

Career Exploration & Job Search: For Any Job in Any Sector

Planning Guide

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The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People

By Stephen Covey

As a career and leadership development consultant with forty years of experience in those fields, I am creating an entire page on this book because it is one of the five books that I have recommended the most to individuals of all ages. It is an international best seller that has helped hundreds of the individuals I have coached. Here are the chapter descriptions of each of the seven habits of highly effective people.

Habit 1 - Be Proactive: Principles of Personal Vision

Habit 2 - Begin with the End in Mind: Principles of Personal Leadership

Habit 3 – Put First Things First: Principles of Personal Management

Habit 4 – Think Win/Win: Principles of Interpersonal Leadership

Habit 5 – Seek to Understand, Then to Be Understood: Principles of Empathic Communication

Habit 6 – Synergize: Principles of Creative Cooperation

Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw: Principles of Balanced Self-Renewal

If you buy and work through the Application Suggestions at the end of each chapter, you will have a heightened perspective regarding how to handle yourself in your life and certainly during your career exploration and job search.

I obviously do not receive any remuneration for suggesting you purchase this best seller.

Identifying Your Career Anchors: Perceived Areas of Competence You Would Not Give Up

Career Anchors, Edgar H. Schein, Pfeiffer & Co.

On a scale of 1-100, with 100 being the highest, rate your self-concept regarding how accurate the following descriptions are regarding your talents, your motives and your values. Answer the following questions as honestly as you can and work quickly.

Technical Functional Competence _____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to apply your skills in some technical or functional area. You derive your sense of identity from the exercise of your skills and are most happy when your work permits you to be challenged in those areas. You may be willing to manage others in your technical or functional area, but you are not interested in management for its own sake because it would take you away from your own area of expertise.

General Managerial Competence _____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to climb to a level high enough in an organization to enable you to integrate the efforts of others across functions and to be responsible for the output of a particular unit of the organization. You want to be responsible and accountable for total results and you identify your work with the success of the organization for which you work.

Autonomy/Independence _____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to define your own work in your own way. You want to

remain in jobs that allow you flexibility regarding when and how you work. If you cannot tolerate organizational rules in which you will have the freedom you seek, you will seek roles where you have that independence. You refuse opportunities for promotion or advancement in order to retain autonomy.

Security/Stability_____ Your main concern is to achieve a sense of having succeeded so that you can relax. The anchor shows up in concern for financial security or employment security. Such stability may involve trading your loyalty and willingness in order to do whatever the employer wants you to do for some promise of job tenure.

Entrepreneurial Creativity_____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to create an organization or enterprise of your own, built on your own abilities and your willingness to take risks and to overcome obstacles. You want to prove to the world that you can create an enterprise that is a result of your own effort.

Service/Dedication to a Cause_____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to pursue work that achieves something of value, such as making the world a better place to live, solving environmental problems, helping others, improving harmony among people, curing diseases through a new product and so on.

Pure Challenge_____ What you would not give up is the opportunity to work on solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, to win out over tough opponents, or to overcome difficult obstacles. Some people find such pure challenge in intellectual work such as the engineer who is interested only in impossibly difficult designs; some find the challenge in complex, multifaceted situations such as the strategy consultant who is interested only in clients who are about to go bankrupt and have exhausted all other resources; some find it in interpersonal competition, such as the salesperson who defines every sale as either a win or a loss. Novelty, variety and difficulty become ends in themselves and if something is easy it becomes immediately boring.

Lifestyle_____ What you would not give up is a situation that permits you to balance and integrate your personal needs, your family needs, and the requirements of your career. You want to make all the major sectors of your life work together toward an integrated whole and you therefore need a situation that provides enough flexibility to achieve such integration. You feel that your identity is more tied up with how you live your total life, where you live, how you deal with your family situation, and how you develop yourself than with any particular job or organization.

Your Holland Occupational Theme: What Work Environment Reflects Your Personality?

John Holland created the following Holland Occupational Themes which have been used by millions of people to gain clarity about the type of work environment in which they might thrive.

