

Planning Your Career



Source: Manitoba Career Development

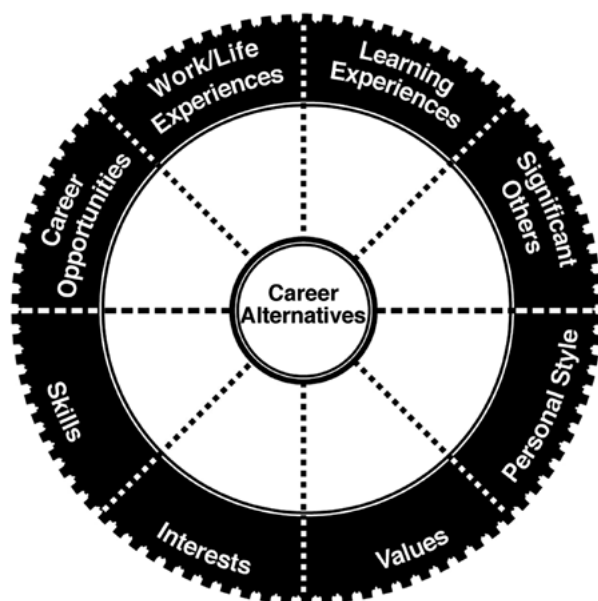
1. Evaluating Myself

What Do I Know About Myself and How Can I Learn More?

The first step in career planning is to know yourself. Understanding all the factors that make you unique will help you to plan a career that suits your own talents, skills, attributes, interests and circumstances. This section of the guide has lots of activities to help you learn more about yourself.

The Wheel

The Wheel is a useful career planning model. The Wheel is made up of eight different sections that will help you focus and record your self-exploration activities.



The top half of the Wheel is made up of external factors (ex: opportunities, experiences).

The bottom half of the Wheel is made up of personal characteristics (ex: skills, interests).

Reproduced with permission from *Career Pathways 2nd Ed.* (Amundson & Poehnell, 2008)

In the diagram, each section of the Wheel looks equal. Depending on your life circumstances, some sections of the Wheel might be more important to you than others. This could change at different times in your life. For example, if you currently have a young family, values might be more important to you at this stage of your life.

This section will focus on each of the eight areas of the Wheel. Once you complete the self-exploration activities you will record your results in The Wheel Template. You can also use the Wheel to record results from other assessments, such as interest assessments and skills assessments. After your Wheel is complete, you may notice patterns or themes in your results. These patterns or themes can help you decide on a career path.

Learning Experiences



Use the space provided to list your education experiences (ex: courses completed, professional development workshops, life experiences).

Formal Learning

Informal Learning

Learning from life experience

Do you have any learning goals?

(ex: complete high school, go to college)

Significant Others

Career planning is usually not done alone. Everyone has people in their lives (*ex: friends and family*) who will be affected by their career decisions. It's a good idea to think about how the important people in your life may influence or be affected by your career plans.

Some questions to ask yourself are:

- Who will influence my career decisions?
- How will they influence my career decisions? (*ex: family demands, family values*)
- Who will be affected by my career decisions?
- Who could help me identify my strengths and potential challenges?

Think about people who know you well. Ask some of them to help identify your interests or work with you on other activities in this guide. They might be able to tell you things about yourself that you hadn't noticed or help you put your career plan into action.



Use the space provided to list important people in your life. Think about who will influence your career decisions or be affected by them. List people who can support you to put your career plan into action.

People to consider in my decision making

People who can support me in my career plan

Personal attributes

Everyone has characteristics and personality traits that make them unique. These form their personality or personal style. Knowing your style preferences will help you to choose an occupation or work environment where you can be yourself and be appreciated for who you are. Although you may sometimes need to work in situations where you can't totally be yourself, it's hard to keep this up long term.



A **personal attribute** is a characteristic or quality that you have. Use the **personal attributes** below to help you identify your personal style. List your top 5 – 10 on your wheel under personal style.

