

Strategies to Explore Your Next Career

How to determine if it's time for a career change – and some practical tools, techniques, and strategies for going about it!

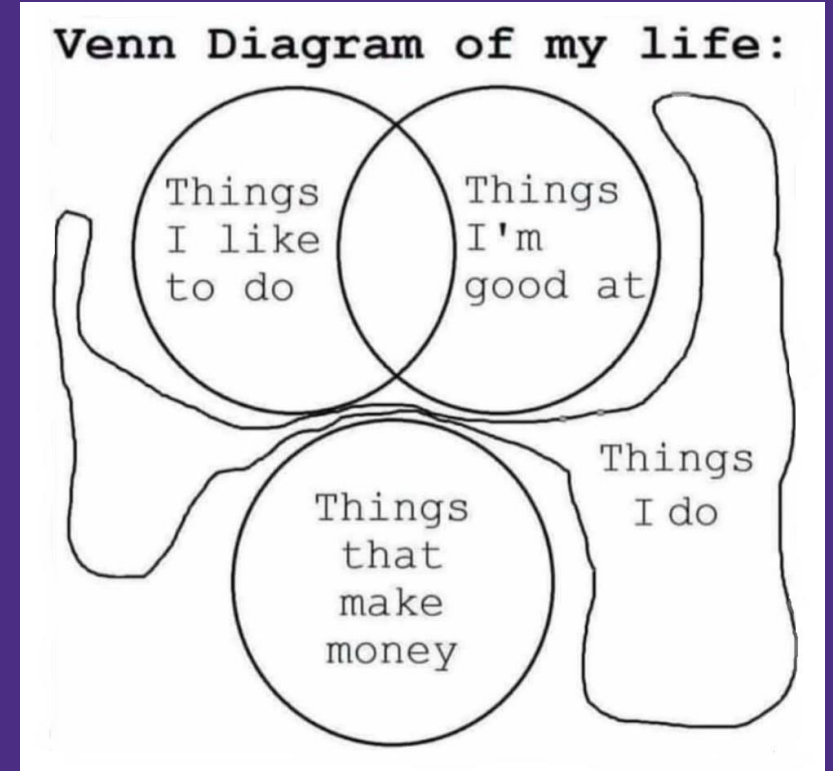
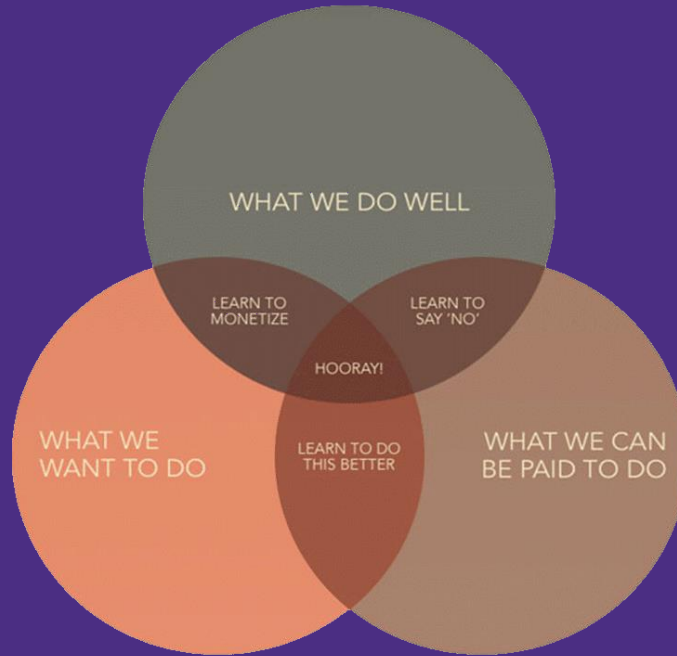
*Presented by Matt Youngquist
President, Career Horizons*

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Visualizing the Career Decision-Making Process



Career Exploration: The New Realities

While career decisions have never been easy, certain aspects of the modern market have complicated this challenge a bit further for many professionals...

- The job market has gotten much more specialized, just like the consumer market; being a “generalist” is no longer a very pragmatic career choice
- It’s been estimated that there were ~10,000 different career avenues before the turn of the millennium; since then, the number has grown to 100,000
- Published job ads make (almost) everybody feel woefully inadequate, since employers load job descriptions up with all kinds of picky requirements
- Similar to social media, it’s dangerously easy to compare yourself with other people and get caught up in the “grass is greener” phenomenon

What Causes Career Dissatisfaction?

