



CAREER MANAGEMENT GUIDE

In the current career environment, individuals with alternatives obtain more challenging and growth-oriented opportunities. Individuals with alternatives need not accept consequences, rather they create opportunities for themselves.

SECTION 1: CAREERS TODAY

Part 1 - The Environment, Career Issues and Trends

The Importance of Education and Experience

In the current economic environment, education is becoming increasingly critical to career success. While employment rose for Canadians with university and college educations, 651,000 fewer jobs existed for those people without high school qualifications. Unemployment rates in the U.S. exceed 10% for those with less than a high school diploma and approximately 2.5% for college graduates.¹ When professional designations (i.e., accounting, engineering) are taken into account, the data on employability and income is skewed in favour of the professional, relative to those who possess only a post secondary educational background. However, in order to maintain a competitive edge, individuals must continue to invest in their development throughout their careers.

Specifically, with respect to the future for business and accounting positions, "growth due to the increasing number and complexity of business operations will be offset somewhat by corporate restructuring and downsizing of management, resulting in average growth for executive, administrative and managerial occupations.

Because these workers are employed throughout the economy, differences in rate of expansion for individual industries will produce varying rates of employment change — job seekers with previous work experience, specialized training, or graduate study have an advantage in competition for jobs."² Consequently, a combination of education and experience figure prominently in an individual's ability to compete.

Until recently, education preceded practical experience. Now, the popularity of concurrent completion of education and practical experience is growing. For example, universities offer programs which combine education with practical experience and many organizations are recognizing the importance of formal training. The CMA program is an example of formal training, combined with practical experience. Considering the importance of education in an individual's ability to compete in the job market, lifelong learning is critical.

Analyzing and Adapting to the Shifts in the Job Environment

In addition to a base of education and experience, effective career management requires an analysis of changes in the job environment and an ability to adapt to meet the changing needs of organizations.

Given the organizational changes that have occurred in recent years (downsizing, delaying, decentralization, reorganization, cost-reduction, IT innovation, competency measurement, and performance related measurement), and their potential negative psychological impacts (anxiety, lowered self-esteem, competitive behaviours, frustration, stress, lowered self-efficacy, and low trust behaviours), a positive framework is required for approaching the future.

Nicholson offers a positive alternative for career management based on: teamwork; the development of competencies; payment based on outputs; a contract of employability and flexibility; and a move to self-managed careers.³

Following Nicholson's framework minimizes the psychological impacts noted above.

Four fundamental trends must be understood in order for CMAs to effectively manage their careers: job markets are becoming external to organizations; technical excellence is no longer sufficient; a new contract exists between employer and employee; and "safety" comes from risk taking. Change is now constant, necessitating life long learning.

1. External Job Markets

As organizations become leaner and place greater reliance on semi-permanent alliances, the importance of "local" knowledge (the particular ways in which any individual organization works) diminishes. Diversity of experience substitutes for depth within one particular organization. Organizations compete by obtaining the best expertise for a limited period rather than the most loyal follower for their entire career. CMAs cannot limit their understanding to the particular intricacies of any one organization. Mergers or alliance shifts may require new approaches to control systems; or new technologies may supersede and/or devalue the knowledge of prior systems. As organizational hierarchies flatten, career movement will be lateral, between functions, between steps and stages in processes, and between organizations. These trends necessitate a focus on external job markets by management accountants.

2. Technical Expertise Becomes Outdated Quicker and Quicker

Technical expertise, once acquired, becomes obsolete with increasing rapidity. For example, automated data handling tools and processes can substitute software for people. Control procedures are increasingly automated.

Accordingly new technical competencies are required in the areas of organizational structure and design and strategic planning. Personal competencies must now encompass both interpersonal and self-management skills as well as problem-solving and synthesizing skills. Individuals must move beyond a narrowly defined view of traditional technical expertise, and embrace those areas required by the emerging competitive environment.

3. The Portfolio Contract Replaces the "Job" Contract

Projects, tasks and contracts are replacing the traditionally defined "job". Individuals must understand that although they can lose their jobs, they do not lose their skills or competencies. Historically, the "job" contract was based on the description, position and salary. Loyalty was rewarded with tenure. The new contract is based on value added in the services performed. It is the application of a portfolio of skills to the requirements of a portfolio of clients.

4. Safety Comes From Risk Taking

Individuals must move from a traditional control orientation to one that values calculated risk taking. Risk taking forces individuals to push themselves beyond comfortable boundaries into new learning experiences. Learning through repeated attempts and failures prior to success will allow individuals to adapt as the environment demands.

The future remains uncertain but interpretable patterns do emerge. Effective career management requires an individual to decipher the emerging patterns, and adapt their thinking, attitudes, skills, abilities, and behaviour in response.

Trends in Organizational Forms

In addition to the environmental trends outlined above, individual's require an understanding of specific organizational trends.

One significant organization trend is that of the new organizational forms. Job markets shift in terms of industry and demand for different services, but organizations are also simultaneously transforming in new structures. Classical organization forms are being replaced by temporary alliances and network organizations. Organizations are under competitive pressures to focus on the activities they do best and to outsource the remainder. Supplier partnerships allow organizations to focus on those tasks where they have competitive advantage. In order to remain competitive, management accountants must understand the strengths and weaknesses of these new structural forms, develop needed competencies and personal strengths, and be prepared to facilitate their use, where appropriate.

Table 1-1 outlines 5 pure organizational structures identified by Allred, Snow and Miles.⁴

Two additional structures which have gained popularity recently are the *process centred* and *horizontal structures*. These structures represent the logical extension of divisional and matrix forms. The career path related to them is across and through process integration. They require technical, commercial and collaborative competencies, and career planning responsibility rests with both the individual and the firm.

In *network organizations*, various organizational functions (R&D, marketing, production, distribution) are conducted by several different organizational entities rather than one large organization.

The adoption of this form requires much higher levels of collaborative and negotiation skills.

Cellular organizations are composed of independent specialists who cooperate to create collaborative ventures.

Professional and knowledge allegiances become the basis of competencies and accomplishment. These cells act independently. Accordingly, the issue of self-governance becomes the critical new competency.

Table 1-1: Organizational Forms and Careers

Organization Structure	Career Path	Key Competencies	Responsibility for Career Planning
Functional	Single firm, within function	Technical	Functional Department
Divisional	Single firm, across divisions	Technical, commercial	Division, firm
Matrix	Single firm, across projects	Technical, commercial, interpersonal	Department, project, firm
Network	Within and across firms	Technical, commercial and collaborative	Firm and individual
Cellular	Independent professional	Technical, commercial, collaborative and self-governance	Individual

Part 2 – Career Decision Making

“Oh, no! I just realized I let a 20-year-old choose my ... career!”⁵

The above quote from a 42-year-old captures the essence of career decision making.

First, at ages 16, 22 and 25, individuals make decisions which set the patterns for their lives, determine the paths they will take, and create the psychological structures they will use to provide meaning and purpose. Those choices are made with the knowledge, values and beliefs held at that point in time. Typically with age comes additional wisdom and perspective. Therefore, the choices made at ages 16, 22, and 25 are made without benefit of information and experience gained later in life.

Second, an individual's choices are their **own** choices. Decision making may be delayed or decided by luck, circumstance or another individual. However, in reality, individuals also accept or make those decisions. Decisions may be made intuitively, impulsively or planfully but nonetheless are our own.

Successfully managing your career will also ultimately be your responsibility. Career management requires choices among career paths and lifestyle issues.

In accepting responsibility for career management, individuals must consider three areas: career anchors, career successes and true desires. Each of these areas is discussed below.

Career Anchors

Through studies of managers, Ed Schein identified eight patterns which anchored careers: autonomy/independence, security/stability, technical/functional competence, general managerial competence, entrepreneurial creativity, service to a cause, pure challenge, and life style.⁶ The meaning of each of these anchors is contained in Table 1-2. The relative importance of each of these anchors to an individual will determine the career choices that they make. For example, individuals anchored by autonomy/ independence would resist joining a traditional organization and be more likely to become independent professionals or entrepreneurs, or to join an organization that offers them high levels of autonomy. Alternatively, individuals anchored by technical/functional competence desire to improve their craft, and are attracted to roles that allow them to emphasize the technical side of their work.

The most important function of career anchors in career management is the recognition that straying from the anchors will usually result in unhappiness. Focus on the intrinsic components of a career rather than the extrinsic characteristics (salary, status).

Career anchors must also be considered in relation to the current environmental trends discussed in Part 1. Some anchors are better adapted to the emerging career opportunities than others. Consequently, risk taking is often required. For example, those with strong security/stability anchors find current environmental trends towards the portfolio career disquieting whereas those with strong lifestyle and autonomy/independence anchors will find more opportunities are consistent with their needs. However, in today's environment, security comes from risk taking.

Many individuals have a technical/functional anchor. These individuals may become the independent professionals who contract their expertise to other organizations. The risk is that the expertise will become obsolete.

Consequently, the importance of continual lifelong learning is underscored. Individuals with autonomy/independence anchors will find their anchors congruent with current environmental trends.

Gaining an understanding of our anchors is critical to understanding ourselves and assessing our opportunities in the current environment. A career anchor self-assessment instrument is included in Appendix A.

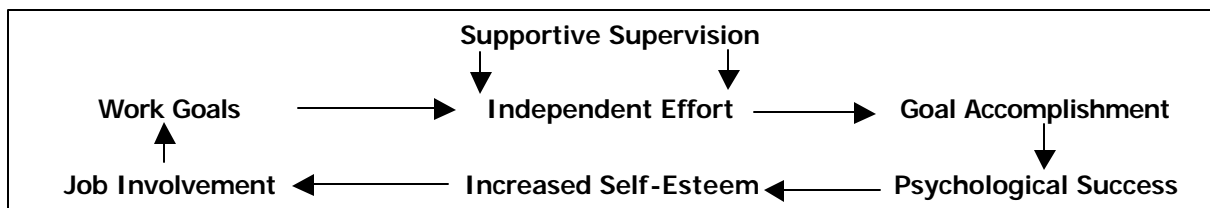
Table 1-2: Career Anchors

Anchor	Description
Autonomy/Independence	Desires work situations that provide maximum freedom to independently pursue career interests.
Entrepreneurial Creativity	Motivated by the desire to create and develop new products and services
General Management Competence	Motivated by the opportunity to develop and use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to climb to general management levels.
Job Security	Concerned with long-run stability and security of employment and benefits.
Life Style	Wants to integrate personal, family and career needs and to maintain flexibility.
Pure Challenge	Motivated by the desire to overcome the odds, solve unsolved problems, and win out over competitors.
Service-Dedication	Wants to use interpersonal and helping skills in the service of others.
Technical/Functional	Intrinsically motivated by the work itself, its technical aspects, and the desire for enhanced technical competence and credibility.

Career Success Cycle

Effective career management requires the realization of success, no matter how small. Accordingly, the creation of a “career success cycle” (Figure 1-1) is a central facet of successful career planning as “nothing succeeds like success”.⁷ Risks and mistakes should not be avoided to the extent of formulating easily attainable goals. Rather, the cycle illustrates the importance of supportive superiors and mentors and safe environments which enable the attainment of challenging goals and allow individuals to learn from mistakes early in their careers. Support and intervention make it easier for individuals to take risks, learn from their actions, be sheltered from the negative connotations of failure, and receive recognition from others for successes.

Figure 1-1: The Career Success Cycle



The “career success cycle” involves setting goals, exerting effort, attaining goals, and feeling successful. Successful feelings build self-esteem and lead to the formulation of more challenging goals. The cycle is repeated. If success is not achieved a negative cycle of psychological failure is created, resulting in loss of self-esteem. Career setbacks are expected. However, the negative effect of a career setback on self-esteem may be greater than the damage to the career itself.

The patterns of success and self-esteem differ between individuals, depending on the stage in their life cycle and the nature of their goals. Early in a career, the establishment of success patterns is crucial. Consequently, individuals must carefully consider their definition of success and to differentiate it from society’s definition and what they are capable of achieving.

Nathaniel Brandon, the originator of the self-esteem movement outlines six pillars of self-esteem.

Self-acceptance - to own, experience and take responsibility for our thoughts and actions without evasion.

Allow ourselves to think our thoughts, experience our emotions and reflect on our actions without necessarily liking, endorsing, or condoning them.

Practice self-responsibility - seek to discover what is to be done, not to blame.

Practice self-assertiveness - to stand up for ourselves and our desires in ways appropriate to the situation.

Live purposely - to be conscious of our goals and purposes and recognize the actions needed to achieve these goals.

