



CAREER ORIENTATION

A Step-by-Step Guide

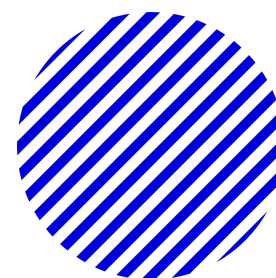


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WHY SELF-AWARENESS MATTERS IN CAREER PLANNING	3
SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES.....	4
Free Personality Tests.....	4
Strengths & Weaknesses analysis.....	5
Values & Interests repertory	8
SETTING PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GOALS	11
Definition of success.....	11
Ideal work environment.....	12
Ideal job description	16
EXPLORING CAREER OPTIONS	18
Brainstorming.....	19
Informational interviews	21
Sectors guides	21
Networking.....	22
LAND 3 CAREER SCENARIOS	22
APPENDIX & RESOURCES.....	25
List of 246 skills as verbs.....	25
List of work values	27
TIARA framework.....	28
IE Industries Guides.....	29
Recommended Books	29

WHY SELF-AWARENESS MATTERS IN CAREER PLANNING

Self-awareness is crucial in career planning because it enables you to understand your strengths, weaknesses, values, and interests. **By gaining a clear sense of who you are, you can make informed decisions about which career paths align best with your personal and professional goals.** This understanding helps you identify roles where you are likely to thrive and be satisfied, reducing the risk of pursuing a career that might lead to dissatisfaction or burnout. **Ultimately, self-awareness is the foundation for creating a fulfilling and successful career.**

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES



Self-assessment exercises are vital tools in the career planning process, designed to help you gain deeper insight into your professional identity. These exercises guide you in **evaluating your personality traits, strengths and weaknesses, core values, and interests.** By engaging in self-assessment, you can identify the types of roles and environments where you are most likely to excel and find satisfaction. The following exercises will provide a structured approach to reflecting on who you are as a professional, laying the groundwork for informed and strategic career decisions.

Free Personality Tests

Personality tests are a powerful component of self-assessment that can provide valuable insights into your character traits, behavioral tendencies, and interaction styles. These tests help you understand how your personality aligns with different career paths and work environments.

- [16 personalities](#) is a personality framework based on the MBTI that provides insight into how a person makes decisions, interacts with people & processes information.
- Once the [IKIGAI personality test](#) is complete you'll be presented with your IKIGAI diagram, which includes your passion, vocation, profession and mission. You may also buy the professional results which include a more detailed explanation of your personality, job archetype, and the top 20 jobs that better suit your ikigai profile.

MY PERSONALITY TRAITS



Strengths & Weaknesses analysis

Analysis of strengths and weaknesses is a crucial self-assessment exercise that helps you **identify your core competencies and areas for improvement**. Understanding your strengths allows you to leverage them effectively in your career, positioning yourself for roles that maximize your potential. Conversely, recognizing your weaknesses provides an opportunity for growth and development, helping you to address gaps that may hinder your professional success.

SWOT ANALYSIS

- **Strengths:** List your top skills, qualities, and achievements.
- **Weaknesses:** Identify areas where you struggle or need improvement.
- **Opportunities:** Look for external factors that could help you advance.
- **Threats:** Consider challenges or obstacles that might hinder your progress.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

RESOURCES ✨

- The List of 246 skills as verbs in the Appendix
- The [VIA Survey](#) which will help you discover your unique character strengths profile.



Functional
(Transferable Skills)

*WHAT YOU CAN DO
and love to DO with
data / statistics, people,
or things.*



Special Knowledge

*WHAT YOU KNOW
and love to use*



Self-Management
Skills or Traits

*HOW YOU CONDUCT
YOURSELF alone or
with others*

Usually these are verbs:

- Constructing
- Creating
- Researching
- Painting
- Analyzing
- Supervising
- Teaching
- Illustrating
- Organizing
- Counseling
- Repairing
- Initiating

**Usually these are
nouns:**

- Graphic design
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Data analysis
- Spanish
- Music, etc.

**Usually these are
adjectives or adverbs:**

- Adaptable
- Self-confident
- Cooperative
- Enthusiastic
- Flexible
- Innovative
- Outgoing
- Supportive
- Persistent

Feedback from Others

- Seek feedback from colleagues, mentors, and supervisors.
- Ask specific questions about your performance, such as areas where you excel and where you could improve.
- Use this feedback to gain a balanced perspective on your abilities.



