, and you will find that over time and with workplace experience, your future will come to you.

3.) The Job Action Plan

Your “career plan” is half the battle. Think of your “career plan” as the big picture or the story line for your career success. It’s a blueprint. However, in order to be successful with your grand strategy, you need sound tactics or plays to follow whenever the next job is to be pursued. Think about the relationship between your career plan (above) and your job action plan (below) as the relationship between strategy and tactics. The strategy (“career plan”) is your broad vision or goal to achieve overall success. Along the way are numerous intermediate steps or tactics (specific job searches) which must be successfully gained in order to make progress with your strategy (career plan).

ON NEXT PAGE

Job Action Plan

(One for Each Job Wanted)

The filled-in boxes suggest approximately when to start and end each task.

Week or Month Timeframe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Search for Places to Work												
Create or Update Resume												
Identify/Contact Resume References												
Constantly Monitor Vacancies at Place You Want to Work												
Find Actual Vacancy Announcements												
Submit Tailored Application for the Job You Want												
Research Company for Interview Ideas												
Anticipate & Prepare Answers for Interview Questions												
Practice Interview												
Define Disability Accommodations												
Give Interview												
Send Thank You Message												
Decide Your Salary/Start Date												
Prepare for First Day of Work												