

Career Planning: Explore. . . Discover. . . Become!

By Sandra Somers

Most of us spend the majority of our time working, yet very few people spend time planning their careers. Do you remember how you initially decided on your career? The answers to that question are very interesting: “My friend was a nurse, so I thought, ‘I could do that.’” “I liked math, so someone recommended I become an engineer.” “I did well in school and did not want to be a lawyer, so I went into medicine.”

There are approximately 20,000 career titles, yet when most people think about how they are going to spend the majority of their time, there is very little planning and forethought that goes into the decision. That may be one reason that almost 22 million Americans are not satisfied with their current careers.

Whether you are starting out, contemplating a career change, desire to advance in your career, or preparing for retirement, take some time to think about and plan your next move. The fundamental question in career coaching is, “What do you want?”

When planning your career direction and/or development, the first step in helping to answer this question is to **explore** your personality, preferences, values, motivations, interests, abilities, and desired work environment. The time you spend in exploration and identification of these variables is foundational in building the career you desire.

Once you know what you are looking for, **discover** what is available. If you are just starting out or desiring to change careers, there are some assessments that can be very helpful. At Change Agents we can use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® to narrow down your career choices. We also use Pro Scan® to help you understand what types of careers match your Natural Effectiveness. These tools help you identify your type, your natural effectiveness characteristics, and use that information to narrow the field of 20,000 potential careers to a list of about 50 – 100. These are careers that people with similar preferences have chosen. You can then narrow it down to approximately 2-4 careers that interest you the most. The next step is informational interviewing. What did you discover about your preferences, values, desires and natural effectiveness that need to be present in your work? Make a list of questions to ask people in the careers you are considering and get the information you need to make an informed decision.

You are now ready to make your decision, set your goals and do what you want to do. Envision yourself in the career you desire. What do you need to do to make it a reality? As Gayla has said, once your goals are in sync with your purpose, vision, and values, it will create the natural momentum to help you attain your goals and **become** who you want to be.

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