A PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR CAREER

YOUR FUTURE YOUR WAY

Manitoba
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................... 2
**Guiding Frameworks** ........................................................................................................................... 2  
  - Blueprint for Life/Work Designs ........................................................................................................ 2  
  - Essential Skills ................................................................................................................................. 2  
  - Employability Skills 2000+ ............................................................................................................. 3  
  - Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners .............................. 3

**Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session** .............................................................................. 4

**PowerPoint Slides** ................................................................................................................................ 5

**Additional Tips and Strategies** ............................................................................................................. 24

**For More Information on Career Planning** ......................................................................................... 24

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## Acknowledgements

This resource package was developed through a partnership involving  
Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade and Life Strategies Ltd.

Project funding was provided by:  
Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities  
Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade  
Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism
Introduction

Career planning is a key skill clients need to develop. The client resource, *A Guide to Planning Your Career*, contains information and worksheets to support clients as they engage in the career planning process. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here; instead the focus of this guide will be to provide practitioners with additional information, tips and strategies for conducting a career planning workshop or working with individual clients.

Information provided in this guide covers the core concepts related to career planning. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

Guiding Frameworks

Many skills can be developed through engaging in career planning. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills and Employability Skills 2000+.

Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Career planning develops the following Blueprint competencies:

- **Competency 1 – build and maintain a positive self-image**
  - Level 2 – build a positive self-image and understand its influence on one’s life and work
- **Competency 5 – locate and effectively use life/work information**
  - Level 3 – locate, interpret, evaluate and use life/work information
- **Competency 8 – make life/work-enhancing decisions**
  - Level 2 – link decision making to life/work building
- **Competency 9 – maintain balanced life and work roles**
  - Level 1 – explore and understand the interrelationship of life roles
- **Competency 11 – understand, engage in, and manage one’s own life/work building process**
  - Level 1 – explore the underlying concepts of the life/work building process

Essential Skills

Engaging in career planning will enhance the following Essential Skills:

- reading text
- document use
- writing
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- working with others (if in a workshop)
- computer use (if using online assessments)
Employability Skills 2000+

Engaging in career planning will develop:
- Fundamental Skills
  - communicate
  - manage information
  - think and solve problems
- Personal Management Skills
  - demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
  - be responsible
  - be adaptable
  - learn continuously
- Teamwork skills (if working with clients in groups)

Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to engage in a career planning process is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to engage in career planning overlaps two Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:
- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Assessment
Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

You’ll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide; this leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly on the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Feel free to tailor your workshop to your personal style and participants’ needs. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

Required:
• A Guide to Planning Your Career (one copy per participant)
• pens, pencils
• for workshops:
  o computer, LCD projector and screen
  o flip chart paper and markers

Optional:
• PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
• Handouts from the client guide
  o Wheel (template)
• Different coloured highlighters
• Small post-it-notes
PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 41 slides. Reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a five hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the full PowerPoint to review the complete content.

Welcome participants to workshop
Introductions
• Have participants introduce themselves
• An icebreaker activity can be incorporated.

Time:
• Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.

Time:
• three-to-five minutes

Review quote (consider this a placeholder; a transition to new section).

Time:
• two-to-three minutes
Career planning is often considered a one-time event, normally to facilitate a school-to-work transition (ex: near the end of high-school or university). It should, however, be an active and ongoing process, encompassing more than just looking at the next promotion.

Other life roles may be: community member, mother, father, child, student.

Career planning doesn’t have to be about major career changes (though that can be the case). Instead, this is about acknowledging that individuals continuously learn, grow and develop. They seek to align work with evolving skills and changing interests while also ensuring work “fits” within their lifestyle (ex: as family requirements change).

If time permits have participants work in pairs to discuss their career journeys including how many careers or jobs to date, how other roles have impacted their choices, why they decided to engage in career planning now.

Time:
• five-to-six minutes, without activity
• 10 - 15 minutes with activity

Career planning should be done on a regular basis. It allows you to be prepared for changes, both personal and in the world of work and be prepared to navigate those changes.

Engage participants in a discussion around who has actively planned their careers and whose career “just kind of happened”.

Time:
• seven-to-ten minutes
Remind participants that, even though it seems like a linear process, career planning is actually cyclical. They may cycle back through the earlier stages several times throughout their working lives.

Time:
• five-to-seven minutes

Career decision making is like a journey; ever flowing and changing. It is a lifelong process that needs to be revisited often to help you stay on the road to success as you journey through your career.

