



Monash Career Planning Resource



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Monash Career Planning Resource

Definition: Career planning is a process by which goals, values, aspirations, abilities, lifestyle, personality, likes and dislikes are identified, examined, prioritised to help individuals determine long term career path and destination.

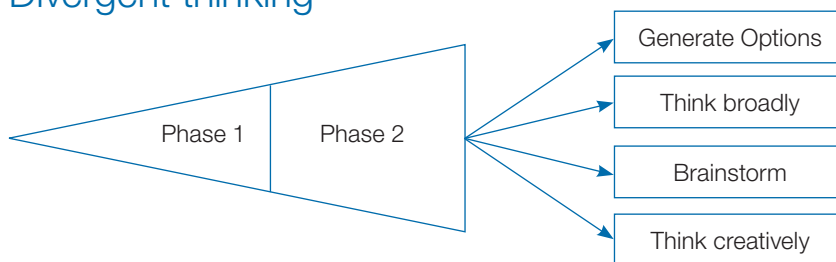
Decide whether you need a career plan or a career strategy.

A **strategy** is less clearly defined. It is useful when there are a number of uncertainties as to how you will achieve your goals. The goals you set might be more long term and it is therefore likely there will be more factors impacting whether or not they are achievable. It will identify some wide ranging directions you intend to investigate, some ideas as to how you will do this and will include a broad definition of the goal or outcome you want to achieve.

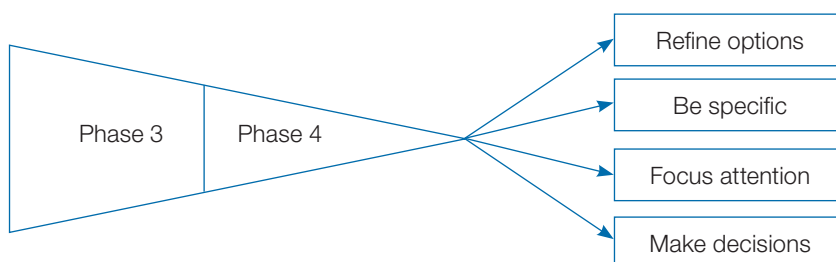
Divergent thinking helps when you are developing your strategy.

If you have some idea about the career direction you want to pursue and can envisage a way to get there, then a **career plan** will be most useful for you. A plan is a series of definite steps and actions you will take in order to achieve a goal. It may include resources you intend to draw on and milestones you will use to determine your progress. **Convergent thinking** is helpful in determining how you will turn your career plan to a reality.

Divergent thinking



Convergent Thinking



Career Planning Process:

Phase 1: Where am I now? (Divergent thinking)

In order to commence your journey towards determining your career goals and direction, it is important to have a clear understanding of your starting point. You never know, you may find that where you are now currently meets more of your needs than you originally thought!

In order to help you clarify where you are now, a number of exercises have been developed. These exercises encourage divergent thinking and will set you along the path of thinking more broadly about what options might be available to you.

At the end of this phase you will have:

- thought about how you want your career path to look when you retire
- a clear idea about what values and interests are important to you
- been honest with yourself about your skills and abilities
- a better understanding about what job satisfaction means to you.

This information will provide the basis from which to explore future career directions.

Activity 1: Write your own retirement speech

Thinking about the end point of your career can help you to define what specifically you want out of your working life. What will colleagues say at your retirement function? What career highlights will they recount and what personal qualities will they attribute to you?

When you have thought about what you would like to hear people say about you, sit down and write the speech.

Activity 2:

Thinking about your retirement speech may started you thinking about what is important for you. Try and capture this more specifically by developing lists of:

- Your values
- Your interests
- Your skills and abilities

You may find these lists are quite long. Try and identify your top five or ten values and interests by ranking all items on your lists, using the following scale:

1. Most important
2. Somewhat important
3. Limited importance
4. Not very important

For the list of skills and abilities, rank the items on your list in terms of:

- (A) Your level of competence: 1 (very competent) to 4 (don't feel confident)
- (B) The level of enjoyment you receive from doing them: 1 (enjoy immensely) to 4 (Dislike)

Activity 3:

Using these lists and your retirement speech write a personal vision for yourself. By doing this you will help clarify for yourself what you are aiming for:

My personal vision is to....

Refine your personal vision until you are happy with it (this may take some days / weeks. When you are satisfied, add it to the first section of your personal action plan.

Activity 4: Job satisfaction

- (1) What is my current level of job satisfaction?
What tasks or responsibilities of my current job make it satisfying or not satisfying?

Spend 10 minutes now creating a checklist of the 10 factors that are important for you in determining job satisfaction, in descending order of importance.

