

How can a career plan help me reach my goals?



Chapter 10

Making a Career Plan

Key Terms

human resources
nonhuman resources
goals
career plan

Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- **explain** the importance of setting goals.
- **identify** your resources.
- **list** your personal and professional goals.
- **develop** a career plan.

Key Concepts

- The planning and decisions you make today lay the groundwork for your future career.
- Identifying and using your resources can help you to achieve your career goals.
- Your career interests and setting personal and professional goals can help you determine which career is right for you.
- A career plan helps you to focus on your career goal and how you plan to achieve it.

The Importance of Planning

What do you want to achieve by planning your career? You might answer, “to get a job.” However, would you really accept any job? If you are honest with yourself, you can name some jobs that you would not accept under any condition.

Like everyone else, you want a job that you will enjoy. A satisfying job doesn’t just happen. You must plan for it. Without plans, you’re likely to have no direction in life. See 10-1. People without direction often end up with whatever jobs are left, or no job at all.

The actions you take and decisions you make today lay the groundwork for your future career. This may sound overwhelming at first, but it really isn’t. Choosing a career involves several steps. Planning helps you take those steps in an orderly way. Planning keeps you organized and on track.

Exploring Your Resources

One of the first steps of the career planning process is to identify your resources. A resource is anything a person can use to reach his or her goals. Chapter 7 discussed the resources within you, such as your interests and aptitudes. The resources within you are **human resources**.

Some other human resources available to you are your teachers, counselors, and family members. They know you almost as well as you know yourself. Talk with them to help sort through your interests and explore career questions.



Your Reading

How is planning the key to finding a satisfying career?

human resources

The resources that people have within themselves.

Why Plan?

Alice:	<i>“Would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?”</i>
Cheshire Cat:	<i>“Well, that depends a good deal on where you want to go.”</i>
Alice:	<i>“I don’t much care where.”</i>
Cheshire Cat:	<i>“Then it doesn’t much matter which way you go.”</i>

10-1

Without a plan, you will lose your way and wander, just as Alice in Wonderland did.

nonhuman resources

Time and all the material resources around you.

Other resources that can help you reach your goals are nonhuman resources. **Nonhuman resources** include time—24 hours every day—and the material resources around you. Time to study as well as participate in a sport and rest is an example of the nonhuman resource of time. A car to travel to school and money for career training are examples of nonhuman material resources.

Other material resources that will help you prepare for your career are your school and community. Within these material resources are people—human resources—who can help you. See 10-2. Explore all that your school and community have to offer.

Your School

The library contains reference material relating to jobs and careers for you to explore. The Internet, often available through your school library or computer lab, has resources for current job openings and is also a source of job market trends.

10-2

Your teacher is a human resource, but your school is an example of a nonhuman resource.



More importantly, your guidance counselor has a wealth of information on careers, their educational requirements, and schools for further training.

A guidance counselor will also help you choose classes related to your career interests. If college is required, he or she will help you select the courses needed for college acceptance. Extracurricular activities can provide opportunities for developing your special skills as well as learning teamwork skills.

Your Community

A wide variety of volunteer activities are available to help you experience job duties firsthand. You can learn about employers in the area and possibly tour their facilities. You can make contacts with various people who can give you inside tips about their careers. They can provide job leads for you when you search for part-time or full-time work. Also, when you need job references, community contacts are usually very willing to serve that role.

Examining Career Interests

When you imagine yourself in a career, you try to picture what you would like about the job. Your likes and dislikes help you sort through potential careers to one that will satisfy you. Often, your likes are identical to your interests. By making a list of your likes and dislikes, you will see a pattern develop. From that pattern, you can conclude which career areas might interest you and which will not.

For example, the person whose interests are listed in Figure 10-3 might enjoy the following careers:

- child care worker
- teacher
- exercise instructor

Figure 10-3 also lists that person's dislikes. Based on those dislikes, he or she probably would not enjoy the following careers:

- data processor
- landscaper
- wallpaper hanger



Making a Difference

Volunteer to help work behind the scenes at a career fair. Assist the presenters with setting up materials before the presentation and with distributing information afterward.



Your Reading

How can your resources help you to achieve your career goals?

10-3

A simple list of your likes and dislikes will help you discover your career interests.



Your Reading

What role do your interests play in career planning?

goals

The aims a person tries to achieve.

Exploring Interests

Dislikes

Traveling and driving for long distances
 Reading technical material
 Painting or working from a ladder
 Cutting grass and doing yard work

Likes

Talking and being with people
 Working out and exercising
 Leading a group or teaching
 Planning activities for children

Your list of likes and dislikes will be much longer than the example shown here. If you have difficulty with creating a list, talk with your guidance counselor. He or she will help you determine your interests.

Sometimes interests are determined through aptitude tests. These tests are fun to take because there are no right or wrong answers. The tests match your interests with jobs that involve tasks you enjoy. Your answers to these tests paint a clearer picture of which career areas are best for you.

