

# Career Planning

## What is it?

Career planning is the process of making informed choices about which occupations you will undertake in your life time to help you achieve satisfaction of your needs and ambitions.

Many people adopt the trial-and-error method of career choice. They do not plan at all and end up in whatever job presents itself or whatever takes their fancy at any given time.

We spend a lot of time planning other events in our life such as a wedding, learning to drive a car, building a home, etc. Your career is just as important as any of these so why not give it due attention.

Most people will work for around 40 years of their lives and more than half of our waking hours are spent at work or getting there and back! Don't you think that it is worth finding a job that you will enjoy?

## How do you do it?

How do you choose the occupation that is going to give you the satisfaction that you deserve?

There are a number of steps involved:

- # Find out about yourself,
- # Determine your options,
- # Do some research,
- # Make a decision,
- # Make a plan,
- # Take action.

## Find out about yourself

In order to make effective career decisions, it is important that you understand yourself. There are many assessment tools available to help you gather the required information. Some of these are available on the Internet or through organisations such as Centrelink. The better assessment tools that have been proven over time are often only available through a Psychologist.

The results will confirm things that you already know about yourself, but you will usually learn new things or make sense of something that was not necessarily clear before.

Having knowledge about your skills, abilities, personal qualities, values and interests, and clarifying what really matters in your personal and work life can help you to determine your next career planning steps.

Aptitude tests are used to find out what you are good at - what are your strengths and weaknesses. These usually cover things such as your verbal and numerical skills and logical and analytical abilities.

There are a number of questionnaires that seek to identify your interests. For example, what occupations appeal to you, what do you want from a job, what do you think that you are good at?

Personality assessments aim to measure your individual opinions, attitudes and values. This information can be used to determine whether a given occupation will be satisfying for you or whether your characteristics would be suitable for a given occupation.

## Determine your options

It is unrealistic to think that these tests will highlight one particular job as being perfect for you. There will be a number of jobs that would be suitable for you and in many cases you may be overwhelmed by the amount of choice - you may discover occupations that you never knew existed.

Some of the choices may appeal to you while others may not. Make a short-list of three or four and do some research so that you can make the right choice for you.

## Do some research

There are a number of things that you can do to enhance your knowledge and understanding of your preferred occupations:

- # Find out what experience and qualifications are required,
- # Find out what employers have these jobs and research the working conditions and organisational culture,
- # Speak to industry associations and individuals already working in these occupations,
- # Undertake some work experience,
- # Consider the labour market outlook for the occupations and the industries in which they exist.

Keep in mind, the amount of training required and whether you are willing to make the commitment. Not all occupations require a University degree and,

quite frankly, not everyone is cut out for University study. There are other options available:

- # Apprenticeship,
- # TAFE,
- # On-the-job training.

The important thing to remember is to choose your training course based upon your end goal. There is no point wasting years of your life and many thousands of dollars on the wrong course.

## Make a decision

After all of your research you will hopefully come to the conclusion that career X is the one for you. Be passionate about it and make it happen!

## Make a plan

To turn your ambition into reality, you need to make a plan of how you are going to do it.

Your plan will need to include the following elements:

- # The things that you need to do,
- # How you will do them,
- # When you intend to complete each step,
- # How you will measure your achievements.

Your career plan may change over time as you refine your needs. It will help guide your activities and choices and serve as a useful tool for evaluation of your progress.

## Take Action

The planning process is a waste of time if you don't take ACTION!!!

Tony Grima  
Careers For Me

