Career Planning Handbook

The art of Assessment

A Central Test Initiative to help individuals taking informed decision about their career.

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I) Why should you Plan Your Career?

Choosing a career is an arduous task, just like every important aspect of our life, planning one’s career is very essential.

Career Planning is choosing a job that you would want to work on for the rest of your life.

A quote by Harvey Mackay that states -“Find something you love to do and you’ll never have to work a day in your life” holds very true.

Being stuck with something you don’t like will make your life miserable and resentful. This makes it all the more important for you to plan your career.

Planning a career that is in accordance to your likes, interests and abilities holds more meaning to you and proves useful in the following ways.

1) Doing what you like motivates you to give it your best and helps you grow professionally. Also there is job satisfaction.
2) Since you like what you are doing, you are more likely to give it your all and be the best at the job.
3) Overcoming obstacles will be more challenging rather than a pain when you love what you are doing.
4) Most importantly, having a plan helps you stay focused and grounded to what you want.
5) Planning a career, helps one make adjustments through the various ups and downs that life throws at them, without complaining.
II) Who Should Plan Your Career?

Who should plan your career? Well, this is a very tricky question and the answer to it varies from culture to culture.

Parents in many cultures are very worried about their children’s future and consider it their moral responsibility to decide what their child should take up as a career option.

Some cultures place a lot of importance only on certain kinds of jobs like engineering, academics and medical sciences.

Certain cultures on the other hand follow a hierarchy of family business wherein on attaining a particular age the individual irrespective of his choice is required to carry on this family tradition.

Some individuals on the other hand consider it a burden to sit and plan out their career and let their friends, family or acquaintances do it.

So who then should plan your career?

The most suitable answer to this question would be that, an individual himself/herself should choose a career for themselves with the guidance of their family members who have a good knowledge of the present market or experts.

One could always consider the advice given by their acquaintances and family, but ultimately need to make the decision themselves.

There is a lot of difference when YOU make the decision for yourself and when someone else makes it for you.

When others make a choice for you, you tend to do it for the sake of doing it. There is no personal interest that you would be taking, and you would be doing it solely for pleasing others. But, when you make the decision for yourself, you are more conscious of your choice, you are serious about it, and are more likely to follow it. There is a personal interest you take and more confidence and independence when you make the decision yourself.
III) How Can You Plan Your Career?

Once you have made the decision to plan your career, it’s important to know “How to go about it”.

Before jumping into a job search, it would be best that you self assess yourself, explore the avenues that best suit your personality, create a plan as to how you want to go about a job search, and then go in for an extensive job search.

You could do the introspecting process individually or could go in for The Career Orientation Test which has been specifically created keeping in mind the above four aspects. This psychological test has helped many individuals choose the right career for themselves. It is scientific and reliable and helps one assess themselves practically and confidently.

The Career Orientation Test is a one-stop shop for all your career planning needs and requirements. A highly reliable source of information, the career orientation test definitely lights the path ahead and gives you a sense of direction. It has helped many make sensible choices regarding their career and saves one the trouble of breaking their head over making a choice.
The four major steps towards Career Planning are

1) Self Assessment

Self assessment involves the four aspects.

a) Values  b) Personality  c) Skills  d) Interests

i) Values:

The first step in assessing yourself would be to identify values to which you give utmost importance. Values are core detriments that ensure if you would be comfortable with a particular job or not.

What do you value most is the question you need to ask yourself.

“Do you prefer relaxed and friendly atmospheres than extremely competitive situations”. “Are you at ease in physically demanding areas” “Do you prefer working individually rather than being in a group” “Do you prefer working in the corporate field where you are require to analyze and conceptualize or do you prefer serving and caring for others”

These are some aspects you need to ask yourself.

The Career Orientation Test helps give you an idea as to where you stand with respect to Values, indicating which aspects you are more likely to be comfortable with.

ii) Interests:

Once you have identified what you value the most; the next step would be to identify what you are most interested in. One way would be to note your areas of interest, and which one you would want to sharpen and would want to have a career in.

There are three simple steps as to how you can go about it, Introspect, Idealize and Initiate.

Firstly, write down the activities you are best at, be it cooking, running, stitching, selling, giving speeches, organizing events at college/school/community etc.

Secondly, now that you have a list, identify those activities that you have been consistent in and haven’t changed a liking towards over a period of time. For e.g. strike off activities that you have an on and off interest in, and tick the activities that you have a passionate interest in.

Thirdly, now that you have a list of activities that you are very keen about, identify key activities that you would want to make a career in.
For e.g. A’s list of activities that he is consistent in is

1) Cooking
2) Writing
3) Organizing
4) Reading
5) Talking to people
6) Studying
7) Singing

And list of activities A wants to make a career out of it is

1) Writing
2) Organizing
3) Studying-Academics related.

The other option would be to go in for “The Career Orientation Test“, it comes handy here as it is specifically created to help you assess how you can make a career of your interests.