Setting Career-Related Goals

Have you ever seen people at work and imagined yourself in their shoes? Have you read about someone's interesting life and thought about yourself in a similar role? Without knowing it, you were considering those careers as goals for yourself.

Goals are aims or targets a person tries to reach or achieve.

Successful people plan for their success. They set goals for themselves and then work to reach them. To succeed in life, you cannot just wait for things to happen to you. You must make them happen. The best way to make things happen is to set goals.

Your goals may be grouped into two categories—long-term or short-term. Generally, *long-term goals* are those that will take more than six months to accomplish. *Short-term*

goals can usually be accomplished within several days or weeks. See 10-4.

The goals you want to achieve for yourself are your personal goals. As a student, many of your personal goals may be tied to your education. Some will also be related to your career. Wanting to achieve good grades and to graduate on time are two examples. Other examples of personal goals include the following:

- to talk to a guidance counselor about taking an aptitude test next week (short-term)
- to practice your math skills during the summer break (short-term)
- to join the debate club next season (long-term)

As you think about a career, you should also consider your professional goals. Any target you want to reach in your career is a professional goal. The following are some examples:

- to begin a college program in accounting next month (short-term)
- to obtain an entry-level accounting job in a large company after graduating from college (long-term)
- to have a management position within three years of working for the company (long-term)



10-4

Catching a fish is a short-term goal. Becoming a fish and game warden is a long-term goal.



Your Reading

How is setting goals related to career success?

Often, personal goals are closely related to professional goals. For example, the personal goal of living in a big city may be due to your professional goal of working downtown. Writing your goals down and reviewing them often is a good way to keep them foremost in your mind.

Taking Steps to Achieve Career Goals

After setting your goals, you must decide how you will achieve them. Be specific about what steps you will need to take to reach each goal. Writing the steps down on paper will help you think clearly. An example is shown in 10-5.

Sometimes people set goals without knowing how to achieve them. If you don't know what to do, ask your friends, family members, and teachers. Perhaps they can share experiences with you that will help you plan for your future.

When you complete a step toward reaching your goal, cross that step off your list. It will make you feel a great sense of accomplishment. When you finally reach your goal, you will have reason to celebrate.

Questions to Consider

Sometimes you may find that one of your goals is unrealistic or can't be achieved in the time period set. If this happens, you may need to change your goal or time frame. Don't be afraid to adjust your goals so you can reach them.

10-5

Writing down the steps needed to reach a goal can help you see what actions are needed.

How to Reach a Goal

The goal: to get a part-time job in a department store within the next two months (*short-term*)

Steps to reach the goal:

1. Look for a job in the classified section of the newspaper.
2. Stop at local department stores and fill out applications in their human resources departments.
3. Set up interview times.
4. Prepare for the interviews.

You may be better able to work toward a goal if you modify it. There are three questions to consider when setting career-related goals.

What Do You Want to Achieve?

This may be the most difficult question of all to answer. Rarely do people know their exact career goal at an early age. Even after reaching the career of their dreams, some people go on to explore other careers.

You should try to narrow your search to one career area that most interests you. However, staying alert to other interesting career areas is important in today's fast-changing workplace.

What Can You Realistically Achieve?

As you investigate the job that interests you, learn what is required to get the job. For example, some employers in the trades require their employees to have their own tools, 10-6. If you cannot afford to buy tools immediately, you may need to look at an alternative job until you can afford them.

Sometimes special training or education is required for a job. If your career goal is to be an engineer, you will need a bachelor's degree. You may not have the grades necessary to get into college, requiring you to take classes to prepare for higher-level study.

While the goal of *engineer* is a good one, you may have to start at a different level. For example, you might start as a draftsman or a clerk in an engineering office. You may also look at other related careers, such as an engineering technician or a land surveyor. It may take a little longer to reach your goal, but the additional work experience will greatly benefit you.

What Is a Realistic Period to Accomplish What You Want?

Your level of motivation will help to determine what you can accomplish in a given period. If you are willing to give up other activities and concentrate on reaching your goal, you may reach it in a relatively short period. The less time you spend working toward your goal, the longer it will take to achieve it.



Community Connections

Talk with some tradespeople in the community to determine if they must buy their own tools and bring them to work each day. Find out how much the required tools cost. Would this aspect of a career persuade them to decide on another type of career?

10-6

Often automotive technicians and other trades people must provide their own tools.



Your Reading

What should you do if a goal is unrealistic or can't be achieved in the time period set?



career plan

A list of steps a person takes to reach his or her career goals.

Developing a Career Plan

Knowing your resources and understanding what you want to do in life prepares you for the next step—creating a career plan. A **career plan** is a list of steps you need to take to reach your career goal. It should include the following:

- extracurricular and volunteer activities that help prepare you
- entry-level jobs that provide experience
- education and training requirements

A career plan is simply a guide. It helps to focus your attention on your career target and how you plan to achieve it. A career plan can be developed for any career. If your goals should change, your plan can be changed to reflect them.