Attributes

accountable	confident	engaging	innovative	personable
adaptable	considerate	enterprising	insightful	polite
adventurous	constructive	enthusiastic	inspiring	positive
agreeable	co-operative	entrepreneurial	intuitive	practical
altruistic	co-ordinated	expressive	just	precise
analytical	courteous	fair	kind	productive
articulate	creative	flexible	logical	professional
artistic	decisive	focused	loyal	punctual
assertive	dedicated	friendly	methodical	persuasive
attentive	dependable	fun	moderate	realistic
balanced	determined	funny	modest	receptive
calm	devoted	generous	motivated	reliable
candid	direct	gentle	nurturing	resourceful
careful	disciplined	graceful	objective	respectful
caring	driven	grateful	observant	responsible
cheerful	dynamic	gregarious	open-minded	sincere
circumspect	eager	hard-working	optimistic	sympathetic
collaborative	efficient	helpful	orderly	systematic
committed	eloquent	honest	organized	tenacious
compassionate	empathetic	humble	original	thorough
competitive	encouraging	imaginative	patient	trustworthy
concise	energetic	industrious	perceptive	visionary

Values

Work Values

Knowing and understanding what's important to you about work will help you to choose an occupation and a work environment that matches your values. Are you most concerned with earning enough money to pay your bills or advancing your skills and experience? In reality, you are probably working for a number of reasons and it's good to identify those reasons, understand their importance, and which career values are most important to you.

Complete the activity below or use this work values quiz to help identify what you value at work:

Service Canada - Training and Careers:

<https://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/>



Use the following checklist to help you identify your work values:

1. Read through each of the listed values and check off the ones that are important to you.
2. Use the space at the bottom of the list to add any values that are not listed.
3. Review the values that you checked. Identify the five values that are most important to you. Write them in the space provided.

Value	✓
Advancement – opportunity to improve position and pay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adventure – things that involve risk or uncertainty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefits – healthcare and personal benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenge – situations that push you to be better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change and variety – varying tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community involvement – work that impacts larger community	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition – comparing work for the purpose of winning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-operation – working with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity – using your imagination	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic security – receiving a rate of pay that meets your needs	<input type="checkbox"/>


Value	✓
Education – change to further your schooling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrepreneurship – opportunities to create your own business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment – the atmosphere in which you work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excitement – passion about what you do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast Pace – enjoy a fast environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendly Co-workers – pleasant and caring co-workers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good Income – earning a lot of money	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping Others – work that benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honesty – being told the truth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving society – work that would benefit society as a whole	<input type="checkbox"/>

Value	✓
Independence – working with little direction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influence over others – affect others work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal relations – relations with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interesting work – work that motivates you	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership – direct and influence others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning opportunities – chance to grow personally	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leisure – time away from work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making decisions – deciding how things should be done	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management – organizing and controlling situations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring – opportunity to train others	<input type="checkbox"/>

Value	✓
Physical Activity – staying physically active	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem-solving – figuring out how to move forward	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public contact – interacting with community members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognition – getting thanked for work done well	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsibility – deciding how things will be	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rewards – extra incentives for work well done	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk – unknown possibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Value	✓
Routine – same tasks each day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety – no risk to yourself or others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedule – outline of when work needs to be done	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-expression – adding a personal touch to your work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social interaction – time to interact with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stability – being assured of a job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Status – position of importance within a workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>

Value	✓
Teamwork – ability to work with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time for flexibility – not a set work schedule and ability to schedule own time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel – work that allows you to go to different places	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work under pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work alone – doing things without much contact with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with Others – doing things in teams or with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>



ACTIVITY

Use the space provided to list your five most important work values.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

You likely place importance on many different values and these might change over time. It is important to evaluate why these values change so you ensure your employment matches what matters to you.

Interests

Interests are things you like or even love to do. Everyone's interests are a little bit different. When you get excited about doing things, those activities are likely the things you like best. With good planning you can find work that really interests you. When you are paid to do a job you love, it may not even feel like "work." To get started, make a list of what you are interested in. Next, look at your list and see if there is a way to turn your interests into a work opportunity.



There are lots of interest inventories available to help you identify your interests. Check out:

- The Career Matchmaker assessment from Career Cruising:
www.careercruising.com **username: barrie password: centre**
- Holland Code Quiz:
www.roguecc.edu/Counseling/HollandCodes/test.asp

Take the results of these assessments and what you know about yourself to create the interest inventory below.

Interest Inventory

What are your 10 favourite activities (*ex: traveling, reading, learning, coaching people, fixing things, building things*)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Skills

Skills – or abilities – are things that you are able to do. Some skills are job-specific and can be used in only one line of work. Skills that can be used in many occupations are known as transferrable skills. You may have developed these skills in school, on the job, volunteering or through life experiences.

