SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Why Do I Need a Self-Assessment Profile?

General over Your Lifetime
Vocational theorists think that a career is one of the fundamental ways in which you can reach your optimal human potential. In Donald Super’s Self-Concept Theory: the recurring stages of jobs in a career are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and, finally, disengagement. Satisfaction comes from a life in which the synergy of your personality, abilities, values, interests, and skills is allowed to play out in personal and work arenas.

Becoming self-aware is the beginning step in both an initial career choice and in subsequent career moves. Over your lifetime, you can expect to have four or more careers; thus you can imagine that career planning is more a complex series of reevaluation and change than a predictable, linear path and that self-assessment is an ongoing process of development and performance.

Specific in Today’s Marketplace

In the realities of the working world today, the implied “social” contract between employers and employees declares that you will have employment only as long as you possess knowledge and skills that meet contemporary business needs.

Taking the time to know who you are professionally and to know, as well, industry trends and the demands of employers are the first steps in determining your fit in the marketplace.

Yes, the wealth of job-search/career information available now from innumerable sources can become overwhelming and frustrating; however, self-knowledge both allows you some control over what can seem like chaos and helps you to choose a future compatible with your desire for a fulfilling lifestyle.

Once you have invested the time and reflection, you can use your “professional self-portrait” as a screen to eliminate new information not personally relevant, while incorporating useful, pertinent facts as they come to your attention.

This self-discovery process also will help you express yourself to employers in specific language which will attract them to your capabilities, your fit for the job, and your potential value to the organization.

Do not be afraid of feeling and then expressing the words, “passion, commitment, excitement, and enthusiasm” in your discussion with employers; this energy and openness become your competitive advantage.
What is Self-Assessment?

The information you gather for your professional self-portrait is multi-dimensional and multi-layered:

- personality and interpersonal styles/teamwork-interaction style/energy level
- priorities, goals and ambitions, ideals, and values: personal needs and motivation, lifestyle/work environment preferences, and corporate culture
- interests: personal/vocational/avocational
- knowledge, technical competencies, skills, and talents: preferred, non-preferred, and needed.

What is the Process of Self-Assessment?

1. Personality and interpersonal styles/teamwork-interaction styles/energy level:

   Several personality inventories are available:
   - Take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the Keirsey Temperament Sorter and learn your type and how you relate to others. Many businesses and corporations commonly use these products.
   - Become familiar with Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences: (verbal/linguistic, musical/rhythmic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal).
   - Read the research of Daniel Goleman into emotional intelligence (maturity is a combination and balance of common sense, wisdom, compassion, humor, self-reliance, and street smarts).
   - Analyze your interpersonal styles: do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team? Are you assertive, aggressive, or passive in your verbal and physical interactions with others? Do you have a sense of humor? Are you reasonable, disciplined, reliable, and responsible?
   - Understand your energy level: consider these four dimensions and how your energy rises and falls in situations: physical, intellectual, social, and emotional.

2. Priorities, goals and ambitions, ideals, and values: personal needs and motivation, lifestyle/work environment preferences/corporate culture:

   a. Understand Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, which outlines rising levels of needs and motivators from physical to emotional and psychological to intellectual and spiritual— from human basic, survival, reoccurring needs to love and affiliation to self-esteem and status to the final stage of more abstract, self-actualization needs.
   b. Relate this knowledge to Herzberg’s Theory of Motivation which states that both external motivators (salary, work conditions, career ladder) and internal motivators (amount and type of responsibility, recognition, and achievement) are important for job satisfaction.
   c. Do this simple work values game: list ten people who have jobs which interest you; list one element of each job which you like; then analyze and
evaluate those ten elements and design your “dream/ideal job.”

- **Lifestyle/work environment preferences:**
  Determine your predilection for the balance and relationship of your work environment to your lifestyle demands (hours, dress, organizational style and structure, supervision style, physical layout, pace, etc.).

- **Corporate culture:**
  Study the corporate culture which will mesh with your values and lifestyle choices. Find out and study the variety of corporate missions and management philosophies. Visit targeted companies to experience the atmosphere and assess the character.

3. **Interests: personal/vocational/avocational:**

  - **Personal interests:**
    What makes you curious? What do you like to read about? What conversations draw you in?

  - **Vocational interests:**
    a. Study Holland’s Code (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional) and take related inventories, such as the Sigi Plus or the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory for general vocational information to relate your personality, values, and interests to work cultures and career fields.
    b. Take the CareerLeader, a comprehensive inventory designed for those interested in the business arena.

  - **Avocational interests:**
    How do you spend your spare time? What are your talents as opposed to your skills? Is your hobby recreational and/or profitable?