Review quote (consider this a placeholder; a transition to new section).

Time:
• two-to-three minutes
The Wheel is an important model for career planning. The client guide provides additional information on the Wheel and includes examples.

The bottom half of the wheel makes up the internal domain which includes skills, interests, values and personal style which are unique to each individual.

Taking time to consider these sections helps individuals to get an increased sense of self-awareness so that they are better able to evaluate upcoming positions or explore other career options.

The upper part of the Wheel is called the external domain and these are those things that are “outside” of the person – the external factors that may influence career choice.

Each section of the Wheel is described in further detail throughout this guide.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes

At this point in the workshop it is important to give participants the opportunity to consider a vision for their future. This can be presented as long term goals. Remind participants that it may take a few months or a few years to bring this vision to reality and, of course, the vision may change over time.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes
Work-life experiences can have two parts:
(1) what work-life experiences does a person have that could be translated into a career (ex: making work out of a hobby) and (2) what does work need to support (ex: acknowledging other life roles, family, leisure activities).

Time:
• 10 minutes

Have participants brainstorm a few examples of work/life experiences and then show this slide to demonstrate other examples that they may not have thought of.

Complete the Work-Life Experiences activity in the client guide.

Have participants note a few key pieces, from the activity, into their Wheel.

Time:
• 10 minutes

Learning experiences also serve two purposes:
(1) what learning has someone acquired that could be utilized in the next career? and (2) what are the current learning goals and will the new career support that learning?

Time:
• three minutes
Have participants brainstorm a few examples of “learning” and then show this slide to demonstrate other examples that they may not have thought of.

Encourage clients to write down prior learning goals that they might have (ex: finish high school, go to university).

Complete the **Learning Experiences** section of the client guide.

Have participants note a few key pieces, from the activity, into their Wheel.

**Time:**
- 10 minutes

**Significant Others**

Significant others are those individuals that can be impacted by a career change (ex: spouse and children) and also those that may be influencing or impacting career decisions.

Have participants brainstorm a few examples of significant others and then show this slide to demonstrate other examples that they may not have thought of.

Complete the “Who are your significant others?” activity in the client guide.

Have participants note a few key pieces, from the activity, into their Wheel.

**Time:**
- 10 minutes
Understanding your personality characteristics may help you to find a work environment that will be a good fit for your preferred work style – a place that allows you to be yourself and appreciate you for who you really are.

Complete the **Personal Attributes** section in the client guide.

Have participants note their top three-to-five personal attributes into their Wheel (either a separate handout or directly into the client guide).

**Time:**
- 15 minutes

Review quote (consider this a placeholder; a transition to new section).

**Time:**
- two-to-three minutes
When discussing the notion of “values” some participants may identify that they don’t care...they work because they have bills to pay and nothing more. This may be true and everyone likely has that reality – help them see that this type of response actually indicates some underlying values (ex: financial security, stability, “breadwinner”). Explain, however, that most people have other key values as well and that working in a job that goes against a key value can make the work very hard. Be prepared to share a story (ex: how someone who is passionate about saving the planet and completely committed to recycling, saving energy, etc. may struggle working for an organization that is the country’s top polluter).

Complete the “What do you value at work?” activity within the client guide.

Have participants transfer their top three-to-five interests into their Wheel (either a separate handout or directly into the client guide).

If time permits, ask clients to share their top five values and discuss the similarities/differences in what people value at work.

Time:
• 15 minutes
• 20 - 25 minutes including discussion
As participants reflect on their interests, ask:
- What would you be willing to do for free?
- What “causes” do you really care about?
- If you could do anything you wanted to earn money, what would it be?

This might be a good time to share a personal or client story/example of how a dream was transformed into a way of earning a living.

Ask participants to complete the “10 favourites activity” section of the client guide.

Have participants transfer their top three-to-five interests into their Wheel (either a separate handout or directly into the client guide).

Time:
- 15 minutes

When considering skills it is important to reflect on what skills:
- participants have acquired,
- what skills they want to keep using (called motivated skills),
- what skills they would like to develop further.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes
Ask participants to complete the online Skills Assessment at Employability Skills 2000+ (see link in guide or print and distribute to participants).

Have participants transfer their top three-to-five skills into their Wheel (either a separate handout or directly into the client guide).

**Time:**
- 15 minutes

At this point, participants will have filled in every section except career opportunities and career alternatives.

Working in groups of two or three
- Introduce yourself using the information in your Wheel.
- Discuss anything surprising about the contents of your Wheel.
- Help identify themes in the Wheels of other group members.