Rank the following descriptors from 1 (most accurate descriptor) to 6 (least accurate descriptor) based on how well they describe your preferred way of working.

___ **Realistic (Doers)** – practical, physical, concrete, hands-on, and tool-oriented

___ **Investigative (Thinkers)** – analytical, intellectual, scientific, explorative, thinker

___ **Artistic (Creators)** – creative, original, independent, chaotic, inventive, media, graphics, and text

___ **Social (Helpers)** – cooperative, supporting, helping, healing/nurturing, teaching

___ **Enterprising (Persuaders)** – competitive environments, leadership, persuading, status

___ **Conventional (Organizers)** – detail-oriented, organizing, clerical

What do you Really Want to be Doing?

Allen, Bearg, Foley & Smith, *The Retirement Boom: An All-Inclusive Guide to Money, Life, and Health in Your Next Chapter*

Note to Readers: Although this exercise and the one that follows were taken from books about retirement, the questions these two sets of authors pose have helped many people who were nowhere near retirement age. They are powerful questions, hence their inclusion in this Planning Guide designed for individuals of all ages. Additional Note – I am friends with one of the authors of this book.

What elements would you really love to have in the next phase of your life that will satisfy your heart and soul? Too mushy? How about...

How would you like to spend your time in the next phase of your life?

Creating Flow: Who Were You When You Were at Your Best?

Bernstein & Trauth, *Retirement Your Way*

Past states when you felt completely satisfied to be doing what you were doing provide pivotal clues about what generally makes you happy.

Think back to those environments or situations in which you felt most creative, when you felt completely satisfied doing what you were doing. List as many as you can remember; be expansive, allow your memory to go back to when you were young and come to the present.

Times when I was completely satisfied:

To next page

From that list pick the one where time just seemed to slip away. Write a story about it. What did it feel like to be there, who were you with, what were you trying to accomplish? Pick the most satisfying and write a short story, or jot down bullet points, about what it felt like to be in that positive situation.

To Next Page

What does what you have written tell you about your interests, style, needs, skills, values, and/or situations in which you flourish?

The Peak Performance Mindset: Writing Your Personal Mission Statement

When I introduced Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People* as Key Resource #1, I mentioned that it was one of the five most highly recommended books I have suggested to those individuals who I have provided career and/or leadership coaching. A second most highly rated book is Charles Garfield's *Peak Performance: Mental Training Techniques of the World's Greatest Athletes*, written in 1984.

Both best-selling authors write about the importance of having a mission statement in order to be a highly successful peak performer. Dr. Garfield makes a clear distinction between having a mission and setting goals, "With few exceptions, peak performers are highly motivated by a deep and personal sense of mission, which is distinctly different from the highly specific and measurable goals each person may set...As shown on power point slide 11, Garfield defines mission as, "A passionate belief in a personal philosophy that establishes the basis for setting goals."

Stephen Covey in his chapter on Habit 2 – Begin with the End in Mind - in *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People* writes the following, "The most effective way I know to begin with the end in mind is to develop a personal mission statement or philosophy or creed. It focuses on what you want to be (character) and to do (contributions and achievements) and on the values or principles upon which being and doing are based A mission statement is not something you write overnight. It takes deep introspection and often many rewrites ... But fundamentally your mission statement becomes your constitution, the solid expression of your vision and values."

Here are two personal examples of mission statements. When I received my Masters degree in Counseling from NYU in 1977 we had to write a mission statement as part of our graduation requirement. Mine was "To help as many individuals as possible to lead lives with which they are satisfied while treating

everyone I encounter with the respect and dignity they deserve.” A second complementary mission statement created ten years ago related to my youth advocacy work is, “To lessen the instances of sexual assault and bullying on, and the use of tobacco products by young people.” The teenage hero Dawn Mortenson in my novels *Dawn of Hope* and *Dawn of the Tobacco Wars: The Sequel to Dawn of Hope* lived that mission statement through her actions.