1. The actual work you're doing isn't a good fit; the tasks you're performing aren't ones you enjoy
2. The company you're with isn't a good fit; the culture or environment doesn't match your values
3. The boss you report to isn't a good fit; you don't get along with them and they don't support you
4. You may have unrealistic expectations; alas, as discussed earlier, some people may just be out of touch with marketplace realities or expect a degree of "perfection" few careers actually offer



A silhouette of a person with arms raised in a cityscape at sunset, with a grey text box in the center.

So
where
does
passion
fit into
all
this?

“The word passion comes from the Latin root word, *patior*, which means to suffer. Passion is engaging in an intense desire to the point where it hurts. When you are truly passionate, you are pushed along by your desire to the point where you are willing to endure pain, suffering and loss for the object which is the focus of your attention.”

-- Jeff Murrah, Owlcation.com

SO HOW PASSIONATE ARE YOU, REALLY?

Career Continuation

Stay in your current field, but perhaps move to a new company or take other small steps to improve your satisfaction

Career Shift

Explore ways to transfer either your specialized skills or industry knowledge into a new role – but not both

**Time to
Change?**

Career Change

Reinvent yourself into a completely new career path with no relationship or connection to what you've done to date

Self-Employment

Start a business, buy a business/franchise, or find a passive income solution that will break you free from the corporate world

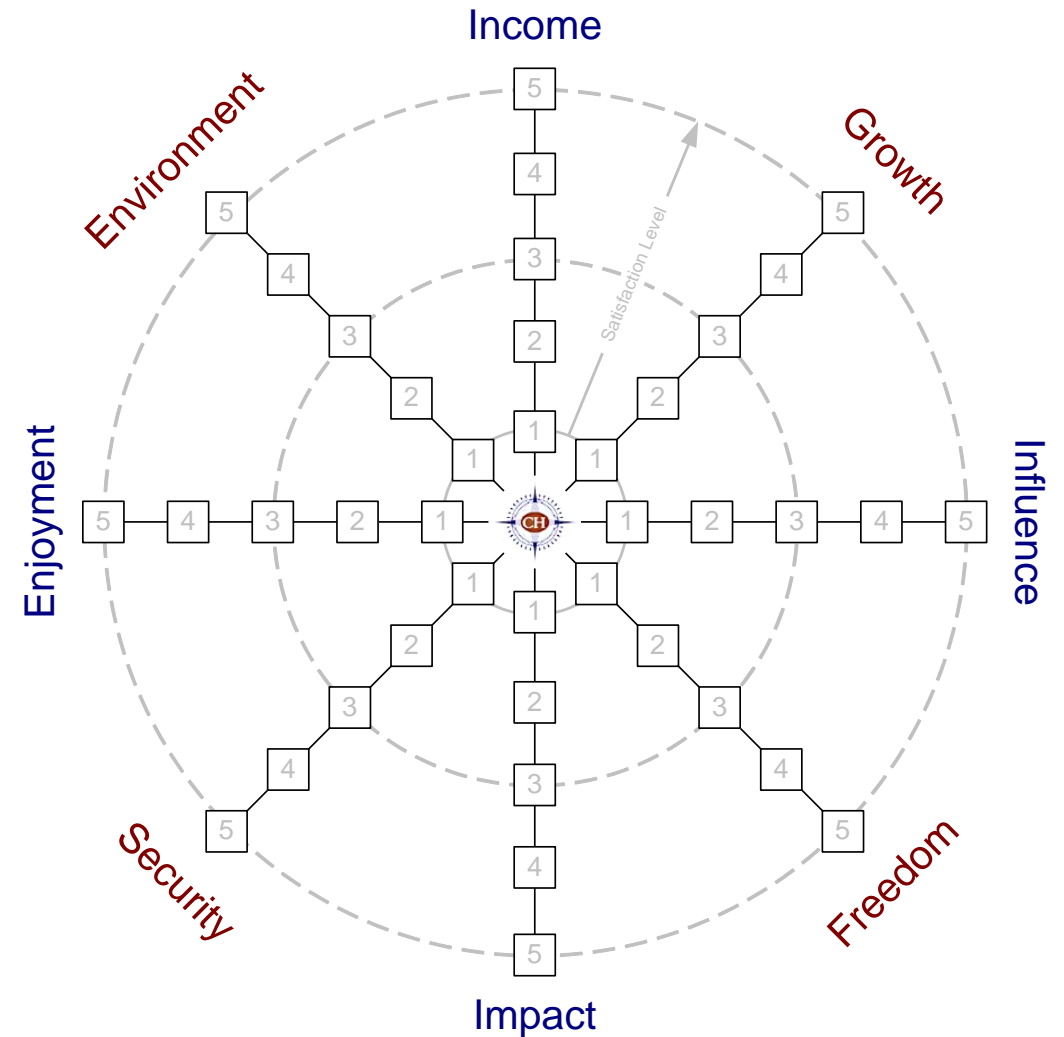
Clarifying Your Priorities

Before we discuss HOW best to go about exploring new career options, it's first important to spend some time clarifying WHY exactly you want to change...