Competency Matrix

- Create a matrix that lists key competencies required in your field.
- Rate yourself on each competency and compare your self-assessment with feedback from others.
- Identify which competencies are your strengths and which need enhancement.

By using these tools and exercises, you can gain a thorough understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, allowing you to make informed decisions about your career development.



Values & Interests Repertory

Knowing what we value most in our work, relationships, and other commitments makes it easier to respond to opportunities and conflicts with integrity.

Write down your **top 5 values**, with your own personal descriptions of what each means to you.

MY WORK VALUES	DESCRIPTION
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

RESOURCES ✨

- The List of work values in the Appendix
- The [Value Sort](#) is an excellent way to reflect upon what is most important to you personally and it is also a great way to stimulate conversations with peers, colleagues and family members.

BUILD YOUR INTEREST REPERTORY:

<p>AREAS OF REAL INTEREST <i>Ex. sports, travel fashion, finance</i></p>	<p>THEMES THAT KEEP REOCCURRING <i>Ex. creativity, leadership, freedom, performance, risk-taking</i></p>
<p>FIELDS, CAREERS, OR INDUSTRIES I'D LOVE TO INVESTIGATE</p>	<p>OTHER IDEAS THAT OCCUR TO ME</p>

SETTING PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Goals provide direction, motivation, and a clear roadmap for achieving success. Personal goals help you define what you want to accomplish in your personal life, such as work-life balance, health, and personal growth. Professional goals focus on your career aspirations, including skills development, career advancement, and long-term objectives.

Definition of success

The personal definition of success varies greatly from one individual to another, reflecting unique values, aspirations, and life experiences. For some, success may be measured by career achievements, financial stability, or recognition in their field. Others might prioritize personal fulfillment, meaningful relationships, or contributions to their community. Ultimately, **defining success is about understanding what truly matters to you and aligning your goals and actions accordingly.**



WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?

BE

What type of person do I want to be?

Kind, calm, famous, confident.



DO

What will I be doing?

Having fun, traveling, making an impact, supporting others, always learning.



HAVE

What will I have?

A fast car, great holidays, contentment, happy children, security.

MY DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

--

Ideal Work Environment

Defining your ideal work environment is essential for career satisfaction and productivity. It involves considering factors such as the company culture, management style, physical workspace, and the level of collaboration versus independent work.

Reflect on what conditions allow you to perform at your best—whether it's a structured corporate setting, a flexible remote arrangement, or a dynamic startup atmosphere. Understanding your preferences will help you identify organizations and roles where you can thrive, ensuring a more enjoyable and effective work experience.

WHERE?

<p>Organization Size: Do you thrive in a small, medium, or large organization?</p>	
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Sector: Are you drawn to the non-profit, private, or public sector?

Company Type: Do you prefer the stability of a big-name company or the innovation of a startup?

Culture: Are you more comfortable in a traditional corporate culture or a more casual startup culture?

Structure: Do you prefer a hierarchical structure with clear lines of authority or a flat structure with more autonomy?

Work Location: Would you rather work from home, at the office, in a hybrid model, or in a co-working space?

Geographical Location: Is your ideal workplace located in a bustling city, a quiet rural area, or does it involve frequent traveling?

Other Considerations: Any additional preferences or requirements that are important to you.

WHO?

You: What responsibilities and tasks do you enjoy and excel at? What position or title aligns with your skills and ambitions?

Colleagues: Do you prefer working with a collaborative team or independently? Are you more comfortable with a diverse team, or do you thrive in a more homogeneous group? What traits do you value in your coworkers, such as creativity, reliability, or strong communication skills?

Clients/Customers: Who are your ideal clients or customers? Do you prefer working with individuals or businesses? Are you drawn to serving specific industries or demographics? What values and behaviors do you appreciate in your clients, such as loyalty, appreciation, or clear communication?



HOW?

Employment Type: Do you prefer the stability and benefits of being employed by a company, or the independence and flexibility of being self-employed? Alternatively, are you interested in starting and running your own business, where you can innovate and lead as an entrepreneur?