Practice personal integrity - living congruently enacting our beliefs in what we do.⁸

An individual's ability to develop self-esteem originates from an ability to act congruently with their underlying persona, desires and needs. Success in the pursuit of false goals will not create the career success cycle outlined above.

Finally, note that past success can become a significant barrier to future learning if an individual becomes captive of their past approaches and strategies. Environmental and personal stresses must be approached with a commitment to questioning, learning and continued development, rather than an unconscious commitment to simply employing techniques that worked in the past.

Career Desires

Each individual needs an **attack of heart**, a need to follow inner desires which capture what they truly want to do. Activities which are devoid of meaning and fulfillment are not worth pursuing in a career.

Material items are not irrelevant in career decisions, as they contribute to comfortable lives. However, the pursuit of wealth to the exclusion of all else is a hollow race.

Overall, individuals must embrace challenging goals, work hard, and strive for success, while ensuring that they have thought carefully about their definition of success. Meaning and fulfillment underpin successful careers and lives, not the material items and status symbols accumulated. Individuals should pursue goals they consider important, satisfying, and fulfilling.

Career Self-Management

You are 100 percent responsible for your own happiness.

Other people aren't responsible. Your parents aren't responsible. Your spouse isn't. You alone are. So if you are not happy, it's up to you to change something. It's not up to someone else to "fix it" for you.

Dr. Gerald D. Bell,
Kenan-Flager Graduate School of Business, University of North Carolina

Many people believe they are self-managing their careers, yet they have no goals, make no plans and seek no feedback. Instead they rely on others and attempt to dodge personal responsibility.

Even those who take charge can fool themselves. Butler and Waldrop describe 4 forces that can cause individuals to lose their way while self-managing careers.⁹ First, many lose their way by listening to the Sirens' songs of wealth or power, material possessions, the expectations of others, and other distractions. For example, they accept a promotion into a job they dislike, losing sight of what is truly important.

Fear and discomfort typify the second force that can cause individuals to lose their way. Whereas the Sirens' songs draw one towards goals that are wrong for them, fears and discomforts push one away

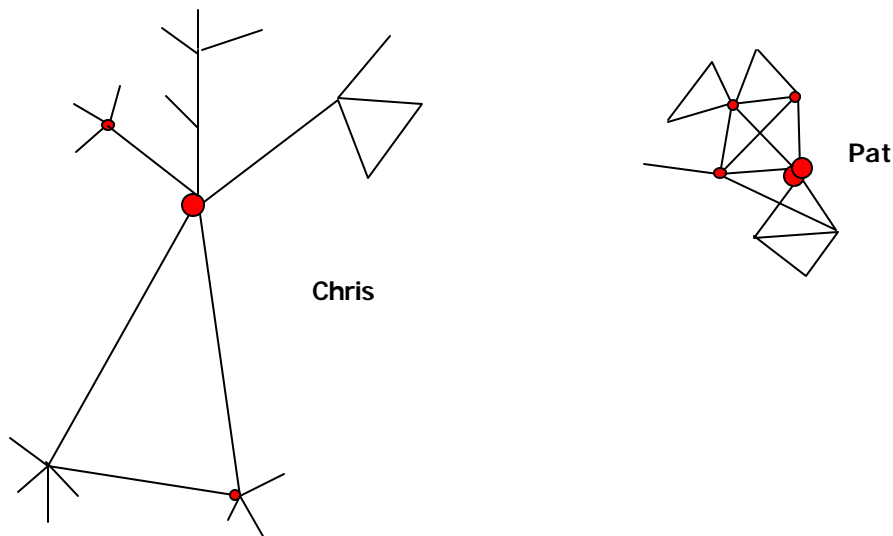
from things that are right for them. Fear of failure and/or success, losing success, and being disliked are a few of the immobilization fears.

The third and fourth forces are lack of knowledge concerning the world and lack of self-knowledge respectively. Lack of knowledge concerning the world relates to the lack of full information concerning what is possible, and what options to consider. Lack of self-knowledge leads to decision making without due regard for competence, interests, needs, and potential.

Each of these four forces can be managed, beginning with self-assessment, introspection and a heightened awareness of the world, how it is unfolding, and the options, opportunities, and pitfalls it contains. From this base of heightened knowledge about oneself and the world, individuals are better able to recognize fears and Sirens' songs.

Provided an individual possesses the proper attitude towards career self-management, the next steps are to determine where opportunities lie, increase capacities, and ensure that opportunities are aware of them. Detailed steps are outlined below:

1. Ensure that you are learning. Be concerned if you feel you have the solutions to all problems you face in your job. This indicates a shift from building intellectual capital to consuming it.
2. Undertake career planning now. Do not wait for another individual to tell you what is needed. Determine what would add value, check your assessment with others, keep your supervisor informed so they are not threatened, and begin implementing.
3. Vary your routine and enrich your sources of information by talking or meeting with different people. Even simply changing your lunch partners can bring new perspective and information.
4. Volunteer for on-the-job assignments where you know little and can, therefore, learn a great deal.
5. Consider your networks. For example, the following two network patterns contain the same number of primary contacts. But Chris has a much broader network of information and influence.¹⁰



Part 3 – The Portfolio Career

The traditional view of what constitutes a job and career is no longer valid. Jobs and careers will look significantly different for new entrants to the job market than for entrants of the baby-boom years who now occupy organizational arteries.

Viewing oneself as having a “job” is a potentially dangerous frame of mind. People lose jobs. People fail to get the job they wish, or their job is outsourced or transferred to a different location. An individual who defines themselves by referring to their job are at risk of being trapped by their view of the world.

Consider the potential impact on self-esteem and self-worth if your position is eliminated as a result of technological advancement.

The traditional view of careers is equally risky. The assumptions an individual makes concerning careers can trap them into ways of thinking and action that are not in their best interest. Consider the following common metaphors:¹¹

Career Metaphor	Implication
Climbing a ladder	Up is the only thing worthwhile.
Game plan	It's a chess match; should I sacrifice this bishop now for future gains?
Paths	Well trodden, clear routes.
Pyramid	Like the ladder, up is achievement, anything else is devalued.
Rat race	Dog eat dog. It's a Darwinian world.
Minefield	Watch where you step, you might get injured
Timetable	Are you falling “behind” (whatever that means?)
Tournament	Single knock-out? If I get beaten for this promotion, is my career over?

Each of these images of career will both serve and limit. If you are competing for a promotion, then a tournament image may be helpful. However, on a cooperative project team, acting in a tournament fashion would be counter-productive. Similarly, a sense of timetable is important if you intend on progressing to the position as president of a multinational. But, if you wish to become a leading expert in a particular area, a timetable loses much of its meaning as it is difficult to define the point at which one becomes the most knowledgeable person in the world and how to chart that progress.

One of the most common images still held today is that of a career as a ladder or pyramid, symbolizing career progress. In the new job environment, this pattern no longer holds as the traditional assumptions concerning careers are invalid.

The ladder may have missing rungs (downsizing), fewer rungs (flattening of hierarchies), parts in another organization (contracting out or strategic alliances), or blockages (demographics of the baby boomers). Consequently, the metaphor becomes increasingly blurred.

As Fisher describes, “In the new game, people float from project to project, from team to team. Job definitions become blurred, titles become almost meaningless. What matters is what you know, how well you apply it to the business and how much you get paid.”¹²

But the metaphor persists. Fisher herself argues for a new model but proceeds to outline the “6 Ways to Rise” in today's organizations.

Individuals must adopt a new way of viewing their jobs and careers if they wish to remain competitive in the new environment. As an alternative, consider the **portfolio career**, a view that one possesses a portfolio of skills offered to a portfolio of organizational clients. The concept was first introduced by

Handy in his book, *The Age of Unreason*. The portfolio view allows an alternative way of framing the relationships between work, organizations, payment and value for an individual. And it provides a new set of assumptions to help people cope with the uncertainty of the job market.

Webster's dictionary defines a portfolio as: "a list of stocks, bonds and commercial paper owned by a bank or investor", suggesting that a portfolio is a collection of items of value, held for the purpose of increasing that value.

In a portfolio career, individuals possess a portfolio of skills which they market to a portfolio of clients. Like the financial portfolio, the purpose of the portfolio is to manage risk. The financial portfolio handles risk by using various financial instruments with differing risks for differing parts of the economic cycle. The career portfolio minimizes risks by having skill sets which can produce a variety of value added activities. If one skill is not in demand, another may be. Further, risk is minimized because the individual deals with several clients. If the relationship with one client ends, the impact is minimized as the dependence on one client is eliminated. Paradoxically, job security is attained through detachment and diversification, rather than loyalty and commitment.

The concept of the portfolio career also provides an alternative way of viewing work relationships. Restructuring of work into projects and clients provides much more flexibility to the individual and to the organization, with the possibility of mutual gain. For example, individuals can earn their way into contracts requiring ever-increasing skills, while organizations are afforded skilled work done by individuals who have demonstrated their competence. Although long-term relationships may develop, they do so without long-term commitments traditionally associated with organizationally housed careers.

The concept of the portfolio career applies equally to those in consulting roles as in traditional employment. One's skills, experience, client contacts and referrals are not tied to one's job. However, as with a financial portfolio, a career portfolio must be constantly monitored to ensure it contains the appropriate skills and clients.

The following discussions relate to managing both skills and client risk within a portfolio.

Skills Risk

In a portfolio career, an individual's value to an organization is based on their skill set and results produced. The collection of skills is portable and the individual assesses when and where to apply the various skills. The risk of skills obsolescence is managed by acquiring proficiency in a variety of skills and continually developing new skills.

A skill set has a life cycle which parallels the product life cycle of consumer goods:

A developing skill is one that the individual has decided is worth developing. In the development stage, the individual is not yet confident in their proficiency and can only market the skill on a results basis, i.e., payment for results - not for time or effort.

A mature skill is one that is fully developed and may be sold to clients based upon the demonstrated capacity of the individual to use the skill set to deliver desired outputs.

A post-maturity skill is one that is either no longer in as great demand by clients or is subsumed within more complex skill sets possessed by the individual. Over time, skills in this category decline in value to either organizations or the individual.

To reduce skills risk, individuals must view themselves as holders and developers of skills. Skills have a life cycle of usefulness. The process of development, maturity and decay is essential for the renewal of the individual's skill set and the management of risk.

The concept of the portfolio career is congruent with Marshall McLuhan's saying "The future of work will consist of learning a living". Consequently, individuals must continually develop their skills. Handy reports how the Japanese ensure a wide experience base for their best managers:

The Japanese, when I asked them what they did with their most talented people: "don't you have a fast track?" I said. They said, "Yes, but it's horizontal. We move them around from experience to experience as quickly as we can, and because they're very good we can move them quicker. That allows us to test their talents in different situations, until they can discover what they're really good at — as well, of course, as getting a lot of experience."²¹

Knowing things is no longer sufficient. Due to the rate of knowledge growth and change, knowing how to access information increases in importance. Individuals must recognize the role of knowing how to learn. For example, there is a difference between knowing the management control procedures of your organization and understanding what you must learn in order to change those procedures in the future.

In summary, individuals must recognize that their value is in their skill sets that enable them to add value to their organizations. Accordingly, the most important long term developmental skill individuals need to possess is the skill of knowing how to learn.

Client Risk

The second risk that "portfolio careerists" must manage is client risk. As the career orientation shifts from "one company and one career" to "many jobs and contracts", risk is minimized by having a variety of clients in your portfolio. With "one company and one career", individuals are dependent on their skills remaining of value to their organization and that the environment will continue to be positive for that organization.

To minimize client risk, an individual must develop a group of clients appropriate to the skill repertoire they both currently possess and have plans to develop. These clients may be categorized as:

Money Clients. Money clients provide the funds required to pay the bills. Skills used for these clients are typically not particularly unique. Little learning takes place in performing work for money skill clients.

Learning Clients. Learning clients provide opportunities to develop new skills and concepts. These activities enable individuals to attain the skill sets they will market in the future. Generally, concrete or extrinsic rewards are not the focus. If payment is received, it is for results as the individual is learning and developing their skills as they work.

Niche Clients. Niche clients result from the matching of developed skills with a significant client need. With niche clients, individuals can market their skills at a premium price. Niche clients also allow you to develop your reputation and network for future work.

An alternate way of classifying clients and work is on the basis of amount of learning and amount of pay.

Figure 1-2 classifies high and low learning situations versus high and low pay situations. Individuals should strive to work in the cross-diagonal areas, i.e., areas of low pay and high learning (to develop new skill sets) and areas of high pay and low learning (to cash in on higher value skills). By maintaining an appropriate balance between these two cells, individuals enhance their long term value.

