

Making a Sound Career Choice

Making decisions about your career doesn't always have to be complicated. If you have spent time getting to know yourself and researching different opportunities, you should be able to make a sound decision. If you plan well, be rest assured that finding a good career, isn't an insurmountable task – even if you're starting from scratch. The steps below can help anyone make a good career choice.

1. Get to Know Yourself

It is virtually impossible to make a sound career choice if you have not done your self-assessment. You need to first know who you are and what you are expecting yourself to be. A self-assessment test needs to address your values, interests, skills and personality traits. This will help you to rule out some careers which do not suit your personality and get your career path more clearly and with appropriate career options.

2. Make a Potential Careers List

Once you know your personality through a career assessment you now have a preliminary list of jobs that match your values, interests and skill set. The task now is to narrow this long list of occupations to not more than ten. Work with the theory of elimination and delete those careers from the list that you are not interested in. For example if your career test indicates that you need to become a civil engineer but you have no interest in buildings and structures then strike out the civil engineering. Years ago I met a girl named Sharon who wanted to be a doctor but when we discussed further, I found out that her biggest fear was looking at blood. Most people can narrow their list down to five to ten potential careers simply by eliminating those occupations they know they're not interested in. Secondly put together the positives and negatives of each career and eliminate those which have the largest number of negatives and least number of positives.

3. Know More About Each Career on Your List

Now you need to explore each career in depth. For each career, you should review a job description, educational and training requirements, average earnings, job outlook, and advancement opportunities. Once you do that you might realize that there are some careers that no longer appeal to you. Becoming a journalist seemed like fun but now it seems they don't make enough money to support the lifestyle you want. After considering becoming a CA you may decide that earning a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting just isn't meant for you. At the end of it, you should have a list of no more than three careers.

4. Meet Professionals in the Field

One of the best ways to figure out which of the careers left on your list is right for you is to meet the professionals working within each occupation. Talking to them will allow you to collect in-depth information that you can't get from any other source. Information you will receive from these sources will be first hand, current and reliable. Before meeting such people you need to have an exhaustive list of questions to ask them. This will ensure that all your doubts are clear and you have all the information you need. It also would show your seriousness about a career and help build a professional network over the years.

5. Narrow Your List to Just One Occupation

Follow this process and bring your career list down to one possible career option. List down the positives and negatives like Sharon did. She was scared of blood but loved kids and dogs. She wanted to be a Paediatrician or a Veterinarian. What she now realised was that it would not fit her style and

she was not ready to work for long years. In her assessment it was also clear that she would do very well in designing and working with structures. Sharon recently passed out from the architectural college. So it is after thoroughly reviewing the pros and cons of each career, and carefully considering the information obtained that you should be able to decide on one occupation to pursue.

6. Set Career Goals

Now that you have decided on an occupation, you need to put a plan in place for your Career Goals. Realistic, achievable goals are essential for the career planning process. While goals must be realistic, they should also be flexible enough to accommodate change – which inevitably will occur.

7. Career Development Plan

This helps you get from where you're currently at to reach your Goals in phases. It is a career Path or a roadmap from choosing your first Job to the peak point in your career. The career development plan works well if you know the mantra of Plan-Sequence -Timing and Outcome. There needs to be a serious thought process involved into building your career path while continuously improving upon your transferable skills.

8. Train Yourself

The More you learn the more you earn. It's true for long term career success. Most of the careers require a formal education, or skilled training at minimum. Over a lifetime most successful professionals will continue to gain more education and training as they advance in their careers.

The decisions you make now affect you later and can have a profound effect on your entire future and quality of life. Making good choices regarding your career affects whether or not you will enjoy your work and be successful at your job. It can affect how your life may turn out overall. Therefore, be sure to make your sound career decisions based on the right choices.