- To find your ideal job, you first need to get crystal clear on your priorities; what “wants” and “needs” would your next job or career satisfy, ideally?
- No job is perfect; every person you chat with will be able to share things they like about their career and things they wish they could improve
- Understanding these tradeoffs is critical to career decision-making; many people take aspects of their current job for granted without realizing it
- Additionally, priorities usually change as we go through different life stages; what used to be important to you might not be a high priority now

Career Satisfaction Wheel

- **Income:** The degree to which your career provides a compensation level that meets your financial needs, goals, and expectations
- **Growth:** The degree to which your career offers opportunities for learning, advancement, and continued professional growth
- **Freedom:** The degree to which your career gives you work/life balance and flexibility/autonomy in performing your work responsibilities
- **Impact:** The degree to which your career involves “meaningful” work, makes you proud, and/or makes a positive difference of some sort in the world
- **Security:** The degree to which your career offers predictability, stability, and protection from job loss or financial hardship
- **Enjoyment:** The degree to which your career aligns with your hobbies, passions, and outside interests
- **Environment:** The degree to which the external factors of your job (e.g. boss, culture, commute, etc.) align with your values, work style, and preferences



The Key: Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

For better or worse, the job market isn't designed to care about you, or me, or getting our personal needs met. It's completely apathetic about such things. Instead, it centers around whether you can solve a problem employers are facing. And the key to figuring out some new potential problems you could solve is to use the KSA framework...

KSA

SKILLS Worksheet

What specific tasks can you perform? What specialized competencies have you acquired? What problems could you solve for an organization?

- I know how to: _____

- I know how to: Create pivot tables in MS Excel
- I know how to: Speak Spanish fluently
- I know how to: Deliver effective sales presentations
- I know how to: Tune up auto engines
- I know how to: Write fundraising grants for non-profits
- I know how to: Program websites using HTML

KNOWLEDGE Worksheet

What have you studied? What industries have you worked in? What topics do you know a lot more about than the average person?

- I know a lot about: _____

- I know a lot about: The retail industry
- I know a lot about: Classic cars
- I know a lot about: Software user interface design
- I know a lot about: Sustainability practices
- I know a lot about: Doing business in China
- I know a lot about: Current human resource regulations

ABILITIES Worksheet

What have you always been good at? What are your natural strengths? What personal qualities do you pride yourself on the most?

• I am good at: _____

- I am good at: Listening
- I am good at: Creative problem-solving
- I am good at: Organizing things
- I am good at: Building relationships
- I am good at: Leading teams
- I am good at: Fixing mechanical things

Having Trouble Filling Out Your KSA Data?

Since we all tend to take our strengths for granted, the following pointers might help you flesh out the best possible list...

- Dig out past performance reviews and job descriptions, if you can find them, and review them to see what KSA elements are mentioned
- Contact a few friends, family members, colleagues, and/or business contacts and ask them for your input on your strengths and competencies
- Look up job leads on Indeed.com similar to the ones you've held currently or in the past; what KSA's do they mention you might have overlooked?
- Recognize that skills generally have to be learned, practiced, and mastered, whereas abilities are qualities you've generally had your whole life (e.g. being a good communicator is an Ability; writing press releases is a Skill)

Brainstorming Method #1: Online Assessments

One place to start your exploration is to visit some of the free websites designed to help explore career options; alas, you'll likely find that many of these tools are fairly superficial and don't take into account factors like experience level, income needs, etc.

- O-NET Online: www.onetonline.org
- Chegg Career Center: www.chegg.com/career-center
- Careers by Major: www.myplan.com/majors/what-to-do-with-a-major.php
- Payscale Career Path Planner: www.payscale.com/career-path-planner
- Payscale Best Jobs for You: www.payscale.com/data-packages/best-jobs
- Jobscan Career Change: www.jobscan.co/career-change
- Schools.com Career Quiz: www.schools.com/careers

Brainstorming Method #2: Indeed.com Searching

A second method for brainstorming career options that can be incredibly effective, if you learn how to use “boolean syntax” effectively, is to go to www.indeed.com and run searches combining your KSA data -- and passions/interests -- to see what turns up.