After the group discussion, debrief the activity asking:
- What themes did you see in your Wheel?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- How complete a picture do you think this is of you?
- Does the information on the Wheel accurately represent who you are?

Optional: Give clients highlighters so they can highlight themes in their experiences (ex: highlight all customer service experiences in blue, leadership experiences in yellow);

**Time:** 20 minutes
After the Wheel has been filled in, it’s time to focus on career alternatives (the centre section).

To identify alternatives, have participants consider all of the information on their Wheel (skills, interests, values, personal style, significant others, learning experiences, work/life experiences). Sometimes, a job being considered will clearly not fit with the Wheel. It’s better to find this out now, before you’re hired to do a job that doesn’t fit.

Small post-it-notes are great to have in workshops using the Wheel. Individuals can write the job/career on the post-it and place it in the centre of their Wheel; all of their unique sections will be filled in and are easy to look at in reference to the “goal” in the centre.

Some participants will not have a sense of career alternatives so will need to, first, explore the labour market. More information can be found in the “How Can I Learn About the Job Market” section of the Client Guide.

Time:
• 10 minutes

Talk about how to evaluate the usefulness of LMI; how to verify it (ex: informational interviews), and what to do if it’s out of date (e.g. informational interviews, connect with Employment Manitoba staff).

The “Career Research” worksheet within the client guide will be helpful for clients as they begin their research.

Time:
• seven-to-ten minutes
Career opportunities (the final section of the Wheel) is akin to exploring the labour market (both internal to the organization and external); it’s important to be aware of what is out there, that is a good fit and a realistic next step. This section is usually filled in after the rest of the Wheel and after some career alternatives have been identified. It may be possible to anchor some pieces here that are important regardless of the job – “company must be within a 30 minute walk from my apartment”.

Participants must be realistic about the work that is available and the trends that may impact their industry or job. For example, someone may be very interested in tourism and he/she knows that most local tourists come from the U.S. Changes in the US economy and border-crossing policies have made it harder for Americans to travel; this trend means that fewer tourism jobs will be available.

Time:
- seven-to-ten minutes

Remind participants that there may be many ways to work and to find the career they are most interested in. Some individuals choose to be self-employed or work two-to-three part-time jobs to broaden their experience and network (or, of course, until something else becomes available). With the global market and shifts in the way work is done it is important to recognize alternative ways of working.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes

- Consider what work is available
  - e.g. locally, regionally, nationally
- For each job that you research
  - Identify three important highlights or trends
  - Note if opportunity is good, stable, or poor

Ways of Working
- Full-time/Part-time
- Seasonal
- Telecommuting
- Job sharing
- Rotational
- Contract
- Self-employment
- Portfolio career
Refer to Sarah’s scenario planning activity in the client guide to further explain this concept.

Have participants work in small groups (three-to-four) to reflect on their own “scenario plans.” The corresponding activity in the client guide will walk them through the steps. It may be too soon to complete the activity so, perhaps, focus on the notion of scenario planning and having multiple options.

Time:
- 10 - 15 minutes

Explain that most of us have some barriers or obstacles that get in the way of career success. We also have strengths to draw on; some strengths can even help to overcome our barriers.

Have participants complete the “Strength or Barrier?” worksheet in the client guide.

Working in groups of two or three
- Discuss your lists and plans to overcome barriers.
- Did you identify any elements that you thought were barriers, but are actually assets?
- Are some of the barriers you identified personal (ex: won’t impact your ability to work)?

Time:
- 20 - 25 minutes
People take it for granted that some things will or will not happen (ex: getting laid off). Not having tried to foresee surprising events, they are at a loss for ways to act when upheaval takes place. Scenario planning is a tool for helping individuals to take a view into the future in a world of great uncertainty.

Scenario planning is the process in which individuals invent and then consider, in depth, several varied scenarios of equally plausible futures with the objective to bring forward surprises and unexpected leaps of understanding. The point is not to select one preferred future and hope for it to become true. Nor is the point to find the most probable future and adapt to it. Rather, the point is to make strategic decisions that will be sound for all plausible futures; no matter which future takes place. Scenario planning is about making choices today with an understanding of how they might turn out.

From a personal and professional development perspective, scenario planning can equip individuals to prepare for their preferred futures in times of constant change.

Time:
• seven-to-ten minutes
This diagram represents the importance of making career changes in small steps rather than trying to make a “grand leap” into a new field/new job:

The square boxes represent the job and/or field that are no longer working whereas the hearts (or half of a heart) represent the desire job and field.