Figure 1-2: A Matrix of Client Attractiveness

High Learning	Attractive: Developing Intellectual Capital, Perhaps Some \$ Gain	Risky: May Not Be Able to Deliver the Goods
Low Learning	Avoid Unless Necessary: Using Older, Low Valued Skills	Attractive: Using Intellectual Capital for Gain
	Low Pay or \$ Rewards	High Pay or \$ Rewards

Areas of low pay and low learning should be avoided if possible as payoffs will be low, i.e., no pay and no learning. Areas of high pay and high learning appear attractive, but are risky due to the potential for performance failure. Clients may expect more than individuals can deliver since they are only in the learning phase.

In order to apply these concepts in a traditional employment situation, individuals must learn to view their employers differently. They must consider who they supply services to, what is being supplied, the value of the services, and the learning opportunities inherent in the assignment. However, the notion of billing clients does not apply as most traditional employment situations are not structured in this manner.

For example, some services (skills) provided to the employer will be of the “bread and butter” variety, while others will require enriched skill sets. Further, the recipients of your efforts will not always be the same person (clients). Some will require the “bread and butter” skills (money clients), while others will provide learning and niche opportunities (learning and niche clients). A given client can often offer more than one type of opportunity (i.e., both money and learning opportunity), and therefore crosses client categories. By viewing traditional employment situations in terms of clients and skills, individuals will be in a stronger position to assess their current situation and formulate meaningful development plans.

In the emerging work environment, increasing amounts of employment will lie in the learning and fee categories. Skilled, high demand portfolioists will bargain for premium rates — including payment for uncertainty. Learning or low-skilled portfolioists will earn less due to either market surpluses or their status as learners, and may find themselves with less interesting work if they fail to take advantage of development opportunities.

Implications of Portfolio Careers

The key to the portfolio career is to view oneself as a holder of skills necessary to service clients. Both the skills and the client base must be continually developed. Figure 1-3 outlines the basic strategies. The long run implications of the portfolio career are uncertain. While organizations have been quick to accept the benefits and inevitability of contracting out, temporary jobs, and part-time employees, the long run implications of these steps should be examined.

Further, organizations must handle the effects on collaborative effort of every individual working for themselves.

The implications of the power shift that is occurring in the knowledge society is another factor to consider. For the first time, the employees, the knowledge workers, own the tools of production. The tools of production become the knowledge held by the individual and the skills to implement that knowledge.

While the demand for generalists exists, it may be argued that contributions of knowledge workers are only accessible through the specialty skills held in their portfolios. These skills are best utilized through teams which know how to work together and tap into each other’s expertise.

The paired forces of globalization and information technology imply an increased likelihood that teams of people will be working together across great distances. Accordingly, another type of relationship

skill is required. Workers who excel in this new environment will be in great demand. Accordingly, organizations may reduce the risks associated with unemployment through longer, more frequent, or more interesting contracts, to attract creative and productive employees. Furthermore, if training and development is used to teach knowledge that is less firm specific, employees will recognize the value of these skills. Ironically, these changes may produce more committed workers and higher performance.

Figure 1-3: The Interaction of Skills and Clients

Broadening Your Skill Set	Finding markets for new skills - expanding the nature of work done and services provided to existing clients	Transformation of your work world - identifying unidentified needs and developing skills to service those needs
Using Your Skills Intensively	Filling in the white spaces - using existing skills to serve existing clients in new ways - filling gaps in existing services	Expanding the delivery base - using existing skills to earn money from new clients - broadening your client portfolio
	Working with Existing Clients	Expanding Your Client Base

PART 4 - COMPETENCIES

Your skills afford you numerous options and present many choices:

specialist	<i>versus</i>	generalist
technical	<i>versus</i>	managerial
depth	<i>versus</i>	breadth

In making choices concerning your career, it is important to recognize what is referred to as the “Rule of Three”. The rule of three holds that most people can do three things well but not four. When you factor other facets of your personal life into the equation with career choices, the impact of the rule of three becomes greater. One cannot attain technical proficiency in depth, broaden managerial skills, move up the hierarchy and balance work and personal life. One cannot seize all opportunities, join all projects, take courses, work on task forces, etc. The solution to simply work harder will not be effective in the long-run. In the long-run, eventually, we run out; out of time, out of energy, and out of credit with family or peers.

All individuals must make choices, whether through action or lack thereof. Failure to make a choice may be manifested in other personal issues or by the expiration of opportunities. The choice will be made. Taking an active role in the choice increases the chance that it will reflect your anchors and desires.

The following sections discuss the choices, beginning with technical skills and moving to broader managerial skills.

Technical Competencies

Traditionally, the field of accounting evolved into a number of sub-fields: compliance auditing, external financial reporting, insolvency, cost accounting, taxation, treasury and internal control. Each accountant was expected to have knowledge of the basics in each field and an in-depth specialty. Recently, the profession has begun to identify competency standards which provide benchmarks against which each accountant can measure themselves.

The technical competency areas identified for CMAs are detailed in Figure 1-4.

Figure 1-4: Technical Competency Areas for Management Accountants¹⁴

Competency Area	Description of Competency
Advanced Management Practices	To enable efficient and effective processes and systems aligned to strategies and goals.
Administrative Accountability and Control	To provide assurances of the quality and effectiveness of administrative processes; provide accountability reporting systems; analyze, interpret and report the organization's performance.
Organizational Structure and Design	To manage work; be a catalyst for change.
Strategic Planning and Decision Support	To assimilate intelligence for external sources; develop planning services; provide decision support systems.
Internal Control	To devise and propose appropriate organizational structures and systems.
Stakeholder Reporting	To present financial and other reports to external parties; provide systems for external accountability on public policy and regulatory issues; and manage governance relationships.
Treasury Management	To manage investment of funds awaiting strategic deployment; plan and execute programs to satisfy external capital needs in accordance with the strategic plan; devise programs to manage financial risk.
Tax Management	To establish principles to guide organizational conduct regarding tax matters; minimize tax expenditure.

These technical competency areas go beyond the traditional view of management accounting.

Within these 8 technical competencies, career planning will necessitate selection of a particular focus. For example, tax management requires in-depth study of taxation and continual update of knowledge to keep abreast of changes.

In becoming a specialist, CMAs can quickly provide sophisticated answers to complicated problems that organizations face. This ability increases the value of CMAs.

These competencies may be applied in three situational areas: leadership, management and operational. The situational areas relate closely to levels in an organizational hierarchy. Leadership provides the sense of direction and obtains resources, management provides the planning, organizing, and the operational area focuses on the "doing" of the task or the actual implementation.

Even with these definitions, many management accountants are beginning to describe the management accountant's role in ways that go beyond technical competency areas. For example, Rizzitello suggests the importance of non-traditional training for CFO's if they are to help their departments meet their ongoing commitments to:

- Provide and analyze non-financial information.
- Give business leaders early warnings and insights on developing business problems.
- Provide management solutions to business problems.
- Work with the companies, customers and suppliers to provide solutions to reduce process costs.
- Help purchasing teams negotiate supplier partnering agreements and proactively search for acquisition opportunities.¹⁵

These are very clearly value adding activities. But the list goes beyond technical expertise to generalists' skills.

Currently, organizations are under increasing pressure to reduce costs and increase efficiency. Technical experts who can assist in these initiatives will be invaluable.¹⁶

The risk associated with specialization is obsolescence. Specialty knowledge can become outdated if not continually revamped. Alternatively, the entire field of knowledge may be transformed by computerization. If the field remains relevant, then greater depth and understanding increases the value of that expertise. Effective career management requires identification of fields which are losing importance and focusing on new areas.

The Career Assessment Tool section of CMA Canada’s website allows the user to assess their technical expertise in each of the 8 competency areas through a series of behaviourally anchored scales.

Personal Competencies

To develop managerial skills, Rizzitello emphasizes the need to interact with internal and external customers, and to participate on cross functional teams. Management accountants can adopt a supporting role in the organization, but to do so, they must not only become the information experts within the firm but must also develop broader skill sets – personal competencies that enable them to work effectively with others.

Figure 1-5 outlines the new competencies in organizational understanding and interpersonal areas.

Figure 1-5: Personal Competencies for the Management Accountant

Competency	Description
Personal Skills	Self Management Skills
Interpersonal Skills	Communication and People Management Skills, including negotiation and mediation skills
Organizational Skills	Personal and Professional Productivity Skills, Priority Setting, Opportunity Finding, Change Management Skills
Analytic, Problem Structuring and Solving Skills	Problem Analysis and Reasoning, Logic and Developing Evidence
Judgment and Synthesis Skills	Identifying Key Elements in Complex Situations, Incorporating a wide variety of information into a coherent analysis

Competency Strategies

To be competitive in today’s job market you can adopt one of three career strategies.

Continue with current skills, but perform them more efficiently - The risk is that others will do similar things, thus lessening the value of your skills.

Reengineer your skills and continuously improve — Becoming “better” adds value to your skill set.

Develop new skills and competencies either in depth or breadth - Establishing distinction also adds value to your services.

Regardless of your skill choices, the skills must be translated into actions of value to the organization (clients).

To make choices one must reflect on who they are and where they are going. However, individuals are paid for results. Reflect, decide, act, learn, and refine. In this way your actions will become guideposts for the future.

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SECTION II: CAREER PLANNING IN ACTION

Career planning requires a familiarity with your likes/dislikes and skills and a matching of those with tasks that clients desire. Once you have established goals, a plan to achieve those goals is required.

This Section leads you through the career planning process via the following Parts:

1. Who Am I? — developing an understanding of yourself.
2. What Am I Good At? — evaluating your skill sets.
3. Who Are My Clients? — establishing a client base and assessing their needs.

The subsequent Sections III and IV focus on determining where to work, what to do and how to attain the desired position.

Although completion of the remaining sections will require a significant time investment, the task of career management is of critical importance. You are ultimately responsible for your own career.

Additional self-assessment exercises are included in Appendix A for those who wish to do extra exploration. These interesting and thought provoking exercises concern: (1) Career Anchors; (2) Personal Growth Needs; (3) Achievement, Power and Affiliation Needs; and (4) Learning Styles.

Part 1 — Who Am I?

Career plans are useful only if they reflect who you are. Although many people believe they have self-awareness, few have put this understanding into words, quantified it, assessed it in the face of experience, and learned from it. By consciously articulating your understanding of yourself, you will be better able to assess the fit between you, the career opportunity and the environment. Further, if your assessment proves inaccurate, you will be better able to consciously learn from the experience and refocus. Alternatively, if your assessment proves accurate, then your understanding of yourself will be validated and you will be better able to move into the future.

Share the results of your self-assessments with someone you are comfortable with and trust. Their feedback serves as an opportunity to extend your self-awareness, provided they tell you what you need to hear, not what you want to hear.

Developing self-awareness requires effort. This effort of introspection is the focus of all career planning. Complete the following exercises to set the stage for the career planning and assessment that follows.

A) History

The patterns of the past repeat themselves in our lives. It has been said that if we do not study history, we are destined to repeat it. Consequently, if we don't attempt to understand and learn from past patterns and events, we will remain mired in those patterns. Therefore, if we understand our past, we can gain insight into recurring themes in our professional and personal lives. These insights allow us to understand our career path. Table 3-1 identifies factors likely to influence our development and professional patterns.

Identifying hypothetical sources of influence is important. However, recognizing the underlying developmental themes that arise from your experience and critical events, requires a more sophisticated analysis. The following three assessment exercises allow you to reflect upon your experiences and unveil their explanatory power.