Work Schedule: Do you prefer a traditional 9-to-5 job, a flexible schedule, or project-based work that might vary in intensity and timing?

Income Structure: Are you comfortable with a fixed salary, or do you prefer earning based on commissions, project fees, or business profits?

Work-Life Integration: How important is it for you to integrate your work with your personal life, possibly blending professional tasks with personal interests?

HOW MUCH?

Salary Expectations: What is your desired salary range?

Benefits: What benefits are important to you, such as health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, or professional development opportunities?

Incentives & Bonuses: Do you value performance-based incentives and bonuses that reward your hard work and achievements? Are you interested in receiving stock options or equity in a company as part of your compensation package?

Work-Life Balance: How much do you prioritize work-life balance, and are you willing to trade higher compensation for more flexibility or fewer hours?

Ideal job description

The purpose of this exercise is to reflect on your previous work experience and identify the patterns that can get you closer to writing a draft of your ideal job description.

1. **Reflect on previous jobs you have held and write what you liked and didn't like about them including skills used, projects involved in, culture, lifestyle, schedule, etc.**

JOB TITLE	LIKES	DISLIKES

2. **What are you interested in?**

- What subjects were your favorite at school?
- What do you read (blogs, etc)?
- What do you watch or listen to (podcasts, shows, etc)

- What do you do outside of work?
- Who do you follow on social media?

3. What specific factors do you have to consider?

- Are you open to travel for work?
- Do you have any geographical location limitations?
- Are there family circumstances that could affect your job search process and decision?

4. Write your ideal job description

I would like a job that allows me to...

Use the following skills: _____

Spend the majority of my time in the following tasks or types of projects:

Work in an industry related to the following topics: _____

Be part of an organization with a culture that values: _____

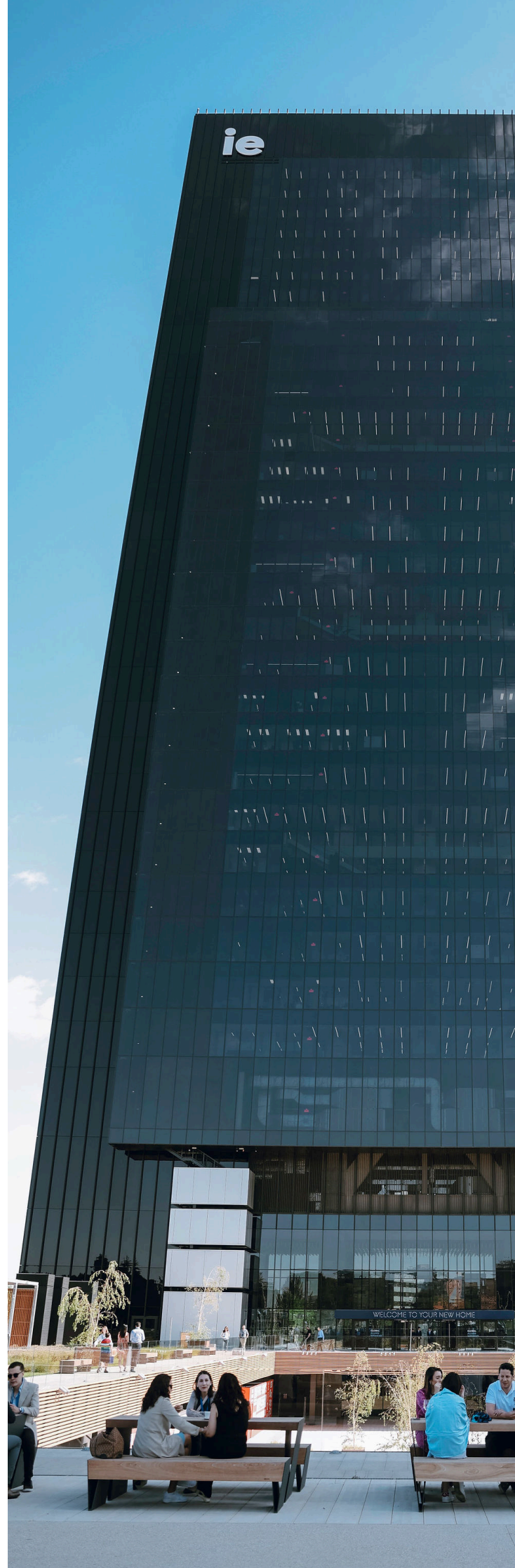
Do work with the following additional factors:

- In-person, remote, hybrid
- No travel, some travel, travel
- Specific geographic location
- Other: _____

EXPLORING CAREER OPTIONS

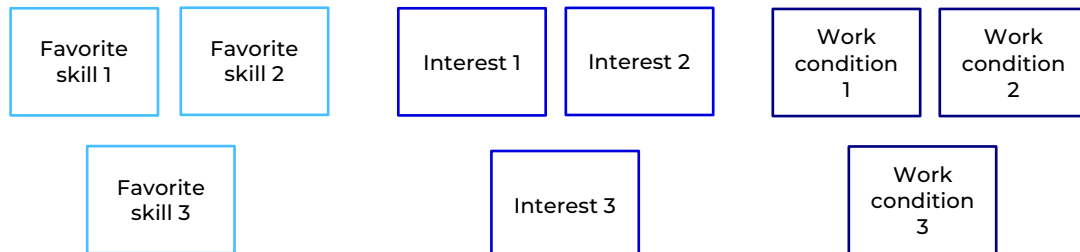
Having delved into self-awareness in the previous chapter, you've laid a solid foundation for embarking on the next phase: career exploration.

Armed with insights into your strengths, values, and interests, you're now equipped to narrow down potential job or career paths. This stage involves proactive steps such as **brainstorming ideas that resonate with your newfound self-understanding, engaging in conversations with professionals in fields of interest to gain firsthand insights, and conducting thorough online research to gather comprehensive information about various roles and industries.** By leveraging these strategies, you can refine your focus and begin to pinpoint careers that align not only with your skills but also with your personal aspirations and professional ambitions. In the following sections, we will guide you through these exploration techniques, empowering you to make informed decisions about your future career path.



Brainstorming

Brainstorming potential career ideas involves combining your top skills, core values, job preferences, and personal interests to uncover paths that align with your unique profile.



For instance, if you excel in analytical thinking and have a passion for helping others, you might explore careers in data analysis within healthcare or social research sectors. Alternatively, if creativity and a flexible work environment are your priorities, roles in graphic design or freelance writing could be worth considering. By integrating these elements thoughtfully, you can identify career avenues that not only utilize your strengths but also resonate with your values and professional aspirations.



RESOURCES ✨

- Leverage AI, using the following ChatGPT prompts:

BRAINSTORM

Expand ideas by exploring many different areas of work that align skillsets and interests

“I want to use my INSERT SKILLS + ANOTHER GROUP OF SKILLS and my INSERT INTERESTS. I do not want this position to involve INSERT SKILLS and OTHER SKILLS. What are some professions for me to explore as a recent college graduate?”

“I am a YEAR IN SCHOOL who is thinking about majoring in X. Come up with 20 different career paths I could take if I pursue an X major.”

“What are some entry-level positions for _____ majors with a skillset in _____ and interests in _____?”

“I am about to graduate college. I am good at XXX skills, and... but don't want to work with XX industry, what jobs should I explore after graduation?”

DEFINE LIFE PATHWAYS

Brainstorm and narrow down a few paths to explore

“I am a college INSERT YEAR majoring in XX with an interest in XX. I am interested in working for INSERT TYPE(S) OF ORGANIZATIONS OR FIELDS. Create five different five year plans I could consider after graduation.”

“Using [INSERTED RESUME ABOVE], what are five different five year plans I could consider after graduation?”

TEST OUT IDEAS

Design and build experiments to test potential life paths

“Using principles from ‘Designing Your Life’, create 15 prototypes for me to test a career in XX field.”

“Using principles from ‘Designing Your Life’, how might I explore the field of XX?”

I'm really interested in becoming an INSERT JOB. What are 20 ways I can prototype and test what this career path might be before investing more resources?

Julia Lang & Dustin Liu, 2023

Finally, **brainstorming with friends, family, and peers in your academic or professional network** can also be a valuable strategy to uncover new career ideas and perspectives.

Informational interviews

Informational interviews are invaluable tools for exploring career options. They involve **reaching out to professionals in industries or roles of interest to gather firsthand insights into their career paths, daily responsibilities, and the skills required for success**. By conducting informational interviews, you can gain a deeper understanding of various career paths, clarify your career goals, and expand your professional network. These conversations also provide an opportunity to seek advice, learn about industry trends, and gather tips for breaking into specific fields.