A first step could be to keep the same job but move into the desired field (represented by the down arrow on the left).

A first step could also be to get into the new job but in the same field.

In both cases the second step is making the next change to get to the desired job/field.

Be prepared to walk participants through this model, perhaps even have an example ready.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes

Review quote; taking the approach that many people manage their careers and are not sure where they are going. For example:
- Do I take this job offer?
- Is now the time to go back to school?
- Should I change careers?

The goal of career planning is to help people identify where they are going and an effective route to get there.

Time:
- three-to-five minutes
4. Setting Goals

- Select a goal
- What tasks do you need to achieve?
- How much time do you have to complete each step?
- What resources might you need?
  - Remember... people can act as resources

Discuss the notion and importance of goal setting.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes

This diagram demonstrates that there may be more than one way to reach a goal and outlines all the steps necessary to reach the goal. The “goal” of the diagram is to get people to stop thinking in a linear way when it comes to taking action (e.g. a person may hit a “road block” when trying to accomplish one major task but this diagram shows there are a number of other things a person could be taking action on while waiting for the “block” to clear). If necessary, visit: www.career-intelligence.com/management/SmartGoals.asp for a detailed description of the SMART acronym.

To use diagram:
- SMART Goal goes in the centre (one goal per diagram)
- Major tasks to achieve goal go on the outside (four corners)
- Small bubbles represent the “to-do” items to get to the goal

Have participants complete the “SMART Goal Setting” worksheet
- Based on today’s workshop, set a SMART goal
- Identify major tasks and associated steps
- In groups of two or three
- Discuss your SMART goals

Participants may find it difficult to come up with a goal; it is important to remind them it doesn’t have to be a “big” goal. It can be to research a specific job.

Time:
- 15 minutes
Review quote.

Time:
- two-to-three minutes

Tracking progress helps to ensure participants stay on track with goals; ask participants to identify their plans for ensuring that they stay on track with their goals; encourage them to share their goals with their significant others (identified earlier in the workshop).

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes
Forcefield Analysis is a model developed by Kurt Lewin. The concept behind the model is that there are two opposing forces that affect the change process and ultimately affect one’s vision/goal. One force enables change; it acts as a catalyst for starting the change process. The other force restricts change and acts in opposition to the enabling force.

As an example:
- Vision could be applying for a new position within your company.
- Enabling force could be a number of things such as flexible working hours, better pay, or the position is more in tune with your career goals.
- The restricting force could be your level of experience/education.

The model allows individuals to look at an overall goal and then think about the incentives to initiate change to reach the goal and potential blocks that will need to be dealt with to reach the goal.

Have participants complete the **Force field analysis** activity in the client guide

**Time:**
- 15 minutes

It is important for workshop participants to reflect on their level of optimism and whether they have a positive attitude towards their future. As important as it is to participate in ongoing career management/development activities, in doctoral research, optimism was the single biggest predictor of career success and job satisfaction. Using planning strategies, setting goals, networking all had an impact but none were as significant as optimism.

**Time:**
- five-to-seven minutes
Summarize the workshop content and activities.

Time:
• two-to-three minutes

Career planning is a life-long process which should be revisited often to remain adaptable and ready for opportunities that come your way.

Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form.

Time:
• two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed.
Additional Tips and Strategies

- Recognize that clients may be in different stages of the career planning process
  - Be adaptable to their needs, willing to spend more time on some areas of career planning than others
- Encourage clients to bring copies of previous assessment results, if available
  - Self-directed clients could complete online assessment activities prior to the workshop or individual session, and bring results with them
- Be aware that some clients are more open to self-reflection/assessment than others
  - Consider offering additional individual support to those who may need it

For More Information on Career Planning

Career Assessment Tools & Tests
www.quintcareers.com/career_assessment.html
Quintessential Careers is promoted as the ultimate career, job, and college site, offering comprehensive free expert career and job-hunting advice. This section provides extensive information on career assessment tools and tests.

Career Pathways: Quick Trip
www.ergoncommunications.com/books/
This is a condensed version of Career Pathways for use with clients who are ready to summarize information and move towards career decisions. It is available in French and English from Ergon Communications.

Planning for Serendipity? Career Management for Changing Times
Written by Roberta Neault, this article highlights several emerging models and approaches to career development. Of particular interest is the section on Career responsiveness; it discusses Neault’s Machu Picchu model in which individuals strategically meander and manoeuvre to reach their career goals.