Table 2-1: Factors Influencing Career Choices & Professional Patterns

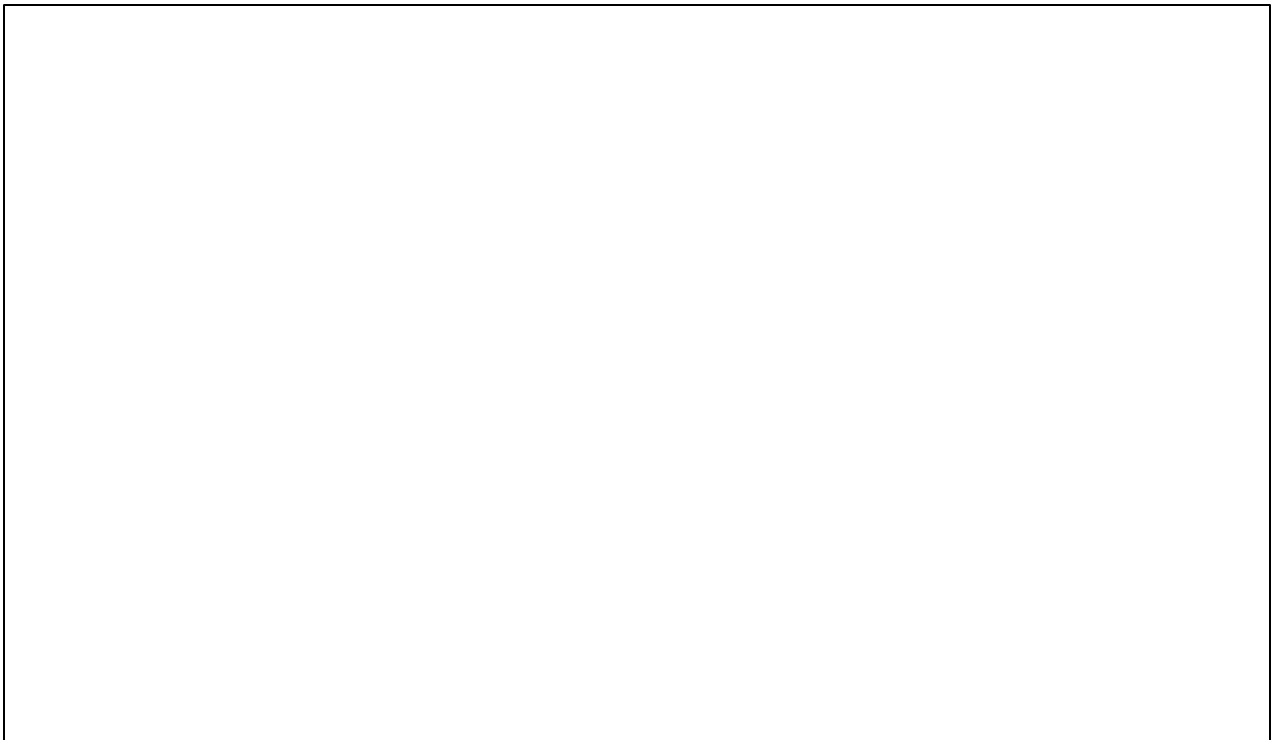
*	Parents' occupations and income levels
*	Other home and family-related factors (i.e., relatives, family size and stability, religious and ethnic background)
*	Friends and their families
*	Teachers and schools
*	Activities and involvement in clubs and groups outside of school
*	Volunteer, summer and part-time work, and other employment experiences
*	Mentors and role models
*	The media

Assessment Exercise 2-1: Road Map

In the space below, draw the road map of your life. Put a check mark where you are today and identify the incidents and events that have been most important in your development. Include the detours, side-tracks, hills and valleys, dead-ends, stops, stations, autobahns, and high-speed connections that have characterized your journey to date.

Consider the most influential people and critical incidents in shaping your identity, when you learned the most about yourself, what interests, themes, patterns and motivations have emerged and evolved over time. These help you to understand what gives you the greatest sense of meaning, fulfillment, and satisfaction.

Extend your road map into the future. Consider alternative scenarios and how the patterns and themes will repeat.

Personal Road Map

Assessment Exercise 2-2: Who Am I?

Answer the question 'Who Am I?' in the boxes provided. Number the boxes in order of importance. Consider the themes/patterns and motivations that link the responses and the indications of what gives you a sense of meaning, fulfillment, and satisfaction.

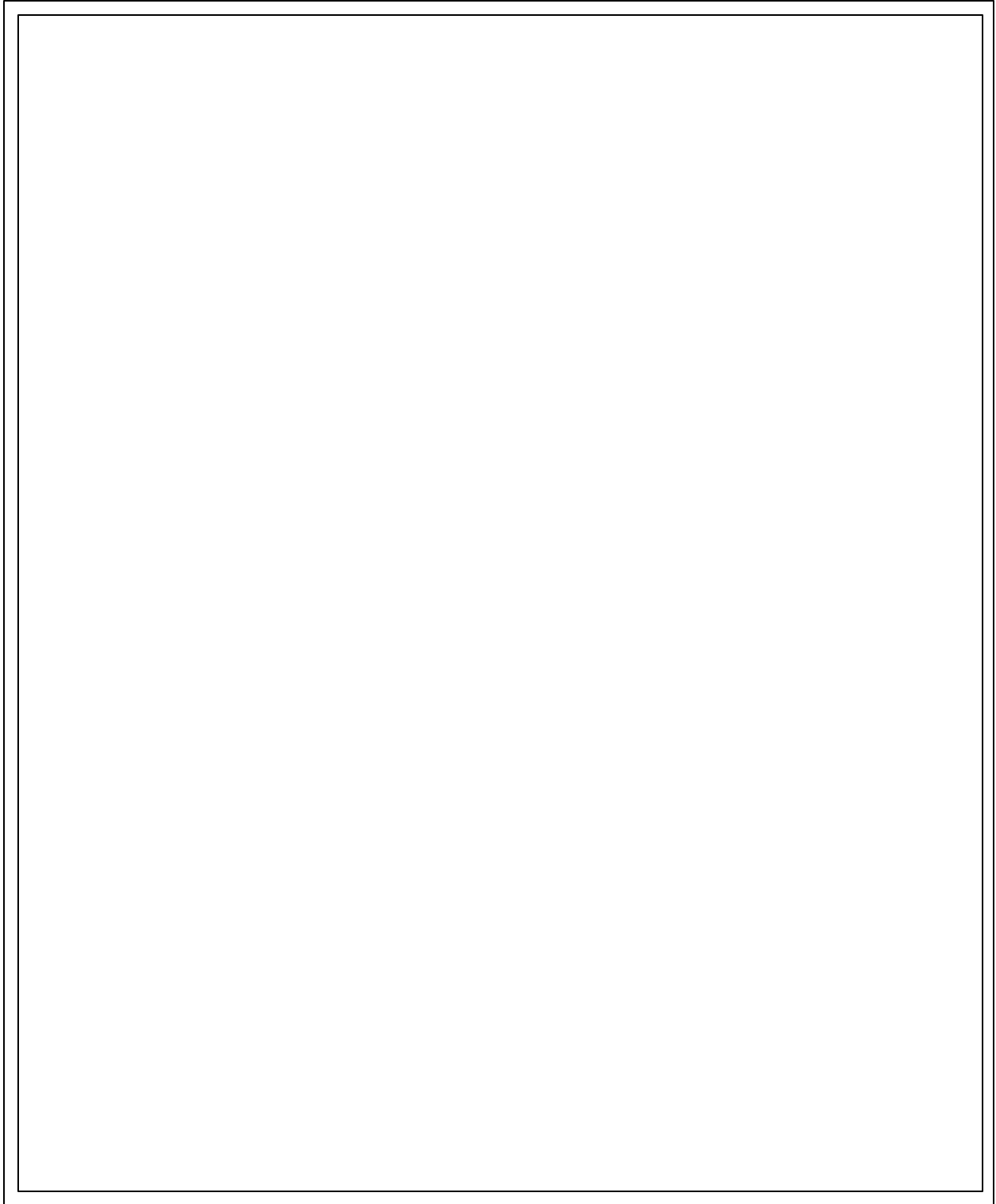
Cross out 2 or 3 of the boxes. Consider how you would feel if these characteristics were missing, including any insights into the underlying connections, themes/patterns and motivations.

I am a person who	I am a person who
I am a person who	I am a person who
I am a person who	I am a person who
I am a person who	I am a person who
I am a person who	I am a person who

Assessment Exercise 2-3: The Eulogy

Write what you would want close friends to say about you in delivering your eulogy. Evaluate whether your present approach to life and career will likely lead to the remembrance that you wish.

Eulogy

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their eulogy. The box occupies most of the page below the instructions.

Summary Of Insights:

In the following table, summarize what you have learned from the three preceding exercises.

Most Influential People:
Most Critical Events:
When I Learned Most About Myself:
When I Learned the Most Professionally:
Who I Am and What's Important to Me:
What Gives Me the Strongest Sense of Meaning, Fulfillment and Satisfaction:
Long Term Themes/Patterns, and Motivations That Have Emerged:
Implications of the Themes/Patterns and Motivations to My Career:
Other Learning:

B) Career Interests/Management Roles

Assessment Exercises 2-4 and 2-5: Preferred Managerial Roles and Skills

Robert Quinn and his colleagues¹ describe eight management roles which relate to competing orientations in an organization. Each role is typified by three skills.

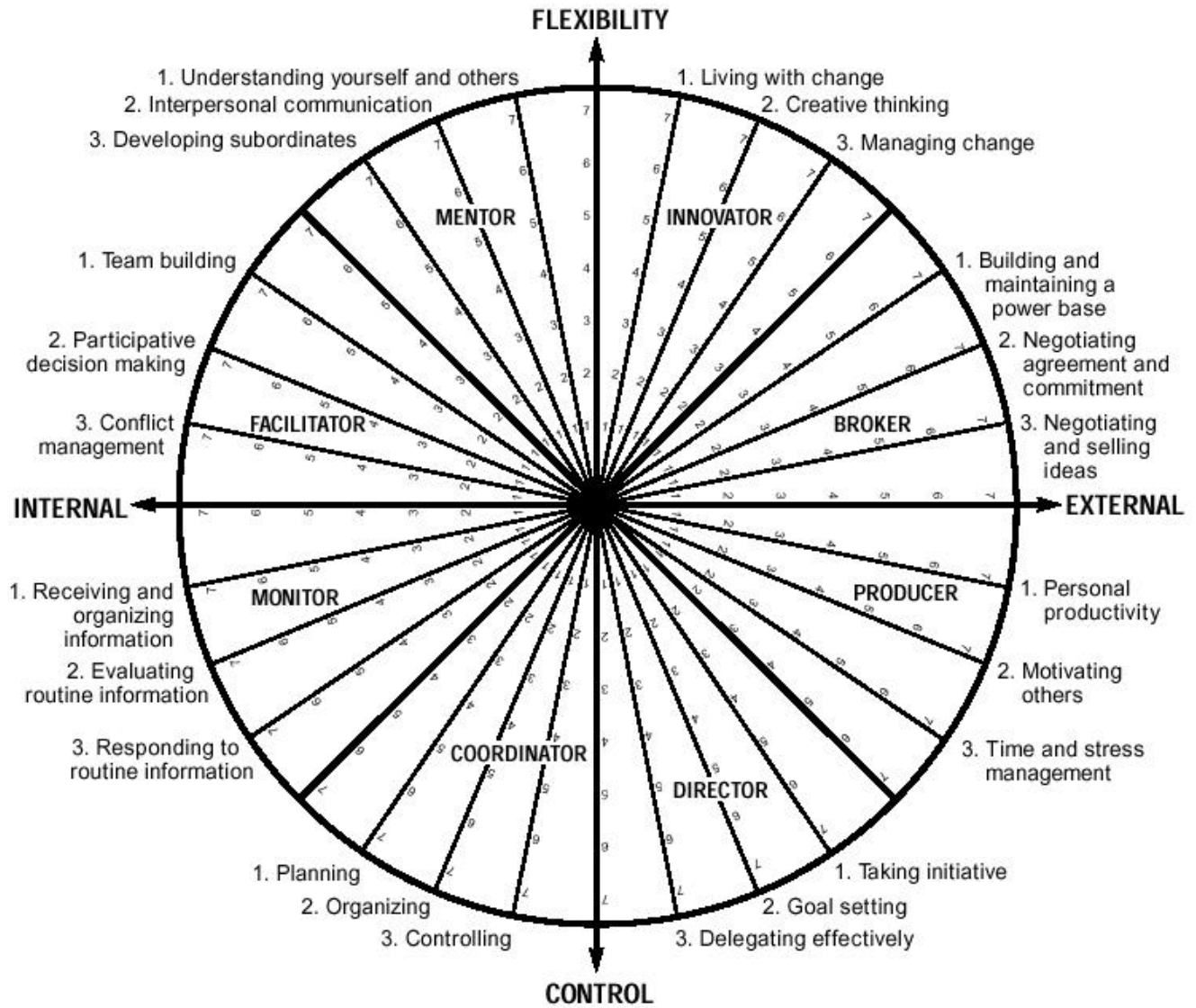
This exercise allows you to explore the link between your feelings about the tasks you do and the effectiveness with which you do such tasks.

Reflect upon your experiences at work, school, volunteer organizations, and elsewhere. Complete Quinn's Set of Managerial Skills using the 7 point scale to identify which roles and skills you generally find to be the most fulfilling and satisfying. The assessment should not reflect upon your skill level or expertise—only on what gives you the greatest satisfaction.

After completing the scales, reflect on what your responses indicate about your interests and life patterns. Plot your ratings on the circular grid.