One possible career plan is shown in 10-7. It shows the steps that one person might take to achieve the dream of becoming a landscape architect. Landscape architects design public outdoor areas so they are beautiful and useful. Notice the career plan

Career Plan for a Landscape Architect	
Junior High School	<p>Mow neighborhood lawns for the experience and extra money.</p> <p>Grow ornamental plants for state fair competition.</p> <p>Volunteer to help at cleanup events for neighborhood parks and highways.</p>
High School	<p>Join the local horticulture club.</p> <p>Start a neighborhood lawn care service.</p> <p>Work at a garden and nursery center part-time.</p> <p>Take classes in drawing and a college preparatory program emphasizing art, botany, and mathematics.</p>
College	<p>Earn a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture.</p> <p>Work during summers at a golf course to help maintain the greens.</p> <p>Intern in the senior year with a respected landscape firm.</p>
After College	<p>Work for two or three years in the occupation. (Some states may require a license to work in this area.)</p> <p>Consider obtaining a master's degree.</p>

10-7

As you accomplish each step of a career plan, your activities move you closer to your goal.

focuses on successive stages in life. It also lists the activities—ranging from easy to advanced—that can be handled in each.

In developing your career plan, it is important that you are true to yourself. You may know people that entered a career path because their friends were planning to do so. Sometimes people follow a certain path because they want to fulfill their parents' wishes. If you feel pressured by a similar situation, it is important that you talk about how you picture your future. Explain that you appreciate their concern for your well-being. Let them know that you hope they will support you and your career choice.

It may take several conversations before they understand your view. However, they may never agree with your decision. Still, you must address the issue with them so they know that you have thought carefully about your future.



Your Reading

What is the purpose of a career plan?

A circular graphic with a purple background and a white glow effect. The word "Chapter" is written in a light orange, cursive font at the top. Below it, the number "10" is written in a large, bold, orange font.

Summary

Choosing a career is an important step in your life. If you have a plan, you will stay focused on your goals and reach them sooner than you would without a plan.

Use the resources that are available to you. In addition to those within you, teachers, counselors, family members, your school, and your community are other resources to use. Resources help you achieve goals.

Setting goals for yourself is a way to make things happen. Goals help you achieve success. You may have both long-term and short-term goals. Some of your goals may be personal, and some may be professional.

Once you have set your career goals, decide how to achieve them in a career plan. Then work toward your goals, making changes to the plan if and when they are necessary. There is more than one way to arrive at your goal. Consider all possibilities and create a plan that best suits you.

Reviewing Key Concepts

1. Why is career planning important?
2. What two basic types of resources are available to you?
3. Why should you examine your likes and dislikes?
4. How do long-term goals differ from short-term goals?
5. Are personal goals related to professional goals?
6. What three questions should you consider when setting goals?
7. Name two reasons why a person might need to enter a career later than planned.
8. What is a career plan?
9. When should a person first write a career plan?
10. What three types of activities are included in a career plan?

Building Academic Skills

1. **History.** Review the career and early years of a famous historical figure. Document the steps that person took to acquire the career for which he or she is famous. Give an oral report on what you learned.
2. **Speaking.** Use graphic organizers to visualize your career plans. Prepare a speech in which you identify your unique career goal and list the steps necessary for achieving it. Also address the skills and knowledge you still need to learn. Form pairs to review each other's graphic organizers and provide helpful comments for improvement.

Building Technology Skills

1. Conduct an Internet search using the words *career planning*. How many sites can be found for helping you to plan careers? What types of information do the sites contain? Which of the sites provide the best help for career planning? Become acquainted with five career-planning sites and share their Web addresses and features with the class.
2. Produce a short video of resources in the school and around the community that help with career planning. Share the video with other classes or play it on your school media programs.
3. Research *aptitude test* online. Determine if the test you found can help you refine your list of career likes and dislikes. What did you learn from the online test? Can you find any other free aptitude tests online?

Building Career Knowledge and Skills

1. Research a career that interests you. Include in your report the educational requirements for this career and any special training that may be needed.
2. List all your likes and dislikes in separate columns. Using your list, identify careers that match the items in your "likes" column.
3. Make a list of personal and career goals. Share the list with at least three people. Ask them for advice in reaching the goals. Summarize their suggestions.

Building Workplace Skills

Map the steps of a career plan for the career that interests you most. Make your career plan cover at least the next 10 years. Be sure to list community and school activities plus volunteer or paid positions that will be helpful. Also identify any special training or education that is required. Give separate copies of your career plan to your teacher and guidance counselor for their review. Consider their recommendations and incorporate them in your plan if you desire. File your plan in a safe place for reference and update it when necessary.