The Career Orientation test is based on John Holland’s Person-Environment typology, wherein he has created a system of matching interests with occupations. On the basis of his several years of research Holland concluded that people can be classified on the basis of 6 major occupational interests

According to the career typology given by Holland,

1) Realistic Occupational Types would find tasks requiring physical manipulation to be very interesting. They are more likely to be interested in
   1) Mechanics
   2) Engineering
   3) Agriculture

2) Investigative Occupational Types would be more interested in jobs that require them to research, be systematic, come up with new ideas, and solve problems. Some examples would be
   1) Mathematicians
   2) Scientists
   3) Computer Programmers
   4) Archaeologists
   5) Researchers
   6) Journalists
3) Artistic Occupational Types on the other hand would prefer jobs that help express their creativity, either physically or verbally. They also dislike systematic, routine and ordered activities. They are very non-conforming and do not like to be restricted in any way. Examples of jobs that are most suitable to them are:

1) Artists
2) Editors
3) Musicians
4) Dramatists
5) Literary Related
6) Painters

4) Social Occupational Types are those that like to inform, develop, guide, nurture, and be amongst a group of people. They value relationships and examples of jobs that are most suitable to them are

1) Teachers
2) Lecturers
3) Social Workers
4) Counselors

5) Enterprising Occupational Types are extroverts and they like leading, manipulating, power oriented jobs that enhance their social status. Examples of jobs that are most suitable to them are

1) Manager
2) Politician
3) Sales Personnel
4) Television Producer.

6) Conventional Occupational Types on the other hand prefer jobs that are structured and rule-oriented. They prefer conforming to rules- regulations and set standards. Examples of jobs that are most suitable to them are

1) Clerks
2) Accountants
3) Book keeper
4) Secretary
5) Banker.

The Career Orientation Test developed by Central Test International clearly indicates where your occupational interests lie and presents you with three important results.

- Your general profile from the perspective of the Holland typology i.e. Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional
• Your Top three occupational profile from the most prominent occupational interests as per Holland`s typology.

• In the last section of the report you will find a list of occupations that meet your interests in order of most to least suitable.

**iii) Skills:** Apart from knowing what you are most interested in, it is extremely important to be aware of what you are good at. Also, if you are interested in a particular career, you may have to develop a set of skills in order to match the job profile.

For e.g. if you want to become a Choreographer, it is extremely important that you know dancing. Apart from that you need to put in regular hours of practice, every day in order to sharpen your skill at dancing.

*The Career Orientation Test*, once again proves useful as it helps you assess your strengths and weaknesses and also provides you tips on how you can work on your areas of improvement.

**iv) Personality:** Now that you are aware of what interests you the most and what skills you excel in, the next most important step is to be aware of what personality type you are. Several counselors vouch that being aware of one’s personality, helps one choose the right career for themselves. For e.g. if an individual who is an introvert will excel in jobs that require him to work independently rather than jobs where he is required to work in a group.

*The Career Orientation Test* helps you understand which personality type you are in relation to Holland’s Typology:
1. RI/IR (Realistic Investigative),
2. RA/AR (Realistic Artistic)
3. RS/SR (Realistic Social)
4. RE/ER (Realistic Enterprising)
5. RC/CR (Realistic Conventional)
6. IA/Al (Investigative Artistic)
7. IS/SI (Investigative Social)
8. IE/EI (Investigative Enterprising)
9. IC/Ci (Investigative Conventional)
10. AS/SA (Artistic Social)
11. AE/EA (Artistic Enterprising)
12. AC/CA (Artistic Conventional)
13. SE/ES (Social Enterprising)
14. SC/CS (Social Conventional)
15. EC/CE (Enterprising Conventional)

Once you are aware of your personality type, it becomes really easy for you to choose the career that is most suitable to you.

I) Now that you have self-assessed yourself, it is time to explore where you stand and what career options you should narrow down too.

1) Firstly, make a list of what you value the most;

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ii) Identify, which values you are ready to hold on to, and which you are ready to let go off.

II) The Second Step would be to identify where your interests lie.

The Career Orientation Test portrays where your interest lies in the following 12 factors. Identify your top 5 interests.

1. Social Dedication
2. Creativity
3. Organization (Method)
4. Literary Orientation
5. Practicality (Manual Creative)
6. Expertise Orientation (Expertise/ Investigative)
7. Action Orientation (Action/ Nature)
8. Technicality
9. Sociability (People Skills)
10. Mathematical Orientation.
11. Enterprising spirit.
12. Team Organization.
III) The third step would be to make note of the skills you have acquired so far. A peep into the report of *The Career Orientation Test* will help you note what your strengths and weaknesses are:

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IV) The next most important step would be to identify your top three combined Holland Profile.