Least Fulfilling and Satisfying 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Most Fulfilling and Satisfying

Quinn's Set of Managerial Skills	Response
The Director Role:	
1. Taking initiative in a situation	
2. Goal and priority setting	
3. Delegating work to others	
The Producer Role:	
4. Personal motivation and productivity	
5. Capacity to motivate others	
6. Capacity to manage time and work stress	
The Coordinator Role:	
7. Capacity to plan well	
8. Capacity to organize and structure an organization's work	
9. Capacity to develop and use effective control processes	
Monitor Role:	
10. Capacity to manage information and reduce information overload	
11. Capacity to effectively analyze information	
12. Capacity to prepare effective written business presentations and reports	
Mentor Roles:	
13. Understanding of who you are and how you impact upon others	
14. Interpersonal communications skills	
15. Capacity to develop others	
Facilitator Role:	
16. Skill in building effective teams	
17. Skill in facilitating participative decision making	
18. Capacity to manage conflict in ways that produce win-win outcomes	
Innovator Role:	
19. Capacity to comfortably live with change	
20. Capacity to think creatively and explore new ideas	
21. Capacity to effectively manage change	
Broker Role:	
22. Capacity to effectively develop and use your power base	
23. Capacity to negotiate effectively	
24. Capacity to make an effective oral presentation	



Please record your scores from the previous page here. Do they suggest a pattern?

Part 2 – What Am I Good At? Identifying Skill Sets

A) Managerial Roles and Skills

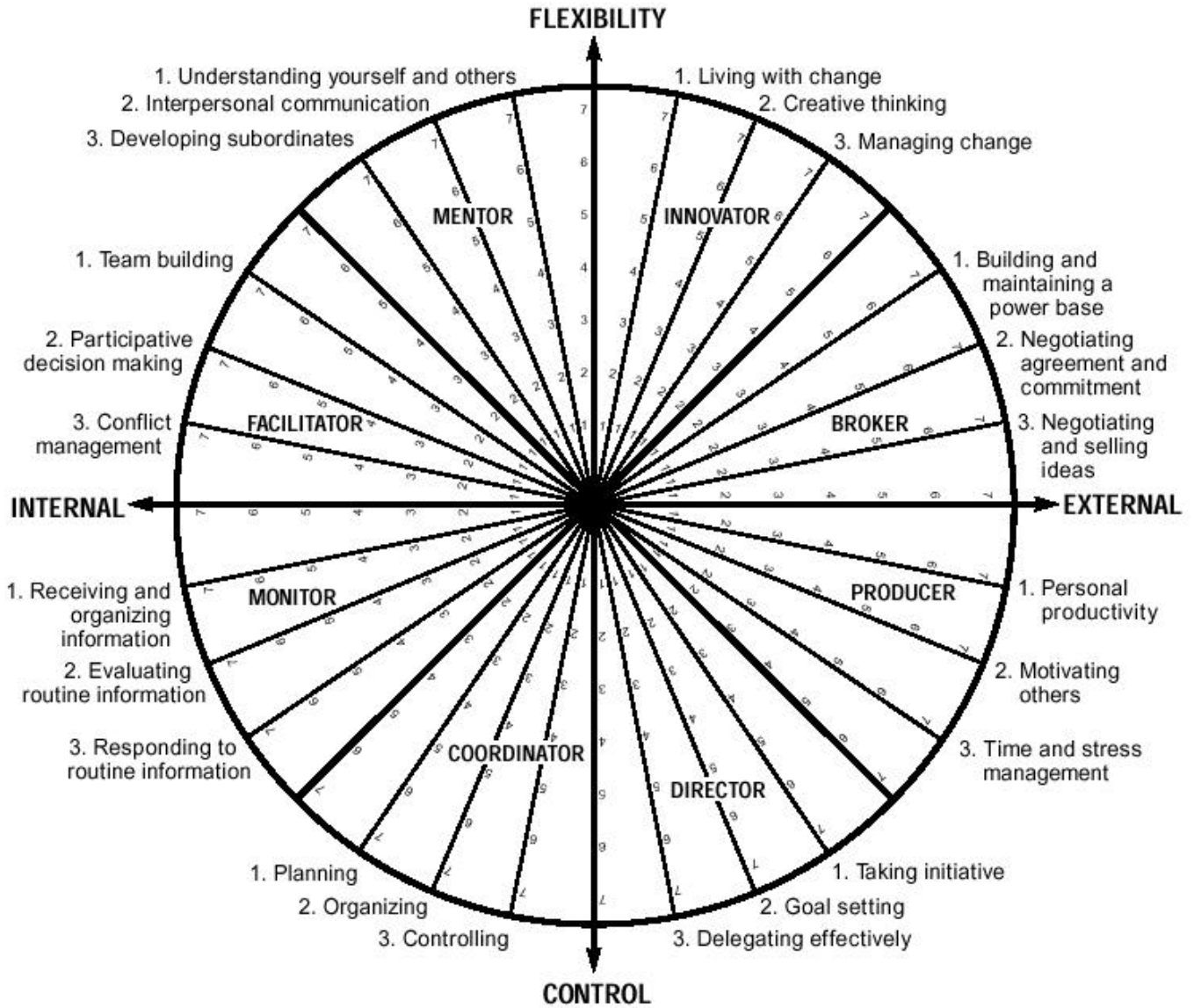
Although consideration of desires is important, career plans must be anchored in the reality of our abilities and skills. With knowledge of our skills and abilities, we can identify our current capabilities and competencies. Further, we can identify skills for development for specific professional challenges in the future. Life long learning requires continual assessment through to retirement.

Assessment Exercises 2-6 and 2-7: Managerial Roles and Skills

Revisit the 8 roles and 24 skills introduced in **Assessment Exercises 2-4 and 2-5: Preferred Managerial Roles and Skills**. For this exercise, rate the items based on how well developed your competencies are in each of the areas. The ratings for this exercise will likely differ from the prior exercise. Plot your ratings on the circular grid.

Not Well Developed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Well Developed

Quinn's Set of Managerial Skills	Response
The Director Role:	
1. Taking initiative in a situation	
2. Goal and priority setting	
3. Delegating work to others	
The Producer Role:	
4. Personal motivation and productivity	
5. Capacity to motivate others	
6. Capacity to manage time and work stress	
The Coordinator Role:	
7. Capacity to plan well	
8. Capacity to organize and structure an organization's work	
9. Capacity to develop and use effective control processes	
Monitor Role:	
10. Capacity to manage information and reduce information overload	
11. Capacity to effectively analyze information	
12. Capacity to prepare effective written business presentations and reports	
Mentor Roles:	
13. Understanding of who you are and how you impact upon others	
14. Interpersonal communications skills	
15. Capacity to develop others	
Facilitator Role:	
16. Skill in building effective teams	
17. Skill in facilitating participative decision making	
18. Capacity to manage conflict in ways that produce win-win outcomes	
Innovator Role:	
19. Capacity to comfortably live with change	
20. Capacity to think creatively and explore new ideas	
21. Capacity to effectively manage change	
Broker Role:	
22. Capacity to effectively develop and use your power base	
23. Capacity to negotiate effectively	
24. Capacity to make an effective oral presentation	



Please record your scores from the previous page here. Do they suggest a pattern?

B) Self-Management Skills

The ability to self-manage is becoming increasingly important in the current job environment. By completing Assessment Exercise 2-8, you will be in a better position to evaluate yourself.

Assessment Exercise 2-8: Self-Management Skills

1. The table below lists skills that are important to self-management. Consider your strengths and weaknesses and what evidence supports these beliefs.
2. Are there any self-management skills you possess that are not included in the list? How well developed are your skills in these areas?
3. Which of your self-management skills have proven the most personally fulfilling and satisfying?
4. Which self-management skills would you most like to build upon and develop in the future?

Ability to make a decision	Ability to effectively balance flexibility & firmness
Assertiveness	Attention to detail
Capacity to play follower roles in teams	Capacity to play leadership roles in teams
Capacity to engage in critical thinking	Commitment to personal development
Cooperativeness	Creativity
Diplomacy	Empathy
Information accessing/gathering skills	Information assimilation and integration skills
Openness to new ideas	Patience
Poise	Reliability
Resourcefulness	Self-control
Thoroughness	Trustworthiness and honesty
Tolerance for stress	Versatility

Part 3 — Who are My Clients?

The two main facets of the portfolio career are skills and clients. The preceding exercises allowed the assessment of skills. The remaining exercises in this Section consider the issue of clients, those you supply services to. Recall that even those in traditional positions of employment have 'clients' or those they supply services to.

Assessment Exercise 2-9: Your Current Client Portfolio

Classify your clients in the table below according to pay and learning. Also consider the types of skills used to service the clients, which clients are helping you grow new capacities, which are simply harvesting existing skills, and which are doing both. Consider the amount of time consumed by a client relative to the value of the unit of work produced and the amount learned. Recall that low learning areas are potentially a poor use of time from both a development and value-added perspective.

	Low Pay (High Time Relative to Value of Work)	High Pay (Low Time Relative to Value of Work)
High Learning	Clients: Skills Used:	Clients: Skills Used:
Low Learning	Clients: Skills Used:	Clients: Skills Used:

Assessment Exercise 2-10: Applying Existing Skills in New Ways for Existing Clients

In the table below, examine how your existing skills could be used in new ways for your existing clients.

Existing Clients	Existing Skills	New Applications
1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	
2.	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	
3.	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	
<i>If there are additional clients, add an extra sheet.</i>		

Assessment Exercise 2-11: Developing New Skills for Existing Clients

In the table below, examine how you can serve your existing clients better. Consider client needs.

Unmet Client Needs	Skills You Could Develop to Meet These Needs
1.	1.
	2.
2.	1.
	2.
3.	1.
	2.

Assessment Exercise 2-12: Developing New Clients for Existing Skills

Over time a client’s need for specific services can diminish and/or we outgrow the client. The previous exercise examined how you can expand your skill set. This exercise asks ‘What new clients exist who need the skills you have and how can you identify them? The issue of the actual development of the client base is discussed in Section IV of this Guide.

Existing Skills	Potential New Clients
1.	1.
	2.
2.	1.
	2.
3.	1.
	2.
4.	1.
	2.

Assessment Exercise 2-13: Breakthrough Skills for the Next Generation of Clients

Some products and services create their own demand.

Similar principles operate at the individual level. What breakthrough services can we provide, what new skills can we imagine and then develop for clients 5 years away? How much are you investing in yourself by risking time and energy in the development of new and different skills? How can we take what we like doing and convince people to pay us for doing these things?

The brainstorming exercise below is best done in a group of people who are comfortable with one another. Wild thinking and outrageous creativity would be the hallmarks of a successful experience of this exercise. Let it all go—and later you can be critical.

Brainstorming the Next Generation of Skills and Clients	
1.	List 5-10 trends that you think will have the most impact on our society and economy.
2.	For each trend answer the question: ‘If the trend happens, what are the consequences?’ List five or more consequences for each trend.
3.	Who will benefit from these consequences? These could be your new clients.
4.	How will you get to know these potential clients? Who do you know who knows them?
5.	What services or products are needed to enable these trends to occur? What skills are needed to deliver the services or products?
6.	How could you develop some of these skills? Which skill (or skills) represent something you would like to do?

Reference

1. Quinn, R.E., S.R. Faerman, M.P. Thompson, and M.R. McGrath, *Becoming a Master Manager: A Competency Framework*. Wiley, New York, 1996.

SECTION III: WHERE SHOULD I WORK AND WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Effective career management requires a congruence between who we are, where we work, what we do, and what we know how to do. It also requires active involvement in both skill and client development.

Part 1 — Career Vision

With an uncertain destination, any path will take you there. Consequently, career management requires a vision for the overall career direction. The vision represents the second step in effective career management, following the assessment of what leads to personal fulfillment and satisfaction. The insights gained in Section II can help to clarify your overall career direction. A good vision statement is:

1. clear, concise, and easily understood
2. memorable
3. exciting and inspiring to you
4. excellence-centred
5. challenging
6. stable but flexible and adaptable
7. implementable and tangible¹

A distinguishing characteristic of highly successful individuals, as well as organizations,² is the clarity of their vision. A personal vision acts as a guide through the years and helps you to resist situational pressures that may lead in inappropriate directions.

Assessment Exercise 3-1: Career Vision Statement

Formulate a career vision statement for your career.

Draft Vision Statement

Once complete, review the statement in comparison to the characteristics outlined above and your insights and observations from Section II.

Consider whether the statement will allow you to sort out issues of direction, make choices, and identify gaps between the present and desired future opportunities (i.e., skills and clients that need to be developed). Ensure the vision is congruent with your sense of self.

Feedback from others may be of use in refining vision statement.