These might prompt you:

- Positive relationships with peers
- Challenging work tasks
- Clear direction
- Opportunities for development
- Nature of work aligns with my values
- Doing something I enjoy
- Flexibility in working arrangements

- Opportunity to lead others
 - Doing something that helps others
- (2) Ask yourself 'What have my satisfaction levels been in other positions? What aspects of those jobs did I find satisfying and what aspects did I find less satisfying? Rate others positions you have held against your list of factors important for measuring job satisfaction. What do these ratings tell you?

Checklist for Phase 1:

- Retirement Speech identifying life long goals/ aspirations
- List of values, interests, skills important to me
- A Personal Vision statement
- Top ten factors to determine job satisfaction

Phase 2: What do I want? (Divergent thinking)

What is it that would make you satisfied and motivated in your career, your personal life and your community life? Understanding what you are looking for in a job and what sort of roles might motivate you can help identify what actions you need to take to progress your career.

As a result of this Phase you will have:

- Found out more about your areas of vocational interest
- Turned your career aspirations into more tangible goals

Activity 1:

Questionnaires can be a good way of identifying types of roles you enjoy. Complete an online interest questionnaire to help identify where your career interests lie.

www.viq.com.au/

Free trial of Vocational Interest Questionnaire

www.myfuture.com/toolbox/workinterest.html

Provides jobs under interest categories (social/investigative etc)

www.librarysupportstaff.com/4personaltest.html#career

Provides a variety of online tests (some free others not) designed to provide insight into career interests and personality type. Also references a number of other resources (books, articles etc)

Take the results of the questionnaire and answer the following questions:

- i) How do your strongest preferences match with the requirements of your current position?
- ii) Identify aspects of your job where there is a match – What do these tell you about future career choices you will make?
- iii) Are there areas where there is little or no match? What does this tell you about future career choices you will make?

Activity 2:

From your retirement speech (Phase 1) list the achievements that would help you get to the point where people would say the things you have written in that speech.

How will you get from where you are now to that retirement function where people are saying what you have written? You may also want to refer to your Personal Vision Statement.

The achievements you have listed form the basis for writing some key goals you want to achieve during your career.

Try summarising the achievements into 5 or 6 key goals.

Before you finalise your list, here is a few things to think about when developing goals.

Setting goals can help you to:

- Remain focussed and channel your energy and effort
- Be clear on the direction you are heading
- Develop/maintain determination, patience and persistence
- Reward yourself when milestones are achieved

Setting goals for yourself can have the added effect of helping you feel more in control of your life, becoming more proactive instead of reactive.

Goals need to be practical and achievable. One way to determine this is to check them against the criteria below:

Are the actions you have listed to achieve your goals SMART?	
Specific:	They must be clear, concise and simple to understand. Will they ensure you achieve your goal? Have you defined the resources you will need to achieve them? Resources don't need to be tangible – they could include support of family, work colleagues.
Measurable:	They must also be measurable and/or quantifiable wherever possible. You can use the Achievement column to define this.
Achievable:	While they should stretch you to some extent, they should also be reasonably attainable. Too difficult and you will quickly become frustrated and demoralised. Too easy and you may lose your motivation and interest.
Results Orientated:	Unless you have a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve, it will be very easy to lose your focus and determination, particularly when things get hard. Make sure your Achievement column clearly defines the changes you want to see.
Time specific:	Have you specified milestones by which you can measure your progress?

The goals you have identified will help guide you towards achieving a satisfying, rewarding career. However, not everyone has unlimited time and resources to spend on career development and enhancement – most of us also need to earn money and meet our day to day commitments. The next two activities will help you work out where to invest the resources you have available to you right now.

Activity 3:

In order to determine which goals are most important, try grouping them into High, Medium and Low priorities.

The rating scale below might help you:

- **High Priority Goals** – these are the ones that are critical to meet if you are to achieve what you want.
- **Medium Priority Goals** – these are the ones that are important to achieve but not central in order to have a satisfying career.
- **Low Priority Goals** – these are the additional extras that would be nice to achieve but your satisfaction with your career won't be diminished if you don't.

Activity 4:

In order to prioritise your goals so you know where you need to focus your energy and resources, try rating each goal in terms of how important it is and how easily it can be achieved.

For your High Priority Goals rate them as

1. A good idea that I can easily do now
2. A good idea that I need to think about or explore in more detail
3. A good idea but for the future, not now
4. Not such a good idea after all

Now do the same ranking for your Medium Priority Goals

Take the High and Medium Priority Goals that you have rated as a 1 and put them on your Action Plan under Heading 'Do Now'

Take the High and Medium Priority Goals you have rated as a 2 and put them on your Action Plan under heading 'Investigate Further'.