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<tr>
<th>RL/IR (Realistic Investigative)</th>
<th>RA/AR (Realistic Artistic)</th>
<th>RS/SR (Realistic Social)</th>
<th>RE/ER (Realistic Enterprising)</th>
<th>RC/CR (Realistic Conventional)</th>
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<td>IA/AI (Investigative Artistic)</td>
<td>IS/SI (Investigative Social)</td>
<td>IE/EI (Investigative Enterprising)</td>
<td>IC/CI (Investigative Conventional)</td>
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<td>SC/CS (Social Conventional)</td>
<td>EC/CE (Enterprising Conventional)</td>
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1)  
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V) Make a note of the occupations relevant to your combined Holland Profile.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Investigative</th>
<th>Artistic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Empowering</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Occupation</td>
<td>Carpenter, Truck operator</td>
<td>Psychologist, Microbiologist</td>
<td>Musician, Interior-Designer</td>
<td>Counselor, Clergy-Member</td>
<td>Lawyer, Retail Store Manager</td>
<td>Production Editor, Bookkeeper</td>
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1)  

2)  

3)  

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After considering all these aspects, rank the Order of your job list once again in this order

Ranking: 1 = Most interested; 6 = Least interested

1…………………………………………………………………………………
2…………………………………………………………………………………
3…………………………………………………………………………………
4…………………………………………………………………………………
5…………………………………………………………………………………
6…………………………………………………………………………………

VI) Identify the skills you would require for the above six occupations that you have narrowed down for yourself.

For e.g. If you want to become a pilot you need to have the following skills.
- Ability to Multi task
- Ability to stay calm under pressure.
- Patience
- Willingness to work in a team.
- Quick reactions.
- Willingness to follow ALL rules

On the similar lines make a note of the skills required for the occupations you have narrowed down yourself too.

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VII) The next step would be to identify what academic course or training you need to take up in order to achieve the career that you have narrowed down for yourself.

Let’s take the same example of the pilot given above. Educational requirements of a pilot would be as follows.

- Indian requirements are secondary schooling 10+2 with Mathematics and Physics.
- Australia does not have specific educational requirements.
- Airlines generally require 12 years of schooling (10+2) with mathematics, physics, plus the ability to read, write and understand the English language.

*Do your research by collecting information from friends, family, the internet, books etc and find out the educational requirements for your career options.*

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VIII) The next most important step would be to identify colleges that offer the course that would lead you to your career.

a) Take into account the cost of education, and ways you would be financing yourself for it.

b) Would you be taking a student loan

c) Would your family finance it.

d) If you are taking a loan, how would you do it.
IX) **Additional Steps you can take up.**

Apart from getting qualified education wise, you could also work on gaining some knowledge of the career you want to work on for the rest of your life.

1) **Read about the career you want to get into.**

Name two books that you could read about your career choice:

- 
- 

2) **Talk to someone who is experienced, and is already in the line of job you want to work in.**

Identify one person in your career area that might give you some advice:

- 

3) **Think of two organizations where you can do an internship/a brief working stint in order to gain work experience in the career you want to work in.**

- 
- 

All these points will prove to be very useful in helping you plan your career.
Brief Overview of Career Planning

Developing self awareness
- Interests
- Values
- Skills
- Personal preferences

Planning job search
- Researching prospective employers
- Self-assessment from employer’s perspective
- Written communication
- Networking
- Interview preparation
- Interim job possibilities
- Strategies to uncover the hidden job market

Linking self-awareness to occupations exploration
- Interpreting interest inventories
- Establishing occupational preferences
- Use of the career resource library

The cycle repeats itself over your lifetime with personal growth or change in circumstances

Setting goals
- Creating priorities
- Developing an action plan
- Devising strategies to implement the plan

Researching Occupational possibilities
- Use of career resource library
- Information interviewing
- Economics, labour market trends

Making decisions
- Integrating information gained in previous exploration into decision-making processes
Armor yourself with the essential when you are looking out for the job of your dreams.

Now that you have an idea what you are best at, it’s important that you be acquainted with the necessary requirements that will help you in your job search.

Apart from the requisites mentioned in the above pages, two other essential requirements that you need to equip yourself with are

1) **Resume**: A resume is an important representative of “You”; the way it is presented greatly impacts your career. It can either make or break your journey towards your dream job. It is therefore extremely essential that you equip yourself with a “Resume” that puts you across in your best form. Show your resume to someone whose advice you trust, and listen to what they say. Create a resume that makes the employer to want to see and meet you. Let it not put them off in the very first instant.

2) **Positive Attitude**: Your attitude towards your dream job is very important. If you approach it with confidence and surety even in the face of obstacles, attaining your job will not be a distant reality. Now that you know what’s needed to choose the right career, waste no time and get started. Hard Work and Opportunity will lead you to your dreams.

“To find a career to which you are adapted by nature, and then to work hard at it, is about as near to a formula for success and happiness as the world provides. One of the fortunate aspects of this formula is that, granted the right career has been found, the hard work takes care of itself. Then hard work is not hard work at all.”

--- Mark Sullivan