Boolean Search Examples: (need help? Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y9ysld9q>)

(youth OR children OR kids OR students) AND (mentoring OR coaching OR counseling)

(“project management” OR “project coordination”) AND biotechnology

(creativity OR innovation) AND (writing OR editing OR “content development”)

(analytical OR analysis) AND (non-profit OR “social impact” OR sustainability)

“law degree” NOT title:(attorney OR lawyer OR counsel OR judge OR professor)

Comments/Tips:

As shown in the last example above, you can use the NOT title: command to eliminate certain jobs from the results that you’re either already aware of - and don’t want to keep seeing - or that you already know aren’t of interest to you

Brainstorming Method #3: LinkedIn Searching

A third method you can use to research options is to go to www.linkedin.com and search the 600 million profiles on the site for people with similar skills, strengths, and qualifications to your own - and see what they've all ended up doing for a living!

LinkedIn Search Examples:

project management” AND “international relations”

writing AND photography AND blogging AND (sports OR athletics)

“financial analysis” AND presenting AND strategy AND “consumer products”

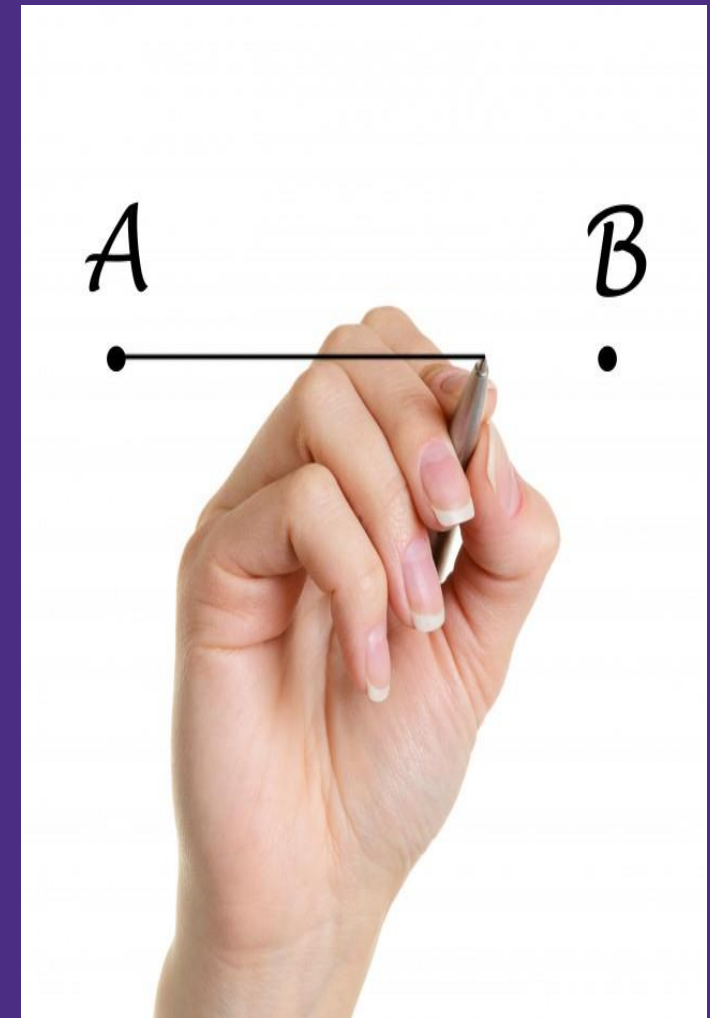
Comments/Tips:

If you get a lot of results that are too obvious and/or not what you're after, either add in some additional search terms or go into the All Filters screen, go to the Title box, and insert a NOT statement to kick certain titles out of the results:

e.g. For the first example above, you could add NOT (“project manager” OR “project management”) to look for more unusual titles beyond the typical ones

I've Decided to Change Careers: So Where Do I Go From Here?

- Frame the overall challenge as a multi-month research project, not a job search; you'll need to “get smart” on the new field via informational interviewing and web research as an initial step
- Utilize local and online educational sources to acquire needed skills, as well as to access alumni, internship, and networking opportunities
- Accept that networking will be a more likely way of landing a job in a new field than traditional resume submissions due to the competition factor
- Bet on yourself; even if you take a step or two back to break into a new career field, people can advance more rapidly today than ever before



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Final Questions?

Time flies, as they say -- so if we ran out of time to address a specific question you raised during the webinar, please don't hesitate to reach out to Matt Youngquist at matt@career-horizons.com!