4. **Knowledge, technical competencies, and skills, and talents: preferred, non-preferred, and needed:**

  - **Knowledge and technical competencies:**
    What intellectual foundation and expertise have you gained through education and experience? Know your GPA and list your achievements.

  - **Skills, preferred and non-preferred:**
    What are your abilities and talents? List your concrete skills (writing and presenting a business proposal) and your intangible skills (building rapport or motivating a team) and then prioritize in order of those you prefer to use daily and those you do not wish to make part of your job.

  - **Skills, needed:**
    Analyze your ideal job and determine what skills you will require to add to your repertoire. Make a plan to develop those skills.

**CareerLeader**

Join your peers in graduate and undergraduate business programs across the country in taking advantage of this useful, comprehensive career tool, designed to capture the unique pattern of your business-related interests, values, and abilities. Created by the career development staff of Harvard Business School and normed on over 25,000
students and clients representing years of education and experience, these inventories are a practical and efficient approach to gathering information for your self-marketing needs.

Upon registration, you may take this battery of self-assessment, computer-based inventories twice, most effectively one year apart. The resulting profile can act as one of your predictors of career satisfaction, and importantly, give you access to descriptions of a variety of relevant-to-you career paths, organizations and cultures, portraits of those who enjoy those professions, and the “requirements” for success in your chosen area.

- Graduate students can register with Shelly Hoover-Plonk in the MBA program office. Program fees cover costs.
- TBA: Undergraduate students, juniors and seniors, can register with Mary Williams, in the Undergraduate Academic Affairs suite; the cost is $20.00.

What are the Benefits of Self-Assessment?
With this self-knowledge, you are in charge of your career planning, strategy, and development.

Understanding and appreciating the key elements of your personality and interpersonal style, as well as your needs, values, interests, and skills pertinent to the job search, will keep you fresh and ready as the marketplace changes. With this information you can approach employers with competence and the confidence of well-considered goals.

Questions to Ponder
Take thoughtful, quiet time to explore these questions and to find useful answers:

- Rediscover how you made past decisions that led you to choose a management major or graduate school;
- fantasize about future options chosen with no barriers or restrictions;
- return to reality and lists constraints to your dreams;
- and finish with a practical, serious picture of who you are and what you want.

An additional approach is to ask trusted family, friends, and colleagues their perceptions of you.

1. How do I relate to people?
   Am I an extrovert or an introvert?
   Am I concrete or intuitive?
   How do I make decisions?
   Do I tend to be more rational or emotional?
   Do I prefer planning or spontaneity?
   What is my temperament style?
   What is my teamwork style?
   Am I a natural leader or do I have to work consciously to that position?
   How do others perceive me?
How do I stand out from others?

2. What are my physical/intellectual/social/ emotional energy levels? 
   How does my energy differ in each of these dimensions and what is the pattern I see during periods of calm or stress and pressure?

3. What matters to me most in life? 
   Why do I work? 
   What rewards are important to me: power, status and prestige, wealth, relationships, responsibility, recognition, intellectual challenge, personal development, freedom, social and community commitment, stability? 
   What have been the most satisfying and the most disappointing experiences at work, in school, or in my personal life? 
   What distinctions or honors have I received? 
   What types of corporate structure do I seek? 
   What is my preferred work setting? 
   What is my most productive work environment? 
   What career path do I want? 
   What style of supervisor do I prefer? 
   Who are my preferred co-workers? 
   How much will the culture and people with whom I work influence my performance and work satisfaction? 
   Am I a leader, follower, a team player, and/or an under/overachiever? 
   How much variety and stimulation do I need? How important is stability? 
   How do I handle long hours, heavy pressures, and deadlines? 
   Do I like to travel and how do I feel about relocation?

4. What are my favorite activities from childhood, adolescence, and adulthood? From school, play, hobbies, and community activities? 
   What challenges me? 
   What subjects engage my curiosity? 
   How much variety and stimulation do I want? do I need? 
   What business issues are of special interest? 
   What books and magazines do I read? 
   What do I like to talk about in social groups? 
   How do I spend my spare time?

5. What are my tangible skills? my intangible skills? 
   What skill is as easy for me as breathing? 
   Am I creative in my work? in my schoolwork? in my hobbies? 
   Do I enjoy using quantitative, logical, and analytical skills? 
   How are my problem-solving and decision-making skills? 
   What skills do I need or want to develop further? 
   What expertise do I have through formal or informal training or through life experience which would interest an employer? 
   What are my strengths and my weaknesses?
For what do people praise me or criticize me?

6. What is my conception of the perfect job?
   What would I do everyday?
   Where would I work?
   Whom would I prefer as my manager and my colleagues?
   What achievements and what contributions do I want to have made in five years?
   Ten years? 25 years?
   What would I like to say about my career at my retirement?
   What will make me say that I have led a good, happy life?