In your career journey, you might hear about “soft” skills and “hard” skills. Soft skills are sometimes called “employability” skills. These are the skills you need to enter, stay in and progress in the world of work:⁴

- communication
- problem solving
- positive attitudes and behaviours
- adaptability
- working with others
- science, technology and math skills⁵

“Hard” skills, or technical skills, are specific skills that you learn (ex: typing, fixing machinery, operating equipment); they may be easier to demonstrate than soft skills. Training programs and formal learning opportunities usually focus on hard skills.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has developed a list of essential skills for work, learning and life:⁶

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- oral communication
- working with others
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use

⁴ www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e

⁵ *Employability Skills 2000+* www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx

⁶ *Understanding Essential Skills* www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/understanding_es.shtml

For more information about skills, visit:

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml

http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/report_skillknowledge-eng.do?action=search_form



Use the skills assessments you completed and what you know about yourself to create a list of:

- skills you have now
- skills you'd like to use for work
- skills you'd like to develop

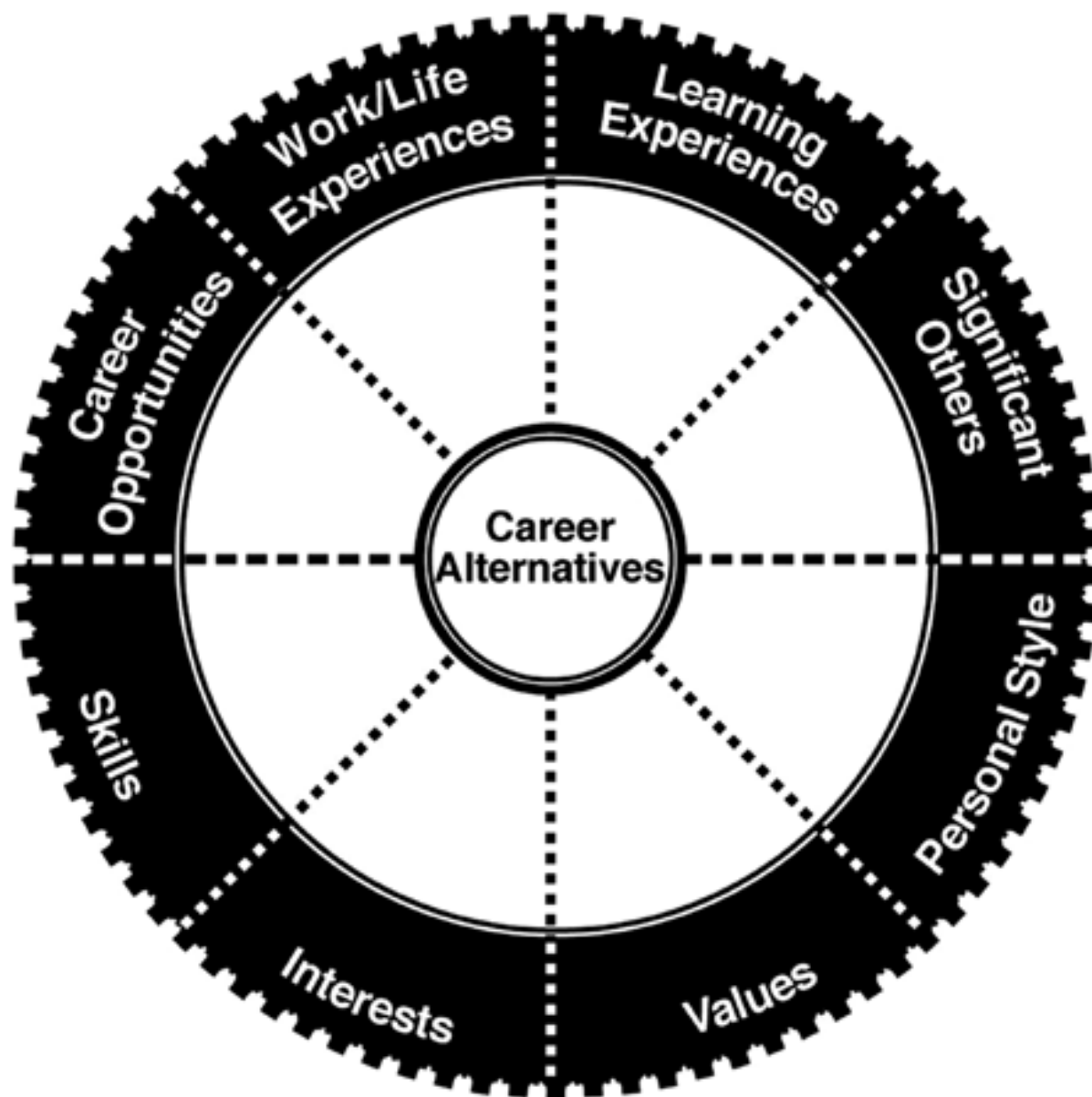
My skills

Skills I'd most like to use when working

Skills I'd like to develop

The Wheel Template

Use this Wheel Template to record the results of your self-exploration activities.



2. Exploring Options

How Can I Learn About the Job Market?

Once you've done some self-exploration, it's time to look around to see what type of jobs might suit you. There is lots of information about jobs, occupations and employment prospects in your area. This information is called labour market information; it can help you make decisions about the type of work you'd like to do. Labour market information includes:

- job descriptions
- wages
- employment requirements
- trends or outlooks (ex: will there be work in this occupation in the future?)
- unemployment or labour shortages



Some good sources of labour market information include:

Government of Canada Labour Market Information

www.jobbank.gc.ca

Wages / Labour Market Information

www.jobbank.gc.ca

Look up the career alternative you identified using the suggested resources. Compare the information provided to your skills, interests and values. Don't overlook people as a source of information. Once you've narrowed down your interests, try to talk to people who work in the jobs in which you are interested. This is called informational interviewing. Informational interviewing is a great way to get first-hand information and a chance to ask questions.



Once you begin your research, you'll need to keep track of your findings. Use the Career Research Worksheet provided to guide your research. It's a good idea to research at least three to four of the career alternatives that interest you.

