

## Career Planning Guide

An average person may change careers (not just jobs) up to 12 times in their lifetime. Research shows that people who manage their careers tend to be able to better weather job transitions and express a greater satisfaction with their work and personal lives.

**Use this career planning model to help you manage your career.**

- You can start at any point on this model.
- You may be working on several areas simultaneously.
- Periodically review and update your career and personal goals.
- If you are new to career management, follow the steps in order to ensure you're effectively addressing each area.



## Manage Your Career

The center of this career planning model is career management. Career management involves a “can do” attitude. It also involves a commitment to lifelong learning and skill evaluation. Career management also requires the ability to flow with the ever-changing world of work. You, not your employer, are in charge of your career and your life. Your work life will be full of opportunities to re-evaluate your goals, learn new skills, advance in your chosen career, and make choices about your personal life.

**Here are some resources to help you manage your career.**

### **Manage your Finances.**

Start with a financial Reality Check to see what kind of lifestyle you want and can afford. [www.iseek.org/careers/realitycheck.html](http://www.iseek.org/careers/realitycheck.html) Explore budgeting and financial management tools to help you plan your financial future. [www.finra.org/Investors/ToolsCalculators/](http://www.finra.org/Investors/ToolsCalculators/)

### **Succeed in the Workplace.**

Learn tips and succeed in a new job and advance in your career. [www.iseek.org/jobs/succeed.html](http://www.iseek.org/jobs/succeed.html)

### **Stay Current.**

Professionals, whether in a business, trade, non-profit or government agency, need to continually evaluate and upgrade their skills and experience. Find ways to meet professional mentors and peers and keep current in your chosen career or industry. <http://iseekinteractive.org/blog/?p=1724>. Use social networking to help you boost your career. [www.iseek.org/industry/manufacturing/jobs/social-networking.html](http://www.iseek.org/industry/manufacturing/jobs/social-networking.html)

### **Balance your Work and Life.**

Personal commitments and technology can blur the boundaries between work and personal lives. You may need to find ways to regain balance. [www.mayoclinic.com/health/work-life-balance/WL00056](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/work-life-balance/WL00056). Part of this balancing act is managing every day stress. [http://helpguide.org/mental/stress\\_management\\_relief\\_coping.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/stress_management_relief_coping.htm)

### **Deal with Job Transitions.**

No one is guaranteed a job. You may experience job loss through no fault of your own. Learn about some resources to help you transition to your next job. [www.iseek.org/jobs/jobloss.html](http://www.iseek.org/jobs/jobloss.html)

### **Get Help.**

You may experience personal or professional situations that feel overwhelming and may seem out of your control. There are public support services to help you manage childcare, healthcare, transportation, job search, and other needs. [www.iseek.org/jobs/publicservices.html](http://www.iseek.org/jobs/publicservices.html)

## Step 1: Assess Yourself

You should know what skills, interests, and work values you bring to the workplace. Then, explore occupations that match who you are.

### Skills:

*If you're new to the workplace:* Learn about your basic work-related skills using the ISEEK Skills Assessment. See which occupations match the skills that are important to you.

[www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment](http://www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment)

*If you're an experienced worker:* Career changers can use the JobSTAT tool to see how the skills you used on your most recent job match the skills needed for other careers.

[www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/ota/OccupationSelectA.aspx](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/ota/OccupationSelectA.aspx)

Your Top 10 Skills:	5-10 Occupations that Match Your Skills:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

### Interests:

Discover how your interests relate to occupations.

[www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/interestAssessment.cfm](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/interestAssessment.cfm)

Your Top 2 or 3 Interest Areas:	5-10 Occupations that Match Your Interests:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
	4.
	5.
	6.
	7.
	8.
	9.
	10.

**Work Values:**

Identify occupations that you may find satisfying by matching your work values to careers.

[www.onetcenter.org/WIL.html](http://www.onetcenter.org/WIL.html) or [www.myplan.com/assess/values.php](http://www.myplan.com/assess/values.php)

<b>Your Top 2-3 Work Values:</b> 1. 2. 3.	<b>5-10 Occupations that Match Your Values:</b> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
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**Combined Assessment Results:**

Look at the occupations you listed above under skills, interests, and work values. List the occupations that show up on two or three of your assessment lists.

<b>Your Top 5-10 Occupations that Match Your Skills, Interests and Work Values:</b> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
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## Step 2: Explore Careers

Once you have a good sense about what you bring to the workforce, explore careers and education that match. Start with the careers you identified in your personal assessments in Step 1. Evaluate the careers that seem to best fit you. Potential employers look more favorably upon candidates who are targeted in their chosen occupation and industry.

### Learn about Careers.

- Find out about careers and industries.  
[www.iseek.org/careers/careersSearch](http://www.iseek.org/careers/careersSearch).
- Learn about “What You Can Do with a Major in...”  
[www.ashland.edu/services/cardev/cdm-major.html](http://www.ashland.edu/services/cardev/cdm-major.html)
- Look at Minnesota's new and emerging career fields.  
[www.iseek.org/careers/emerging.html](http://www.iseek.org/careers/emerging.html)
- Consider other work options such as military, self-employment, and non-traditional jobs.  
[www.iseek.org/careers/uniquepaths.html](http://www.iseek.org/careers/uniquepaths.html)
- Talk to people who are employed in some of your top occupations.  
[www.iseek.org/jobs/infointerviews.html](http://www.iseek.org/jobs/infointerviews.html)

My Top Careers	Overview of Career	Education/Training Needed (e.g., degree, certification, license, apprenticeship)	Wage Ranges & Job Outlook	Worth Considering? Why?