Now is the time to work on your draft of your mission statement. Please read back over the Career Anchors you identified, your Holland Occupational Themes, your answer to the question “What do you really want to be doing?” and your work on “Creating Flow: Who were you when you were at your best?” Refer to the above descriptions of mission by both Drs. Garfield and Covey for assistance.

Here is some space to begin your draft of your Mission Statement if you are so inclined:

Job Search Activity List

Place a check mark next to those key job search actions that you currently have in place.

___ Identify the positive attributes and experiences that you bring to employers of interest and work to leverage your plusses and lessen your negatives in your approach.

___ Create a list with contact information of all those people who would return an outreach message from you. Prioritize it by how helpful you think they might be and how willing you think they might be to help you. Many people use LinkedIn or Facebook for this activity.

___ Create a strong LinkedIn profile.

___ Create a strong online and offline resume.

___ Create or utilize an existing resilience strategy that allows you to bounce back from the rejections, lack of replies to your outreach to friends and employers etc. that are a normal part of the job search process.

___ Create a list of employers of interest.

___ Create a list of jobs of interest.

___ Create a **proactive** (reaching out to employers of interest who have not listed a job, preferably through a referral from one of your contacts) & **reactive** (replying to an employer who has listed a position) job search strategy using www.job-hunt.org and other relevant resources.

Self-Information Summary

Transpose your answers in the previous exercises to the proper area below in preparation for the creation of a draft of of your Action Plan

What were your top Career Anchors?

What were your strongest Holland Codes?

What was your answer to the question – What elements would you really love to have in the next phase of your life? And/or

How would you like to spend your time in the next phase of your life?

Next Page

What is a summary statement of what you learned about yourself from your answer to the question When was a time when you were completely satisfied doing what you were doing? What did that exercise tell you about the type of situation in which you would flourish?

What actions did you already have in place from your answers on the Job Search Activity List? What are job search actions you believe you need to take in the short-term to move forward with movement toward situations of interest?

Creation of a Draft of Your Career Exploration & Job Search Action Plan

We are now at the section of the program where we are asking you to identify the actions you are you going to take to move your career and life forward. These actions might help move you toward your Personal Mission, if you have started to create one, and/or your interest in exploring career options or finding a volunteer opportunity, part-time job, full-time job, or self-employment situation.

Please take time to write down actions that you have identified based on what you knew before you started this program or learned while you were going through it. Be expansive while creating the initial draft of your action plan, you can always edit down your ideas as you move ahead.

Once you have a draft of your action plan I suggest writing down these actions in a letter to yourself, put that letter in a self-addressed, stamped envelope and give it to someone you can trust to put it in a mailbox at the end of a timeframe that would allow you enough time to complete the actions to which you have committed. I have done this exercise in multiple workshops and have found that when individuals knew they would be receiving their action plan statements of commitment in the mail they stated that they moved more energetically toward their goals and appreciated having data about how they had done.

If you don't think you need to send yourself a letter write down your draft of actions you are going to take in this document or wherever it will be easy to access. It is important to write down your commitment

with a timeframe attached to each action. I wish you the best as you move forward with your life and career.

Relevant Resources

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Stephen R. Covey

Peak Performance: Mental Training Techniques for the World's Greatest Athletes – Charles Garfield PhD

Career Anchors – Edgar Schein PhD

Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers – John L. Holland

Working with Emotional Intelligence – Daniel Goleman PhD

Transitions – William Bridges PhD

The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure and Bounce Back from Setbacks – Al Siebert, PhD. Dr. Siebert created the website The Resiliency Center – www.resiliencycenter.com which provides a free quiz that provides a resiliency score.

Highly Effective Networking – Orville Pierson (Note - Orville is a friend of mine)

The Brain Training Revolution: A Proven Workout for Healthy Brain Aging – Paul Bendheim M.D.

Retirement Your Way - Bernstein & Trauth

The Retirement Boom: An All-Inclusive Guide to Money, Life, and Health in Your Next Chapter – Allen, Bearg, Foley & Smith

www.jog-hunt.org