

A statement of career intent

Beverly Landais encourages us to create the career that we want and find fulfilment.

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Change. Pivot. Reinvention. Crossroads. Considering a career move can be a daunting as well as an exciting experience. Long gone are the days when most people expected to join an employer and stay there for much of their working life. Modern technology, access to education and social change mean more opportunity, flexibility and choice. However, there is also the recognition that individuals need to take responsibility for managing their career development.

The reality is that it takes time, effort, and a good deal of soul-searching to change career direction successfully. You may be lucky and find the right occupation in short order, but it is unlikely. Many people need to stay in their current job and career while looking for new opportunities. You can take steps to improve your present situation and prepare for a future occupation to enhance your current working condition and begin to lay the groundwork to pursue a new career direction.

Do you know what you want from your career? What would it be like to achieve all that you hope? Maybe you are happier and more fulfilled with a sense of purpose in life. Many people are unsure and feel overwhelmed at the thought of trying to work this out. Finding a way forward starts with imagining what your ideal career might be.

You might like to try this 'dream job' exercise. Find a quiet time when you can



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dig deep and avoid self-editing. It may not be comfortable, so be kind and practice self-compassion as you do this. Make a note of your answers as you will need these for the next step.

The first four steps

Begin by imagining your ideal role – one that fulfils you and makes you happy and proud. Describe the role in as much detail as possible. What would you be doing? What would be the working environment? With whom are you working? Where would you be working? Keep going until you have a concrete picture.

Now think about your strengths, skills and capabilities. What personal characteristics have been valuable to you? Take your top three and imagine a few occupations where these may be transferable. What might be possible?

Then recall your past interests and achievements. Thinking back, what did you enjoy as a child, at college or in your first job? Can you see any patterns or themes? Are these still important to you?

Next, consider: What are you like at your best? How would you sum up your successes to date? Describe these fully. Use real examples as these can become mini case studies to use at a job interview.

These four steps will help you focus on what matters the most to you at work. You will end up with a list you can review to consider what career and occupation are most likely to be a good match.



Pausing to recall specific times when you have used your strengths, been resourceful and overcome challenges is an excellent way to boost self-confidence at any time. Doing this is especially powerful when you need to show your abilities at their best, such as during a job interview or at an important meeting.

The fact is that if you want a better career, you must work out how to make it happen. Reviewing what motivates, most matters and works for you can put you in a better position to do this. It also helps to focus your energy and time on specific objectives that are attainable yet will stretch and challenge you. Ultimately the key to progressing your goals is feeling ready, willing and able to work towards them.

Career Goal Mapping Process

Develop your plans using this Career Goal Mapping Process. Begin by setting your intention by mapping your desired career journey. Next plot the critical steps needed to reach the desired destination. Consider the following ten prompts as you begin this process:

- What is your career goal? Start with a statement of intent, ie. 'What I want from my next role is...'
- What would it look like to be one step closer to your career goal?
- How can you make it as easy as possible to take this step?
- What resources can you access that will enable the pursuit of your career goal?

- What are the key steps that you need to take?
- When will you take these steps?
- Whom will you enlist to support you?
- What are your learning plans to fill knowledge gaps and progress critical decisions?
- When thinking about your career goal and next steps, ask yourself: on a scale of 1-10 (where one is 'unlikely' and ten is 'definitely'), how committed are you to completing this action?
- How will you hold yourself accountable for getting things done?

If you are worried about things that might derail you, then try using 'If ... then' scenarios to plan your response. This technique helps you prepare constructive reactions to obstacles and find ways to deal effectively with any setbacks. Think out what might get in the way. How can you lower these barriers? Consider the options for dealing with them by using the following approach: 'If this happens ... then I will ...' In this way, you set yourself up for success by focusing energy and effort on the things you can control.

Now write up your reflections. Think five years from now. Imagine you have accomplished all that you hoped. Write about everything in the present tense as this provokes confidence about your future. What you did to achieve such a brilliant outcome? What steps did you take? Who gave you support? Which of

your strengths and resources did you tap? What obstacles did you overcome – and how? What training or other personal development did you undertake?

Work back from this bright future to the present day. What decisions did you make that advanced your career goal? What will you do in the next four weeks to begin this process? Be specific in your answer. Now set out what you will do in the next three, six and nine months. Remember that you can revise your plan as you go along. Now, what will you do in the next week? Choose one thing and go from there.

Looking back on an imagined journey to success will put you in a resourceful state of mind. Then you are better equipped to begin the day-to-day changes you need to make to achieve your objective. Most of all, it is a practical process as it helps you to think through the pathway to reach what you would like to do.

Of course things never go as smoothly as hoped. However, this approach will foster self-esteem, develop a growth mindset and promote the resourceful attitude necessary to deal with setbacks and make the most of opportunities.

Here are five bonus tips to help you effectively advance your career goals:

- Express your goals positively – Start with a statement of intent, setting out what you want from your ideal role.
- Write your goals down so that you can refine them.
- Be specific in setting milestones so that you can stay on course.
- Break down into small steps what needs to happen to achieve your goals. Think of these as rungs on your ladder to career success.
- Set goals that stretch you while being realistic to achieve, and within your control.

You can follow the career path that others set for you or choose to follow the career path that you want. Creating a Career Goal Map is an excellent means to working through what you want, how you intend to get there and what skills, support or resources will enable you to push forward. What one action will you take today to move closer to your dreams for a brighter and better future?



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