Finalized Vision Statement

Part 2 — Emerging World of Work

Assessment Exercise 3-2: New Skills, Abilities, and Experiences For 10 Years From Now

Given the information provided concerning the changing nature of the job environment, consider the new skills, abilities and experiences you will require to compete and thrive professionally in the next 10 years.

New Skills, Abilities & Experience Needed

Part 3 — Opportunity Assessment

The field of management accounting is changing so rapidly that it is impossible to identify all of the possible opportunities. This is particularly true in larger urban centres.

Consider the sectors of the economy which you feel are likely to grow and provide opportunities. The high technology sector is one example, although opportunities exist even when a sector appears static. Some research into the demographics of industry sectors may be warranted.

Management accounting opportunities exist in all sectors and in firms of varying size. Your search can be narrowed by focusing only on those areas which you identified in Section II. The nature of management accounting opportunities will also vary with the level within the organization. The following table illustrates the range of positions open to management accountants:

General Management — CEO, general manager; administrative VP; financial VP; corporate controller; corporate secretary; corporate treasurer.

Senior Specialist Advisors — Mergers and acquisitions specialist; government relations specialist; fleet manager; long-range strategic planning executive; insurance, pension, and benefit administrator; information and control systems specialist; contract management; securities and asset manager; budget control manager; internal auditor; senior consultant.

Accounting Operations — Division controller; plant controller; general accounting executive; credit and collection executive; chief accountant; officer manager; accounting supervisor; intermediate accountant.

Accounting Specialists — tax compliance/research manager; tax accountant; cost accountant/manager; financial analyst; budget analyst; value analyst; information and control system analyst and designer; credit analyst/representative; activity based management specialist; accounting systems consultant.

Financial Consulting — Public accounting; business planning and analysis; financial systems; mergers and acquisitions; executive search; investment advice and management.

Entrepreneurship — Starting your own business

Education and Teaching — Director of education or research; professor; teacher; seminar leader.

The above list is incomplete as opportunities evolve as the environment changes. Management accountants who are prepared for the new world of work, will find themselves involved in opportunities that extend well beyond the traditional notions of accounting jobs. The movement into senior management positions will require competence in strategy development, an understanding of the other functions and processes in the organization and a capacity to integrate those functions and processes. The opportunities will require increased professional development activity to acquire the skills needed for the future.

Further, the required skills, abilities, and experiences change as one changes positions or accesses new opportunities. For example, junior positions will require significant data skills: the handling, compiling, comparing, analyzing of accounting information, and the preparation of information useful to users. A promotion to manager places increased emphasis on people and coordination skills, along with supervising, coaching, team building, and leadership skills. Individuals lacking in these skill sets and who do not wish to develop them should consider remaining in specialist roles.

Assessment Exercise 3-3: Future Career Opportunities/Positions

1. What career opportunities or positions do you wish to see yourself in, within the next 2 to 5 years? Examine the range of possible positions and record those which interest you.
2. Talk to individuals in your own and/or other organizations that are involved in those areas of interest to you and who have excelled in their positions. Record the skills and abilities required for success in the specific opportunities you are exploring.
3. Consider how well you would fit into each identified position. Select the opportunities which you desire and which you are prepared to work towards.

Part 4 – Skills Requirements

Career management requires the development of skills and abilities needed to accomplish both your current roles, and for future opportunities you aspire to. One of the defining characteristics of a professional is their responsibility for lifelong learning. Consider your current role and the specific opportunities you wish to pursue.

Identifying and understanding the required skills is difficult. Job descriptions provide some assistance but are historical documents which seldom reflect future skill requirements. The previous assessment exercises will also help. However, the best method for identifying required skills is to interview successful incumbents in similar roles soliciting their future projections. Then, systematically analyze the opportunity, looking for the behaviours and skills that will be critical to success. Peers can act as sounding boards to test your understanding of the skills needed and your plans for acquiring those skills.

The skills, abilities and experiences you do not currently possess must be developed through on-the-job training, professional seminars and courses, self development projects, and other approaches. Courses and seminars can help you acquire the skills, but you must still find opportunities to put the skills to use at work, home, and in volunteer roles. Specific action plans to attain skills will be developed in Section IV of this Guide.

Assessment Exercise 3-4: Future Skills

Reconsider each of the following Assessment Exercises and the future positions and opportunities you aspire to during the next 2 to 5 years. For each exercise, identify the three most important skill areas you must develop to prepare yourself for the future positions or opportunities you find most attractive.

1. Assessment Exercises 2-6 and 2-7: Managerial Roles and Skills
2. Assessment Exercise 2-8: Self-Management Skills
3. Assessment Exercise 2-13: Breakthrough Skills for the Next Generation of Clients
4. Assessment Exercise 3-2: New Skills, Abilities, and Experiences For 10 Years From Now

Given the above evaluations, identify the types of experiences which would be particularly helpful in attaining the required skills and demonstrating to others that you are ready for the desired opportunities.

Part 5 – Congruence with Position or Opportunity Aspired to

The Peter Principle states that people are promoted past their level of competence. A lesser known principle is that often individuals seek and accept positions for which they do not fit, possibly due to ego, a sense of urgency, status, economic pressure, or pressure from others. The lack of fit will typically lead to unhappiness, stress, and poor performance.

Effective career management provides that we are competent, fulfilled, and satisfied by what we do over time.

Career Fit implies that needs for growth and development can be satisfied in the position and that career identities, vision, dominant career anchors, and needs can be fulfilled. Lack of fit necessitates a change in positions/roles, a refocusing of goals and ambitions, or acceptance of the consequences of a lack of fit. The consequences vary, but may include a profound sense of career failure.

Positions which provide for challenge, autonomy, and influence over the environment generally stretch individuals and help them to develop. Positions which provide feedback on performance by having complete and identifiable tasks, give the information necessary for improvement and growth. These enriched opportunities will fit individuals with strong needs for growth and who possess learning strategies that allow them to take advantage of the environment to develop.

Conversely, individuals with weaker needs for personal growth will be overwhelmed and anxious in such positions. These individuals are better suited to more routine positions, with less variety. Figure 3-1 summarizes the position characteristics for individuals with strong and weak needs for personal growth.

Figure 3-1: Characteristics of Jobs That Fit

Individuals with Strong Personal Growth Needs	Individuals with Weak Personal Growth Needs
Enriched job Challenge Variety Risk Taking Influence Accomplishment Autonomy	Non-enriched job Routine Stability Little Uncertainty/Ambiguity Little Opportunity for Influence Friendliness Security

Assessment Exercise 3-5: Characteristics Of An Ideal Position

1. Rank the importance of the following attributes in a future position.

Low Importance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Importance

	Characteristic	Rating
1.	The future position is enriched	
2.	The future position is challenging	
3.	The future position has a lot of variety	
4.	The future position provides lots of opportunities for clear feedback	
5.	The future position has clear reporting channels	
6.	The future position has assignments and responsibilities with clear beginnings and endings	
7.	The future position has the resources needed to perform the tasks	
8.	The future position is an influential one	
9.	The future position gives you a lot of autonomy	
10.	The future position gives you a sense of accomplishment	

2. Which 3 characteristics are most important?
3. How can you increase the likelihood that these attributes were available in a future position?

Part 6 – Organization/Client Requirements

Career fit involves not only the congruence between your needs, abilities and the position characteristics, but also the fit between the organizational characteristics.

For example, individuals with strong growth needs and strong managerial and autonomy anchors will feel comfortable in organizations which are decentralized, innovative, action and performance driven. Ambiguity provides an opportunity to increase influence and to take action. High standards provide challenges which invigorate these individuals to action. Individuals with weak needs for personal growth and strong security anchors would find these same organizations uncomfortable and stressful.

For many, the nature of the goods and services produced by the organization are also important. Some find particular sectors, firms, and products/services intrinsically more interesting and satisfying. The internal demographics of the organization may also be important. The rate of growth of the firm, combined with the age of incumbents in the position and the rate of turnover, may indicate the quality of opportunities available in the organization. Organizations can be characterized by their climate or culture. Figure 3-2 outlines nine dimensions that capture important aspects of organizational climate to consider in evaluating fit.

Figure 3-2: Organizational Climate Dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Standards	the degree to which the organization has high expectations of its employees
Responsibility	the degree to which the organization delegates responsibility to individuals
Structure	the degree to which the organization relies on rules and regulations to get work done
Rewards	the degree to which people feel that they receive proper recognition and rewards for their efforts
Warmth	the degree to which people feel warm and trusting of others in the organization
Risk	the degree to which the organization encourages risk-taking behaviour
Support	the degree to which people receive support and encouragement in their activities
Conflict	the tolerance of the organization for conflict
Identity	the degree to which people identify with and have a sense of pride in the organization

Assessment Exercise 3-6: Characteristics of the Ideal Organization Climate

For each of the climate dimensions detailed above, consider what you would be looking for in an ideal organization to work for. Consider your reaction to situations where standards were very high versus absent; where individuals were held responsible versus a lack of accountability; and where activities were highly versus loosely structured.

Climate Dimension	Rating of Dimension (i.e., What is Optimal For You?)						
	<i>Low</i>			<i>High</i>			
Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Responsibility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rewards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warmth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Risk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Identity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 7 – Congruence with Organization

The previous section identified the ideal type of organization which you would like to be involved with. The next step in career management is to assess the quality of the fit between you and the organization.

Assessment Exercise 3-7: Quality of the Fit Between You and the Organization

1. Reconsider Assessment Exercise 3-6. Consider the specific organization(s) you see yourself working for in the future and evaluate them on each of the nine climate dimensions. If you have insufficient information concerning the organization to evaluate the climate dimensions in an informed way, then further research into the organization is required before proceeding.

2. Identify the most significant gaps and assess whether these could be altered. If these aspects cannot be changed, determine whether you can comfortably accept the gaps or should search for an organization that offers a better fit.

The quality of the fit between you, the type of position, and the organization housing the position, is critical to the fulfillment and satisfaction you gain from your professional life. Figure 3-3 illustrates the combinations of personal needs with position and organization.

Figure 3-3: Integrating Personal Needs With The Position And The Organization

Person Has:	Hierarchical, Traditional Organization		Decentralized, Innovative Organization	
	Enriched Job	Not Enriched Job	Enriched Job	Not Enriched Job
LOW Growth Needs	Unhappy	Best	Overwhelmed	Okay, but
HIGH Growth Needs	Okay but Concerned	Frustrated	Best	Underemployed

Two ideal situations exist. First, an individual with low personal growth needs fits best with a job which is not enriched and an organization that is traditional. The person should seek a relatively stable environment with less challenging tasks. Second, an individual with high personal growth needs fits best with a job that is enriched and an organization that is innovative. The person should seek a more ambiguous environment with more challenging tasks.

Lack of fit can result in uneasiness and unhappiness. The accompanying stress is structural and will not subside until either the job changes or the person changes jobs.

The environmental changes outlined in Section I suggest that the climate of management accounting in the evolving work environment will be significantly different from the climate that has characterized more traditional organizations. For example, responsibility centres will be pushed down, in flattened, decentralized, process centred structures. In the place of structured hierarchies, we expect to see fewer layers, less structure, and greater use of teams, networks, and other innovative forms. Innovation, risk taking, and organizational learning will be viewed very differently in these latter organizations.

Summary

Recognizing the relationship between the organization and careers is fundamental to effective career management. In reality, individuals normally lack the ability to alter organizations in fundamental ways. Although an individual may have little impact on organizational climate, the impact of the climate on the individual is significant. Consequently, we need to understand the climate and how it will affect the organization's view of us, and our view of ourselves and the organization. Finally, while traditional departments and functions are likely to co-exist with more future oriented ones for some time, they will be under increasing pressure to change.

One last dimension should be considered in career planning — **fun**. If your work environment generates a sense of fun, zest, and enthusiasm in you, you will likely look forward to getting up in the morning. In the long-run, life is far too short to be spent in an environment that pays very well, but that we dislike.

References

1. Jick, Todd, 'The Vision Thing (A),' in T. Jick, *Managing Change*, Irwin, Homewood, Illinois, 1993, p. 143.
2. Collins, James C., and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, Harper Business, New York, 1997.

SECTION IV: DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

The development of the vision statement for your career marked the beginning of the process of crystallizing your career action plan. The intent is to put you in control, although forecasts and maps always contain surprises. The vision statement provides a sense of direction.

Through the preceding Sections you have developed a career vision, considered self-awareness and skills, analyzed the congruence between yourself and possible positions or opportunities, determined required skill development to fill these possible positions or opportunities, and examined issues of fit between you and organizations or work climates that provide those opportunities. The next stage involves formulating specific career action plans.

Part 1 — Identifying Skill and Knowledge Gaps

Your self analysis has identified personal characteristics that must be reflected in the positions or opportunities you entertain. Further, you have identified positions or opportunities, clients, and the organizational characteristics you find attractive, and the skills and abilities required to be successful in them.

