



## Career Reflections

Like a trip to the dentist, make career assessment and planning an annual event (although, this should be a rewarding and positive experience).

Memorialize your reflections of self-exploration, thus allowing you the opportunity to refer to your responses and update accordingly.

### Assessment—Where are you?

Start with contemplating your current place in your organizational community. In addition to values, do you feel that you're a good "fit" with the company's culture? Are you really passionate and excited about what you do and who you do it for? Do you have healthy, respectful, cooperative, and productive relationships at work? Are you growing in your position? Do you feel fulfilled in your work? Do you like and respect your boss? Are you happy?

Reflect on your unique identity—your likes and dislikes, your needs and wants.

- What motivates you (changing the world, recognition, compensation, fun, affiliation, status, power, job security, helping others, impact, learning, achievement, and so on)?
- Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team? Why?
- On a team, what role do you prefer to play (leader, devil's advocate, facilitator, good corporate soldier, and so on)?
- What are your "people skills," and which do you enjoy (instructing, negotiating, supervising, persuading, mentoring, enabling, coaching, counseling, communicating, sensing, collaborating, listening, building consensus, managing conflict, and so on)?
- What are your information/project-oriented skills, and which do you enjoy (creating, planning and organizing, problem-solving, analyzing, synthesizing, taking instruction, setting goals, designing process, and so on)?
- What is the level of your technological skills? What is the level of your functional skills and areas of knowledge (ranging from novice to opinion leader)?



Examine what you like to do when you aren't working. Many times these interests can give you great insight into future career paths.

Make a note of your past and most recent significant accomplishments. Do this by using a "T-BAR" format: topic, background of the problem, action taken, and the results. This will assist you with creating and updating your resume, and it will help you prepare for interview dialogues. Practice how you would describe yourself to a potential employer in less than two minutes.

As you look at present and pending future, will you welcome new challenges that accompany organizational change? Can you thrive in ambiguity? Can you be a model for grace under pressure? Are you results-oriented? Will you lead by example?

### **Planning—Where are you going?**

Define your professional purpose and desired legacy. Set short- and long-term career goals for yourself. How do you define success? How will you know when you've achieved it? What are you doing today (training and education) to prepare for these goals?

Look beyond your current job for transferable skills. For example, if you're creative and fairly comfortable at the keyboard, you could apply these skills across multiple industries in a variety of jobs such as marketing, advertising, public relations, and Web design.

Consider the marketplace. What are the employment trends? What skills do you need? If necessary, can you differentiate yourself with your accomplishments, skills, and education?

Be aware of your propensity and inclination for risk-taking.

Who else needs to be part of your planning?

(Reference: Hansen, R. S. Quintessential careers: 10 tips for successful career planning. Retrieved on March 13, 2007 from [http://quintcareers.com/printable/career\\_planning\\_tips.html](http://quintcareers.com/printable/career_planning_tips.html))