Take the High and Medium Priority Goals you have rated as a 3 and put them on your Action Plan under the heading 'Back Burner'.

Checklist for Phase 2:

- Result of interest questionnaire and implications for future career choices
- List of achievements from your retirement speech, and from these
- Prioritised list of career goals

Phase 3: Reflect and Analyse (Convergent thinking)

You should now have a better idea about your goals for the future and the values, interests and skills that will help you to get there. Now you need to think about how you are going to achieve these goals. Broadly speaking what sort of roles / positions will help you achieve these goals? What sort of industries have the most of these positions? How do you get started in such industries? These are challenging questions and ones which may require you to do some further investigation.

By the end of this Phase you will:

- Know what type of roles you should start considering
- Know the industries that these roles are most common in

Activity 1:

Think about what you wrote in your Personal Vision statement and the list of values and interests you identified as important to you. What sort of roles encompass these values? For example, if 'helping others' is a value and an interest of yours, leadership, advisor, practical or educational roles might provide the most opportunities to live this value. Using the examples of roles below, plus any others you can think of, write a list of the type of roles you believe fit best with your values and interests.

Some examples of roles include:

- Leadership
- Management
- Advisor
- Strategic
- Practical
- Education
- People orientated

Activity 2:

Now think about the types of industries that incorporate the roles you are interested in or that would help you achieve your overall goals? You might need to spend time reviewing the employment section of the newspaper or the employment web sites to get a better idea what sort of industry sectors advertise these roles.

Some examples are:

- academia
- government (federal, state, local)
- mining
- retail
- services

Checklist for Phase 3:

- List of types of roles that act as criteria against which to determine suitability of jobs.
- List of industry types that are of interest and which align with values identified in Phase 1

Phase 4: Action Planning (Convergent thinking)

Now that you have identified your career goals, what is driving you to achieve them and what sort of employment areas might be relevant, you now need to plan. Planning could involve gathering more information on the types of industries you have identified.

So far we have established what you want to achieve and why you want to achieve it. In order for these goals to be real we also need to define:

- a) When you aim to achieve them
- b) How you will achieve them.
- c) What resources you will need
- d) How you will know when you have achieved the goal

Attached is a format for an Action Plan. You may need to modify it to suit your needs.

Activity 1:

Force Field analysis. What is driving me to achieve my goals - & what is preventing me? What will I do about these blockers?

Drivers	Blockers

Conclusion

The Action Plan you have developed is designed to bring about change. When change is imposed on us by others it can be difficult to accept and adapt to. However, when we are the instigators of the change, it is likely to we will be more comfortable – after all, the changes you have identified as wanting to bring about are for your benefit!

However, these changes may not be easy for others to understand or accept. Even for you, this process of

changing how you live your life will sometimes be difficult and discouraging.

Change is difficult because it takes time and effort and because it is a gradual process and not a 'quick fix'. It requires patience and tolerance for failures to change as quickly as we might expect or demand of ourselves. The change process is uneven and it is easy to become discouraged when everything seems static and all our efforts seem to be in vain. In such circumstances it is very easy to revert to our 'old' ways of doing things, our habitual responses, thoughts and feelings.

Some factors that can impact our ability to change:

- Our personal attitude to change. This can be determined in part by two things:
 1. Our tolerance for ambiguity (the ability to cope with ambiguous situations; rapid change or vague . inadequate information)
 2. Our 'locus of control' (the extent to which people believe they are in control of their own destinies)
- Organisational structures also affect our ability to change. The more hierarchical or rigid an organisation, the more challenging it can be to bring about change.
- Fear of failure or success can also be a major barrier to change.

Activity

What changes will the achievement of your goals bring about?

What impact will these changes have on your life?

What will others think of these changes – how much support will you have, will others let you change?

How will you address this and gain their support?

Action plan

Name:

Today's date:

Personal Vision Statement:

'Do Now' Goals are:

1.

2.

3.

'Investigate More' Goals are:

4.

5.

'Back Burner' Goals are:

6.

7.

Action Plan

Goal 1 is to....

Actions

(What am I going to do?)

Resources

(What assistance do I need?)

Milestones

(By when? Critical dates?)

Achievement

(How will I know I have achieved this goal?)

Action Plan

Action Plan	
Goal 2 is to....	
Actions (What am I going to do?)	Resources (What assistance do I need?)
Milestones (By when? Critical dates?)	Achievement (How will I know I have achieved this goal?)