Career Research Worksheet

Photocopy

Occupation name: _____

Typical job duties (list three-to-five)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Education needed: _____

Note: if you don't currently have the required education for the career you are considering, list where the training is available. (ex: list local training providers, colleges and their programs)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Physical requirements or demands:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Skill or ability requirements:

(ex: communication skills, interpersonal skills, ability to travel)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Salary ranges (ex: low, average, high): _____

Occupational outlook _____

(ex: What are your chances of getting a job? Will there be vacancies?)

Similar or related occupations: _____

For how long do you see yourself doing this job? _____

Are there opportunities for advancement? _____

3. Making Decisions

How Can I Decide?

Once you've completed your self-exploration and your labour market research, you are ready to make some career decisions. This section will help you look at all the options before making a decision.

You have used the wheel to document things that are important to you. As a result, you have a better understanding of your interests, work values, skills, and things you need to keep in mind when choosing a career path.

Use the template below to evaluate the various career alternatives you have researched. This should ultimately let you choose a path that will lead you to satisfying work/life opportunities.

Career Decision-Making Chart

Results of self-exploration activities	Career Alternative Customer Service - Retail		Career Alternative Customer Service - Bank		Career Alternative _____		Career Alternative _____	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Interests								
Fashion	✓			✓				
Skiing		✓		✓				
Working on a team	✓		✓					
Community service		✓		✓				
Values								
Family	✓		✓					
Working with others	✓		✓					
Variety at work	✓		✓					
Responsibility								
Personal Style								
Focused on results	✓		✓					
Family oriented								
Organized								
Committed								
Skills								
Customer service	✓		✓					
Organization	✓		✓					
Leadership	✓			✓				
Interpersonal	✓		✓					
Work/Life Experience								
School	✓		✓					
Volunteer	✓		✓					
Soccer coach	✓			✓				
Customer service representative	✓		✓					
Learning Experiences								
High school diploma	✓		✓					
Significant Others								
Children		✓	✓					
Husband	✓		✓					
Best friend	✓		✓					



ACTIVITY

Use the following chart to compare the career alternatives you have identified to the factors in your wheel.

Results of self-exploration activities	Career Alternative		Career Alternative		Career Alternative		Career Alternative	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Interests								
Values								
Personal Style								
Skills								
Work/Life Experience								
Learning Experiences								
Significant Others								