



Any successful career plan starts by having a goal for your target job. This is the job where you get to use your talents and skills. The job you feel passionate about, where you wake up each day and look forward to work. Some of us know exactly what that job is, and how we're going to get there. For others, it can be a lifetime of wandering around from job to job until we figure it out. You can save time, effort, money, and improve your own personal well-being by taking the time now to identify what you want to do with your life, and making each experience count towards your career goals.

Get Organized

Starting a Career Plan

1. **Get Focused!** What do you want to do? What are your priorities in life? If you want to be happy in what you do, you'll want to make sure these two match up.
2. **Take Inventory!** Exactly what can you do right now? What skills would you promote to an employer?
3. **Find the Gaps**— Look at your target career and compare it to your current skills. What's missing? More education? More experience? A certification?
4. **Set Your Career Goals**— Put a timeline to your career plan and set goals. Use your goals to measure your progress towards the target job.
5. **Set Your Mental Attitude**— What do you believe about work and how does it interact with your personal well-being?

Experts say you will have 5-7 job changes by the time you are 38, and some of those may be total shifts in career direction.

57% of people would prefer to work for themselves or start their own company.

Identifying Your Target Job



Setting Your Career Destination

When you need to get directions, you enter a destination on your phone, and it uses GPS to plot the course from your current location to your destination. You do have some choices in which route to take, and whether you go by foot, car, bus, or ride share. If you don't have your GPS turned on, you get a map of the destination, but no route to get there.

Think of your career plan as your GPS, and the skills you have right now as your current location. Your target job is the destination.

You choose which route you take to your destination- whether you take the fastest route, or add other stops along your journey. Setting goals and creating a plan for your career keeps you on track.

As you gain more experiences and work in different areas, you may find that your destination changes. Whether from an accident blocking the road, or a side trip that takes you in a new and more exciting direction. Don't forget to take a look around you and enjoy the view!



Skill Gaps

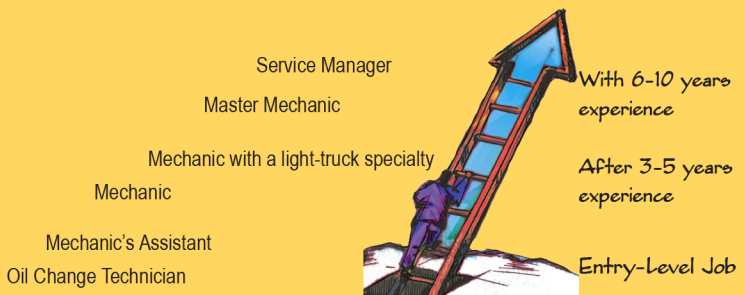
Once you know your skills, look at the requirements of your ideal job, and identify the gaps between what you can do now, and the skills you'll need in the future.

- Look at the job descriptions, experience needed, and qualities of the people in that job.
- You know your current skills, now identify the skills and experiences you still need to do that position.
- Your skill gap is the difference in skills and experience between the two places.
- By identifying the skills you need to gain, you have a starting point for setting your career goals.

Career Ladders

What jobs will help you build the experience and skills you need to reach your target job? Do your research. Identify the skills and education you need, then target the jobs you can do now to start you on your way.

Start at the bottom of the ladder with entry-level jobs.
Add more education, training, and experience.
Work your way up the career ladder.



Exercise: Reaching a Target Job

Look at your future right now... what would your ultimate job be? If you were to feel happy and successful, what work would you be doing each day? Research your target job and identify the answers to the questions below to being to create your career plan.

My Target Job		I see myself there in _____ years.	
What skills do I need to do the target job?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ 	
EDUCATION	Degree or training needed		
Specialty training needed			
Certification or License needed:			
How much will it cost?			
How long will it take?			

JOBS that will help me reach my target

Job 1:	Full or Part Time	Job 2:	Full or Part Time
Key skills/knowledge I'll learn:		Key skills/knowledge I'll learn:	
Job 3:	Full or Part Time	Job 4:	Full or Part Time
Key skills/knowledge I'll learn:		Key skills/knowledge I'll learn:	

Take Action!

What Can I Do Now to Get Ready for My Target Job?

- Choose the right major or education program to develop skills needed in the target job.
- Identify any specialty area that interests you and find out the requirements.
- Pay attention to graduation requirements and GPA expectations of employers in the field.
- Focus on getting good grades.
- Look for summer jobs and internships that can build skills you need.
- Join a professional association, or reach out and be a mentor to others.
- Volunteer as a way to gain soft skills you need on the job.
- Identify any licenses or certifications needed to start out in this field.
- Taking any exams needed to be able to practice in your field.
- Get additional technical certifications that support your work.

There's Always More than One Way...

There are different ways to get to the same target job

- Jill became head nurse in local hospital after working her way up from a floor nurse, with 6 years on the job.
- Joe's experience as a medic in the army lead to his leadership of a trauma unit in another hospital.
- 25 years experience in computer engineering led Roy to a career as a university professor.
- Joe started out as a university professor after getting his Ph.D. in the same subject.

How will your target job impact your personal well-being?



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Additional Resources:

- Creating Your Career Portfolio: At-A-Glance Guide for Students
- Career Transitions Workbook

For more information visit <http://bit.ly/career-portfolios>