Assessment Exercise 4-1: Key Gaps

Given your self-awareness (background experiences and themes, skills, career anchors, and growth needs) and your view of the ideal position or opportunity, clients and organization:

1. Describe the characteristics of specific positions or opportunities that you wish to attain in the next year, 2 years from now and 5 years from now. Consider the fit between your earlier assessment of yourself and your needs.
2. Identify the resulting skill gaps which must be addressed in the next year, 2 years from now and 5 years from now. Consider the contacts which must be made and exposures required.
3. Detail the skills, abilities, and experiences you must develop over the next 1 to 5 years in order to close the gap between your current capacities and those required to fulfill the future positions or opportunities you desire.

Part 2 — Establishing Goals

With a career vision, targets (future positions/opportunities, clients and organizations), and skill gaps now specified, the task remains to develop goals and action plans. Action plans should specifically detail how you intend to attain your vision. They should address skill, ability, and experience acquisition, client development, and overall professional and positional development. The plans should detail how you propose to develop, where you propose to ply your skills and abilities, and how you propose to get there.

To be useful, your goals should be S.M.A.R.T.:

Specific or concrete.

Measurable and meaningful. Measurability allows you to identify short and intermediate benchmarks for assessing progress, while meaningfulness speaks to personal relevance.

Attainable. Only establish goals which you are capable of influencing or acting upon.

Realistic and challenging. Your goals should be congruent with your skills, but force you to extend for growth and development.

Time bound, in order that you may assess your progress at specific and appropriate points in time.

Assessment Exercise 4-2: Development of Goals

Using the table provided below, first, identify 2 to 3 goals per year, for each of the next 5 years, which if accomplished will move you toward your career vision. If the formulation of goals beyond one year proves too difficult, focus on the first year and commit to review the goals in one year's time.

Second, establish benchmarks for each year, for each of the goals to monitor progress towards the goals.

Development of Goals

Goals for Year 1
1.
2.
3.
Benchmark for Goal 1:
Benchmark for Goal 2:
Benchmark for Goal 3:

Goals for Year 2

1.

2.

3.

Benchmark for Goal 1:

Benchmark for Goal 2:

Benchmark for Goal 3:

Goals for Year 3

1.

2.

3.

Benchmark for Goal 1:

Benchmark for Goal 2:

Benchmark for Goal 3:

Goals for Year 4

1.

2.

3.

Benchmark for Goal 1:

Benchmark for Goal 2:

Benchmark for Goal 3:

Goals for Year 5

1.

2.

3.

Benchmark for Goal 1:

Benchmark for Goal 2:

Benchmark for Goal 3:

Lea Smith

As an example of effective goals, consider Lea, a 31 year old accountant. Lea graduated from an accounting program and possesses high growth needs, high needs for power and achievement, and a strong managerial anchor. She wants to be a chief financial officer in a major organization by the time she is 40. She is well regarded by her manager and co-workers, and likes her employer. However, she has been immersed in highly technical work since joining the organization and lacks formal management training and experience. As a result of her role, she lacks visibility with senior management and is typecast in a highly valued technical role.

Lea can enhance her managerial growth and development if she sets specific targets: to successfully complete the performance management and the management of change workshops (by February 15th), to chair the committee on new information technology (March 1st), to interview 5 successful managers on the implementation of new information technology (July 1st), to present the final report of the task force (October 1st), and to assist in the management of the implementation of the new information technology (November 1 to June 30).

The goals formulated by Lea are S.M.A.R.T. and will allow her to develop managerial skills, get noticed, receive managerial mentoring, assess her performance in concrete terms, and redirect her energies in ways more likely to contribute to her long-term goals.

Part 3 — Addressing the Gaps

Action plans allow you to close the skill gaps identified.

Four options for building a skill set are on-the-job training, self directed study, short professional program, and longer term professional development programs.

Assessment Exercise 4-3: Action Plans to Close the Skill, Ability, and Experience Gaps

Using the Summary Career Planning Worksheets in Appendix B:

1. List the specific skills, abilities and experiences you must develop in the next year and over the next 2 to 5 years.
2. Detail your development plans to attain these skills, abilities and experiences. Consider the potential role of specific materials, courses, programs of study, special assignments and task force opportunities which could be used for development purposes.
3. Identify those who could assist you in the development of needed skills, abilities and experience. Consider the role of a mentor, supervisor, professional association, or staff at a college or university. Also consider the financial and time commitment aspects of the development.
4. Identify any potential impediments to developing the needed skills, abilities, and experience and how you would handle this.

Ensure that in responding to the above four areas, you have adequately addressed:

- What specific skills and abilities you will develop and experiences you will obtain?
- Why you want to develop these skills, abilities, and experiences?

- Where you will develop these?
- Who will assist you in your development?
- When will you have completed the specific things you have in mind?

Assessment Exercise 4-4: Action Plans For The Positions Or Opportunities And The Organization

If you are in the opportunity you want, in the organization of your choice, do not complete the following exercise. However, if your analysis has indicated a lack of fit or if your goals have identified a desire for change, concrete action plans must be developed.

1. State specifically the position you wish to hold and the organization in which you wish to hold it 1 year from now, 2 to 3 years from now and 5 years from now.
2. With the exception of skills, abilities and experiences addressed in the exercise above, assess how well you fit the position and organization identified. Consider how you propose to handle a lack of fit.
3. Determine if the desired position or opportunity is vacant, or when it will become vacant. Consider other similar positions or opportunities which may be suitable if the desired position is occupied for an indefinite period.
4. Determine if the position or opportunity you desire currently exists. If it does not yet exist, consider how you could facilitate establishing it.
5. Describe the process of achieving the position (including clients) or opportunity you desire. Consider who makes the decision, whether you know these individuals or could influence their decision, and whether you know what they are looking for. If you do not know these individuals, determine who could introduce you to them, how you could enhance your image over time with these people and whether they are aware of your skills, abilities, experience, and accomplishments.
6. Consider others who will likely want this position or opportunity and how you compare and could improve the comparison.
7. List the three most important steps you should take to obtain the position or opportunity you desire next and whether there are any impediments to taking action. If there are impediments, consider what you can do to move around these barriers. Conversely, if nothing is preventing action, determine when you can accomplish the steps.

Before leaving this section, review your plans one additional time, and ensure that you have included mechanisms for measuring and receiving feedback on your progress towards accomplishing your career goals.

Part 4 — Assessing Career Plan Adequacy

With career plans in place you are moving towards adapting to your changing profession, developing needed skills, abilities and experiences, obtaining the specific positions and opportunities (including clients) you desire, and associating yourself with the organizations you select.

Translating a rigorous analysis into an effective career action plan is a difficult task. It is easy to become immobilized in the face of complexity, uncertainty, goal conflict, and competing demands.

The critical elements of a career strategy are yourself, your family, peers, community, current managers, positions or opportunities, clients, and organizations. Once identified and considered, action is necessary.

Assessment Exercise 4-5: Action Planning Checklist and Career Portfolio Worksheet

1. Is your action plan consistent with your analysis of yourself, the position or opportunity you desire, or the organization you wish to be associated with?
2. Is your action plan time-sequenced in a logical order?
3. What is the probability of success at each step of your implementation plan and have steps been taken to improve the changes as much as possible?
4. Does your plan consider possible contingencies if results are not as anticipated?
5. Does your plan anticipate secondary consequences (i.e., effect of pursuing an international opportunity on your children and your spouse's career)?
6. Is your action plan realistic, given your influence (formal and informal), network of contacts, and your skills, abilities, and experience?
7. Do you possess the personal competence and resolve necessary to implement your action plan?
8. Have you considered how your action plans impinge on other relevant people (i.e., spouse, family, mentor, friends)?

As a final check on the adequacy of your career plans, return to the concept of the portfolio career. Consider your plans in relation to the portfolio of skills and clients that will serve you well. In the following table, specify how your portfolio will develop in the next 2 to 5 years.

	CLIENTS	
	Existing Clients	New Clients
New Skills		
Existing Skills		

Part 5 — Reviewing and Updating the Plan — The Importance of Feedback

Effective career plans incorporate feedback and review to:

- generate and clarify options
- assess options and manage transitions in roles and responsibilities
- develop competence and effectiveness in your roles and responsibilities
- evaluate progress towards your career goals
- reassess yourself and your goals relative to progress achieved

Feedback should be concrete and should involve a few trusted individuals, with whom you can share your career plans. They can act as a sounding board for new ideas and as an advisory council when you are developing and reviewing your plans for your career and professional development.

Once your initial career goals are established, you should set a career development planning cycle. This cycle should occur on an annual basis and should take the form of a formal review of progress to date and an updating of goals, objectives, and professional development plans.

Assessment Exercise 4-6: Feedback and Review

1. Determine where you propose to obtain the information necessary for monitoring career progress and professional development.
2. Select those who you propose to involve in the feedback and review process.
3. Establish the date and time for the next formal review and update.

Part 6 — Assessing Fit

After completing the plan, reflect on whether it feels right and, if not, ascertain the reasons. It is important to be confident of and comfortable with the career and professional development plan established. Our plans and goals need to fit with who we are and reflect a balance between our dreams and the reality we face.

Conclusion

It is difficult to find the time required for professional and career planning. However, “Do your best” goals or relying on the organization seldom produce desired outcomes. They relegate career and professional development responsibilities to good intentions, chance, and the whims of others and make it impossible for us to undertake a thoughtful, pragmatic, and programmatic approach to identifying and bringing desired changes to life.

Alternatives and opportunities are waiting to be developed. Career and professional development planning cannot guarantee health, wealth, and happiness. However, we can choose to take actions that will significantly influence what we do and how we live. A well thought out, action-oriented plan will help us get to where we want to go.

Career Planning in Action - Jerry Kan

Jerry is an athletic 33 year old with an undergraduate business degree. When the opportunity arose to take a job as accounting manager in the resource sector, Jerry and his family relocated to Thunder Bay. Since arriving there six years ago, Jerry's spouse has developed a very successful career in chemical sales and has become the Western Ontario representative for 3 firms. The arrival of their first child a year ago made life fairly complex.

Jerry has been active in the professional accounting association, as well as community groups such as Rotarians, taking on leadership roles in these organizations. He takes particular pride in his ability to manage conflict, generate interest, excitement and commitment in members, and his capacity to keep current with leading edge thinking and innovations in management accounting. However, his job has not proven nearly as exciting or rewarding.

He is treated well by his employer but, due to downsizing, there are few career prospects for him with the firm. He finds it far more bureaucratic than he would like, and he resents having to constantly check with the U.S. controller over fairly minor items—an individual he considers less technically up-to-date.

As the first step in career planning, he assesses himself, discovering that he has very strong growth needs, high achievement needs, and strong technical, autonomy, and lifestyle anchors. Due to his very active professional involvement, he feels up-to-date technically. However, there are a number of areas he has not had an opportunity to put directly into practice (i.e., process centred management) because his firm has been unwilling to experiment with the approaches. As he reviews his past, he can see how important these themes are to him.

He believes it is important to develop the managerial and strategic skills necessary to turn technical ideas into performance enhancing processes. While he has kept up-to-date technically, he believes there may be significant educational and work experience gaps that could keep him from achieving his goals. While he has demonstrated some of these skills in his volunteer work, he has not been pursuing continuing education in these areas and his employment situation does not provide development opportunities. Because of his wife's career, he knows moving is not an option presently. The move to Thunder Bay had seriously disrupted her career, and they both felt it would be unfair to do that again.

As he considers the contacts he has made, he is amazed at the variety of people he has met who could and likely would be willing to assist him with his career plans.

Following the appraisal of who he is, his current situation, and what he wants to do, he begins to discretely explore the options and alternatives further, calling friends and associates (as appropriate), and discussing the matter with his spouse. His involvement in the professional accounting association and various community groups proves very helpful in this regard. The options prove to be much richer than he first thought possible, with the result that he finds himself assessing three concrete employment opportunities.

Based upon his assessment of the gaps he faces, Jerry enrolls in a two year continuing educational program, to develop his strategic, new business development, marketing, change management, implementation, and consulting skills.

Jerry also establishes very specific goals and action plans for himself on a positional and organizational front. Since he now knows he wants to be a partner in a consulting firm, specializing in management accounting issues, before he is 38, Jerry lays out a S.M.A.R.T goal-oriented action plan, for the next 5 years. The first step is to attempt to engineer 2 specific projects with his current employer, that will give him an opportunity to demonstrate corporate experience in strategic analysis, consulting and change management, over the next two years.