RESOURCES ✨

- The **free career networking platform [MyJobGlasses](#)** to book 20-min appointments with professionals and discuss your career prospects.
- The **TIARA framework** in the appendix to prepare your informational interview.

Sectors guides

Sector research is an essential step in exploring career options, providing valuable insights into different industries and their specific dynamics.

RESOURCES ✨

- IE Industry guides in the appendix
- [ONET Online](#) provides detailed occupational information, including job duties, required skills, and career outlooks within different industries.
- [Vault Guides](#): career guides which offer industry insights into what it takes to land your dream job in your chosen profession.

Networking

Networking events also serve as dynamic platforms for exploring different industries and expanding your professional horizons. These events bring together professionals from diverse backgrounds, offering opportunities to connect with industry experts, leaders, and peers. By attending networking events focused on specific industries or career fields, you can engage in meaningful conversations, gain firsthand insights into various sectors, and learn about emerging trends and opportunities. Whether it's a conference, panel discussion, or informal meetup, networking events provide a conducive environment to exchange ideas, gather industry-specific knowledge, and establish valuable contacts. These interactions not only broaden your understanding of different industries but also pave the way for potential mentorships, collaborations, and career prospects.

RESOURCES ✨

- [IE Connects](#) to identify all the upcoming events for the IE community, including career fairs, company visits, industry-specific events.



LAND 3 CAREER SCENARIOS

Defining three scenarios—namely, an aspiring plan, alternative plan, and safety plan—for your career provides a strategic framework to navigate uncertainty and maximize opportunities for growth and fulfillment.

The **aspiring plan** outlines your ideal career path, encompassing ambitious goals, desired roles, and industries that align closely with your passions and long-term aspirations. It serves as a beacon, guiding your efforts towards achieving your ultimate career objectives.

In contrast, the **alternative plan** offers flexibility and adaptability by exploring viable career paths that may differ slightly from your primary aspirations. This plan considers alternative industries, roles, or skills that still align with your strengths and interests, providing contingency options in case your primary goals evolve or face unexpected challenges.

Lastly, the **safety plan** in your career strategy incorporates considerations of stability, security, and practicality, considering factors such as your professional background and geographic location. It focuses on roles or industries that align with your existing skills and experience, ensuring a smooth transition or continuation in your career journey. Additionally, this plan considers opportunities within your local or regional job market, leveraging familiarity with the area and potential networking advantages. By emphasizing stability and familiarity, the safety plan provides a reliable fallback option during uncertain times, offering both professional security and peace of mind in your career pursuits.



**ASPIRING
PLAN**

**ALTERNATIVE
PLAN**

**SAFETY
PLAN**

ROLE

SECTOR

LOCATION

APPENDIX & RESOURCES

List of 246 skills as verbs

Achieving	Acting	Adapting	Addressing	Administering
Advising	Analysing	Anticipating	Arbitrating	Arranging
Ascertaining	Assembling	Assessing	Attaining	Auditing
Budgeting	Building	Calculating	Charting	Checking
Classifying	Coaching	Collecting	Communicating	Compiling
Completing	Composing	Computing	Conceptualizing	Conducting
Conserving	Consolidating	Constructing	Controlling	Coordinating
Coping	Counseling	Creating	Deciding	Defining
Delivering	Designing	Detailing	Detecting	Determining
Developing	Devising	Diagnosing	Digging	Directing
Discovering	Dispensing	Displaying	Disproving	Dissecting
Distributing	Diverting	Dramatizing	Drawing	Driving
Editing	Eliminating	Empathizing	Enforcing	Establishing
Estimating	Evaluating	Examining	Expanding	Experimenting
Explaining	Expressing	Extracting	Filing	Financing
Fixing	Following	Formulating	Founding	Gathering
Generating	Getting	Giving	Guiding	Handling
Having	Heading	Helping	Hypothesizing	Identifying
responsibility	Imagining	Implementing	Improving	Improvising
Illustrating	Influencing	Informing	Initiating	Innovating
Increasing	Inspiring	Installing	Instituting	Instructing
Inspecting	Interpreting	Interviewing	Intuiting	Inventing
Integrating	Investigating	Judging	Inventing	Leading
Inventorying	Lecturing	Lifting	Keeping	Logging
Learning	Making	Managing	Listening	Mediating
Maintaining	Memorizing	Mentoring	Manipulating	Monitoring
Meeting	Navigating	Negotiating	Modelling	Obtaining
Motivating	Operating	Ordering	Observing	Originating
Offering	Painting	Perceiving	Organising	Persuading
Overseeing	Piloting	Planning	Performing	Predicting
Photographing	Prescribing	Presenting	Playing	Problem solving
Preparing	Producing	Programming	Printing	Promoting
Processing	Protecting	Providing	Projecting	Purchasing
Proof-reading	Raising	Reading	Publicizing	Reasoning
Questioning	Recommending	Reconciling	Realizing	Recruiting
Receiving	Referring	Rehabilitating	Recording	Remembering
Reducing	Repairing	Repairing	Relating	Researching
Rendering	Reporting	Reporting	Representing	Reviewing