My Target Occupation(s) and Industry: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3: Create a Plan and Set Goals

People who set and achieve goals tend to accomplish more and often have higher wages than peers who don't set goals. The effectiveness of goal setting is documented by research. For example, a university researcher found that people were more effective if they shared their goals with a friend, were committed to goal-setting, and wrote down their goals. [www.dominican.edu/dominicannews/study-backs-up-strategies-for-achieving-goals.html](http://www.dominican.edu/dominicannews/study-backs-up-strategies-for-achieving-goals.html)

You can be more effective in managing your career by creating a career plan and setting goals. Write out your long-term career goal and the short-term activities that will help you achieve it. [www.iseek.org/careers/careergoals.html](http://www.iseek.org/careers/careergoals.html)

#### My Plan and Goals

My Long-Term Career, Education, or Personal Goal is: \_\_\_\_\_

Short-Term Activities to Reach My Goal:

I will do this short-term activity:	By this time or date:	Using these helpful resources:	Measuring my success by:	Rewarding my success by:

I will re-evaluate my Plan and Goals by this date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 4: Expand Skills

In order to get into a new career or advance in your current field, make sure you have the skills, experience, and credentials that employers desire. Most occupations that pay a living wage require a degree. If you already have a college degree, expand your skills with further training.

- **Go to School.**  
Learn about the real benefits of getting degrees and training.  
[www.iseek.org/iseek/static/Pay\\_By\\_Education\\_Level.pdf](http://www.iseek.org/iseek/static/Pay_By_Education_Level.pdf)
- **Pay for School.**  
Find tips on how to get started, tools for organizing your finances, and descriptions of the many ways to pay for college or vocational training. [www.iseek.org/education/pay.html](http://www.iseek.org/education/pay.html)

### Find Programs and Schools.

Explore colleges, fields of study (majors), programs, courses, short-term training, and online learning.  
[www.iseek.org/education/educationSearch](http://www.iseek.org/education/educationSearch)

My Top Careers	Type of Training (degree, certification, license, apprenticeship)	School	Length of Training	Requirements/ Costs

### Evaluate Your Training Options.

Thinking about your education and training options will help you plan for your top careers.

My Top Careers	Type of Education or Training	Pros	Cons	Worth Considering?

### Remember your Career While You Are in School.

Consider these activities to jump-start your career before you graduate from school.

[www.iseek.org/careers/studentcareers.html](http://www.iseek.org/careers/studentcareers.html)

	Visit College Career Center	School Groups	School Projects	Gain Experience (internship, volunteer, part-time job)	Other Activities
Date(s) of Activity					
How activity helps me					

## Step 5: Find a Job

In today's economy, successful job seekers are organized and targeted in their job search activities. Use the list below for job search strategies that will connect you with employers.

**My targeted occupation(s), industry, or employers:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>1</b>	<b>Get job search help.</b>	Go to your college career center or local WorkForce Center and ask about free workshops, webinars, or other job search resources. <a href="http://www.iseek.org/careers/mnworks.html">www.iseek.org/careers/mnworks.html</a>
<b>2</b>	<b>Understand job search strategies.</b> * How Employers Hire * Importance of Networking * Schedule Interviews (e.g., cold calling) * Learn about Job Seeking Activities.	<b>How Employers Hire:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/employershire.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/employershire.html</a> <b>Hidden Job Market:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/hiddenjobmarket.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/hiddenjobmarket.html</a> <b>Form a Network:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/network.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/network.html</a> <b>Schedule Interviews:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewschedule.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewschedule.html</a> <b>Job Seeking Activities:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/jobchecklist.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/jobchecklist.html</a>
<b>3</b>	<b>Showcase your achievements using a portfolio.</b>	<b>e-Folio:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/efolio.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/efolio.html</a>
<b>4</b>	<b>Create a resume.</b> * Types of Resumes * List Skills on your Resume	<b>Resume:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/resumes.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/resumes.html</a> <b>List Skills:</b> Use your skill assessment results and required skills from your occupational research.
<b>5</b>	<b>Understand job applications.</b>	<b>Applications:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/jobapplications.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/jobapplications.html</a>
<b>6</b>	<b>Create cover letters and a list of references.</b>	<b>Cover Letters:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/coverletters.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/coverletters.html</a> <b>References:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/references.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/references.html</a>
<b>7</b>	<b>Find job leads and apply.</b> * Find Potential Employers * Places to Find Job Leads * Respond to Job Ads	<b>Research Employers:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/employers.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/employers.html</a> <b>Job Websites:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/websites.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/websites.html</a> <b>Minnesota Works:</b> <a href="http://www.minnesotaworks.net/">www.minnesotaworks.net/</a> <b>Job Ads:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/adtips.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/adtips.html</a>
<b>8</b>	<b>Consider employment and temporary agencies.</b>	<b>Find Agencies:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/tempagencies.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/tempagencies.html</a>
<b>9</b>	<b>Prepare for interviews.</b> * Discuss your Skills * Understand Employers Needs * Prepare for Common Interview Questions	<b>Skills Assessment:</b> Use your skill assessment results and required skills from your occupational research. <b>Interview Tips:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewtips.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewtips.html</a> <b>Common Interview Questions:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewquestions.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewquestions.html</a>
<b>10</b>	<b>Follow up after interviews.</b> * Sample Thank You letters * Negotiate Salary and Benefits	<b>Interview Follow-up:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewfollowup.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/interviewfollowup.html</a> <b>Negotiating Offers:</b> <a href="http://www.iseek.org/jobs/negotiation.html">www.iseek.org/jobs/negotiation.html</a>