Step 2 is to suggest a move to a half time consulting relationship with his current employer, two years from now. He believes they will be amenable to the idea for several reasons: his strong relationship with the general manager, it would be cost effective, his knowledge of specific systems and processes were recognized by his employer as exceptional and very valuable, and they already had similar arrangements with a former engineer and a human resource professional.

Step 3 will also occur at the end of Year 2 and involves formalizing his association with a medium-sized management consulting firm. He has discussed this possibility with the managing partner and he was quite open to the prospect, given that Jerry would be bringing a large, prestigious client with him. In addition, he saw Jerry as possessing a strong: technical background, reputation, and network of contacts. Between Years 2 and 5, it will be Jerry's job to develop his client pool and grow his consulting business, with a view to achieving partnership in Year 5.

Having established short, medium, and long-term S.M.A.R.T goals, benchmarks, and action plans, Jerry once again sits down to review his plans with his spouse, his mentor and a trusted colleague. With their feedback and some modest alterations, Jerry finalizes the arrangements and sets about interesting his employer on the first of the special projects. He also takes out his diary and sets dates and times 6 and 12 months from now, so that he will be sure to formally evaluate his career plan and progress.

APPENDIX A

Additional Self-Assessment Exercises

1. **Career Anchors**
2. **Personal Growth Needs**
3. **Achievement, Power and Affiliation Needs**

1. Career Anchors

Our professional identities tend to form around certain themes during the first five to ten years of our career. Ed Schein¹ defines these as our occupational self-concept or *career anchors*. We use these to develop a sense of where we are going professionally and to help us make choices. The occupational self-concept is comprised of three parts:

1. Self-perceived talents and abilities (based on successes and failures);
2. Self-perceived motives and needs (based on experience);
3. Self-perceived values and attitudes (based upon encounters between personal values and those in the workplace).

The greater the level of our self-awareness, the more likely our self-perceptions will accurately reflect who we are, rather than the expectations of others. Schein identified eight different career anchors. These are described in Assessment Exercise A-1.

The anchor that is strongest (i.e., most important to you) plays a significant role in driving and constraining your career decisions. Weaker anchors exhibit lesser influence. It is not that we do not necessarily see the value in the other anchors - it is just that they are not as influential as the stronger ones. For example, consider a situation in which both your life style and managerial anchors were strong, but life style was more potent.

In this situation you would likely turn down a managerial promotion if you believed it would significantly and negatively impact your life style anchor. When we find ourselves facing career decisions that place two relatively strong anchors in conflict, we are torn as to which path to take.

Career anchors are important for determining where and how we choose to work. A mismatch between our anchors and our environment will lead to dissatisfaction, reduced effectiveness, and alienation. Those most often torn are individuals who have committed themselves to paths that are incongruent with who they are.

By reviewing our experience and assessing our career anchors, we can better understand the themes that have grounded past decisions and have provided feelings of success and accomplishment. Knowledge of this is very helpful when establishing and evaluating career plans—particularly in a period of rapid change. For example, if your primary anchor is job security, careful planning must be in place to deal with the increased anxiety the current labour market generates. Likewise, if technical/functional competence is your strongest anchor, careful planning will be needed to ensure you continue to develop your technical competence, so that you do not find yourself increasingly obsolete.

Assessment Exercise A-1: What Anchors Your Career?

Using a 7 point scale, rate each of the following Anchors in terms of their importance to you. Consider your answers in the context of your current job and the past experiences you have been reflecting on.

Low Importance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 High Importance

Anchor	Description	Rating
Autonomy/Independence	Desires work situations that provide maximum freedom to independently pursue career interests	
Entrepreneurial Creativity	Motivated by the desire to create and develop new products and services.	
General Management Competence	Motivated by the opportunity to develop and use interpersonal problem-solving skills and to climb to general management levels.	
Job Security	Concerned with long-run stability and security of employment and benefits	
Life Style	Wants to integrate personal, family and career needs and to maintain flexibility	
Pure Challenge	Motivated by the desire to overcome the odds, solve unsolved problems, and win out over competitors	
Service/Dedication to a Cause	Wants to use interpersonal and helping skills in the service of others.	
Technical/Functional	Intrinsically motivated by the work itself, its technical aspects, and the desire for enhanced technical competence and credibility.	

2. Personal Growth Needs

Different preferences in career anchors, roles and skill sets reflect differing personal needs. The satisfaction of these needs will determine whether or not we find our work fulfilling. One of the more important ways of thinking about needs is to consider the extent to which we need to be challenged, stimulated, and stretched versus our need for a safe, secure, and predictable environment. These are our growth needs. Growth needs typically will be stronger for those anchored by pure challenge, and weaker for those anchored by job security.

Successful career planning requires that we consider the relative importance of our need for personal growth and then search out compatible work environments. In order to prepare, reflect upon the earlier assessment tasks and address the items contained in Assessment Exercise A-2. In responding, do not fall into the trap of fooling yourself because some of the responses seem more acceptable or positive. Here, as in other sections, you are better served by having your answers reflect who you are - not what you think (or what others think) you should be.

Assessment Exercise A-2: Growth Needs

Using a 7 point scale, how would you rate yourself on each of the following items:

Low Importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High Importance	
Item									Rating
I need to work in an environment that really challenges and stretches me.									
I need work which provides me with the power and influence needed to accomplish my goals.									
'Doing my own thing,' even at work, is important to me.									
I don't really care if others approve of what I am doing. I do what I think is necessary.									
An unpredictable work environment doesn't make me unhappy.									
Interpersonal conflict does not make me unduly anxious.									
Performance feedback is important, so that I can assess how I'm doing.									
I need to be recognized for the things I accomplish.									

By totaling the numbers you have circled, you will have an indication of your growth needs. Scores less than 25 reflect lower growth needs. Scores between 25 and 40 suggest moderate growth needs. Scores over 40 suggest higher growth needs.

Individuals with strong growth needs prefer environments that are less predictable and routine. They tend to take somewhat greater interpersonal and/or technical risks because they enjoy the challenge, achievement, and sense of personal growth. They avoid excessive risk taking, they want to have a decent probability of success, given hard work. They express needs for interpersonal power/influence, independence, autonomy, and recognition for their accomplishments. However, they have relatively low needs for the approval of others. Individuals who have low growth needs tend to reflect the reverse of the above pattern.

3. Achievement, Power, and Affiliation Needs

Another way of thinking about your needs is to consider the work of McClelland.² He identified three needs: achievement, power and affiliation. The need for achievement refers to the drive to strive to succeed and excel in relation to a set of standards. However, those high in need for achievement are not gamblers, they prefer tackling standards that represent a significant, but not insurmountable challenge. The need for power reflects the need to be in control, to influence others to behave differently than they otherwise would have. The need for affiliation identifies the need for close interpersonal relationships, to be liked and accepted by others. Assessment Exercise A-3 will help you consider the relative importance of these three needs in your career.

Assessment Exercise A-3: Achievement, Power and Affiliation

For each of the following 15 statements, circle the number that most closely agrees with how you feel. Consider your answers in the context of your current job and the past experiences you have been reflecting on.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

#	Item	Rating
1	I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work.	
2	I enjoy competition and winning.	
3	I often find myself talking to those around me about non-work matters.	
4	I enjoy difficult challenges.	
5	I enjoy being in charge.	
6	I want to be liked by others.	
7	I want to know how I am progressing as I complete tasks.	
8	I confront people who do things I disagree with.	
9	I tend to build close relationships with co-workers.	
10	I enjoy setting and achieving realistic goals.	
11	I enjoy influencing other people to get my way.	
12	I enjoy belonging to groups and organizations.	
13	I enjoy the satisfaction of completing a difficult task.	
14	I often work to gain more control over the events around me.	
15	I enjoy working with others more than working alone.	

To determine which needs are most likely to motivate you, score your answers in the following way. The column with the highest score represents your dominant need.

Achievement	Power	Affiliation
1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.
10.	11.	12.
13.	14.	15.
Totals ³		

References

1. Schein, H., 'Career Anchors Revisited: Implications for Career Development in the 21st Century,' *Academy of Management Executive*, vol. 10, No 4, 1996, p. 80.
2. Drawn from Robbins, S.P. *Organizational Behavior: Concepts, Controversies, and Applications*, 6th ed. Prentice-Hall , Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1993, p. 212.

APPENDIX B

Summary Career Planning Worksheets

Career Vision:

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New Skills and Experiences Needed:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Client Development Needed:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Future Position/Opportunity/Organization Aspired to:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Goals and Benchmarks:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1
Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1
Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1	Goal 1
Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark	Benchmark

Action Plan to Close the Skill and Experience Gap:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Gap 1	Gap 1	Gap 1	Gap 1	Gap 1
Gap 2	Gap 2	Gap 2	Gap 2	Gap 2
Gap 3	Gap 3	Gap 3	Gap 3	Gap 3

Action Plan for Position/Opportunity/Organization Aspired to:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5

Review and Update:

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5

APPENDIX C

Additional References

Bolles, Richard N., **What Colour is My Parachute?** Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, updated annually.

This perennial offering maintains the currency of its career planning advice by regular updating. The book is user friendly, and contains background information, exercises, and advice for individuals involved in career planning, career changes and job search.

Butler, Timothy, and Waldroop, James, **Discovering Your Career in Business.** Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1997.

This book is designed to help with career planning for those with a specific interest in business. It addresses both losing and finding your way and is built around the Business Career Interest Inventory software (included). The software is used for self-assessment and planning purposes and examples are provided concerning its use and interpretation.

Edler, Richard, **If I Knew Then What I Know Now.** New York: Berkeley Books, 1997.

This book grew out of the author's preparation for a speech at a university commencement exercise. It is a compendium of career advice solicited from over 150 successful Americans, 25 years into their careers. Their observations are presented as simple statements (one per individual), offered without critical review or integration.

Handy, Charles, **The Age of Paradox.** Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1995.

Handy provides a thought-provoking assessment of the emerging world of organizations, the future nature of work, how people will be affected, and the importance of creating senses of continuity, connection, and direction. It should be on the required reading list for those interested in future perspectives - a future that is already upon us.

Hesselbein, Francis, Goldsmith, Marshall, and Beckhard, Richard, **The Organization of the Future.** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

This book is a collection of short articles by leading organizational thinkers. In it they share their perspectives on the future of organizations and work. While the articles are not particularly rigorous or mind expanding, they do provide a useful overview of their thinking and food for thought for those thinking about their careers.

Johnson, Mike, **Getting a Grip on Tomorrow: Your Guide to Survival and Success in the Changed World of Work.** Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1997.

This is another of the 'how-to' books on developing plans and approaches to help you survive professionally in the new world of work. However, it has a European flavour and the quality/clarity of the thinking differentiates from other similar products and makes it worth paying attention to. It is well grounded, readable and thoughtful in both its assessments and recommended approaches to career-oriented individuals.

McCarthy, Kevin W., **The On-Purpose Person.** Colorado Springs: Pinion Press, 1992.

This self-help book follows in the tradition of Steven Covey (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), and focuses on defining and operationalizing purpose and vision in one's life. Exercises are included.

Morrison, Ian, **The Second Curve: Managing the Velocity of Change**. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.

Morrison provides an excellent overview of key trends and how organizations have to move from the first wave of their success and learn how to identify and ride the wave of the future. The relevance of those interested in career management lies in its perspective on the future.

Moses, Barbara, **Career Intelligence: Mastering the New Work and Personal Realities**. Toronto: Stoddart, 1997.

This Canadian book provides a perspective on careers that is consistent with the trends and tone contained in Jeremy Rifkins book (reference and description provided below). The picture painted of the future of work is not a warm and inviting one, but Moses does provide specific advice for individual survival and renewal.

Noer, David M., **Healing the Wounds: Overcoming the Trauma of Layoffs and Revitalizing Downsized Organizations**. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Not all the casualties of mergers and downsizing leave their organizations. A group that is both injured and all-too-often forgotten is represented by those who retain their employment. This book deals with the survivors and provides a useful overview of the issues involved, important perspectives, and advice and guidance.

Rifkin, Jeremy, **The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labour Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era**. New York: Putnam, 1995.

This scholarly book on the future of work is well researched and frightening in its implications. It presents a picture that is far from rosy and provides recommendations for how society should respond. While unsettling, those interested in the future of organizations and career should consider the analysis and its implications.

Twombly, Dianne, **Getting Back to Work: The Ultimate Jobseeker's Guide for Canadians Over 45**. Toronto: Macmillan, 1997.

Twombly provides useful career planning and job seeking advice for older individuals who find themselves unemployed. This book does not focus specifically on the challenges faced by older knowledge workers, it does address a number of the issues important and unique to this particular group (i.e., dealing with age discrimination).