Resolving	Responding	Restoring	Revising	Sensing
Risking	Scheduling	Selecting	Selling	Serving
Separating	Selecting	Setting	Setting-up	Sketching
Shaping	Serving	Showing	Singing	Summarizing
Solving	Sharing	Speaking	Studying	Synthesizing
Supervising	Solving	Symbolizing	Supervising	Team-building
Systematizing	Speaking	Talking	Synthesizing	Transcribing
Telling	Supplying	Testing &	Teaching	Tutoring
Translating	Taking	proving	Training	Undertaking
Typing	instructions	Treating	Trouble-	Utilizing
Unifying	Tending	Understanding	shooting	Working
Verbalizing	Traveling	Upgrading	Understanding	
Writing	Umpiring	Weighing	Understudying	
	Uniting		Using	
	Washing		Winning	

Source: Bolles, Richard N. What colour is your parachute? (p.79). Berkeley, Calif: Ten Speed Press, 2000.

List of work values

ADVENTURE AUTONOMY BALANCE BOLDNESS
FUN FREEDOM CALMNESS CHALLENGE
HUMOUR INDEPENDENCE PEACE COMPETITION
PASSION CONTROL SIMPLICITY RISK
RECOGNITION POWER PREDICTABILITY MASTERY
RESPECT INFLUENCE SECURITY INTELLECTUAL RIGOUR
CREDIBILITY LEADERSHIP TRADITION EXPERTISE
STATUS AUTHORITY ROUTINE WISDOM
ORGANIZATION LEARNING VARIETY HELPING OTHERS
PRACTICALITY DEVELOPMENT NOVELTY CONTRIBUTION
EFFICIENCY SELF-IMPROVEMENT INNOVATION SERVICE
QUALITY GROWTH ORIGINALITY GENEROSITY
ACHIEVEMENT IMPACT ACQUISITION EMPOWERMENT
EXCELLENCE INSPIRATION ABUNDANCE JUSTICE
WINNING LEGACY COMFORT DIVERSITY
PERFECTION CHANGE MONEY TOLERANCE

Source: *The Career Change Guide* by Rachel Schofield

TIARA framework for informational interviewing

<p><u>TRENDS</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What trends are most impacting your business/field right now? • How has your business or field changed most since you started? • How do you think your business or field will change most dramatically in the next several years?
<p><u>INSIGHTS</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What surprises you most about your job/field/employer? • What's the best lesson you've learned on the job? • What's been your most valuable experience at your employer so far, and why? • If you had to attribute your success to one skill or trait, what would it be? • Is that trait shared by many across the organization or is it unique and you've adapted it to your advantage?
<p><u>ADVICE</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can I be doing right now to prepare myself for a career in this field? • What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were my age in my position? • If you were me, what would you be doing right now to maximize your chance of breaking into this industry/function?
<p><u>RESOURCES</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources do I need to look into next? • What next steps would you recommend for someone in my situation?
<p><u>ASSIGNMENTS</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What project(s) have you completed that felt added the most value? • Have any projects increased in popularity recently at your organization? • Have you had interns/new graduates in the past? If so, what type of projects have they done?

Source: *The 2-Hour Job Search* by Steve Dalton

IE Industries Guides

Recommended Books

