



WP3 – INTERACTIVE INFOGRAPHICS FOR CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Future proofing my career

CALL-TO-ACTION ACTIVITY

THEMATIC AREA

Secure – skills for job retention

ACTIVITY TITLE

Future proofing my career

TYPE OF RESOURCE

Self-Help Activity



DURATION OF ACTIVITY (IN MINUTES)

180

LEARNING OUTCOME

Knowledge: Define the concept of future-proofing in the context of career development

Skills: Apply anticipatory thinking skills to predict future career challenges and opportunities

Attitudes: Commit to ongoing career development by proactively seeking opportunities for growth and change

AIM OF ACTIVITY

You'll probably have multiple jobs in your professional career. Flexibility is crucial for success in the evolving work landscape, staying responsive to changes in the labour market. Throughout your career, you'll gain a unique set of skills and expertise to propel your journey forward. The key to transitioning successfully is understanding what's needed to make a significant change and achieve your ambitions. Unfortunately, there's no handbook for this; career planning is a trial-and-error process with uncertainties and insecurities. However, setbacks are building blocks for your character, providing practical experience and insights into the consequences of actions. The mistakes made become valuable lessons, shaping your career and offering guidance for the next generation at the start of their journey.

By implementing this activity, you will be able to strategize and develop and long-term plan for you personal and professional development and set up objectives that are: realistic, motivating and challenging, goal-oriented and suited to your own aspirations and needs

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR ACTIVITY

- N/A

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Utilising forward-thinking skills to anticipate future career challenges and opportunities, and actively engaging in continuous career development by seeking growth and change, demands ongoing and thorough introspective reflection. This process isn't confined to a specific moment in your professional journey but is a continual, deep understanding of your evolving drivers, aspirations, and ambitions. It involves adapting to the current moment in your life and identifying what aligns best with your new circumstances.

By the end of the process, you will be able to create and keep updated a personal journal where you will track down new ambitions, accomplishments, lessons learnt and other important experiences – both good and bad – that are contributing to build your character and persona, and shaping the professional that you want to be.

STEP 1 – Visualise the ultimate destination

Regardless of the industry, market, and sector that you're in, the advancement in career of a worker can follow several archetypes.

The HR management and business literature provides for many different nomenclatures and examples:

- **Horizontal Career** – A horizontal growth of your career prepares you to become a sophisticated expert on a certain “niche”. This is a progress in career that happens through specialisation and allows people to become increasingly more proficient, expert and experienced in their domain. This is the typical case of scientists for instance, artists and designers, lawyers, and other professions that stick to specific roles and responsibilities.
- **Vertical Career** – A vertical growth of your careers prepares you to climb the ‘corporate’ ladder and take on increasingly more demanding roles of responsibility. This is a progress in career that happens by acquiring higher-ranking positions that move the worker from a position of mere execution to decision making power. This is the typical case of a career in any military corps, but also in traditional corporate institutions (finance and banking)
- **Spiral Career** – A spiral growth of your careers prepares you to follow a hybrid form of the previous two examples. This is a career progression that happens from moving both horizontally and vertically; by investing your set of skills, competences and know-how in new operative domains and with totally different outcomes in mind. This is the typical case of a scientist that decides to leave the laboratory of the university and join the R&D (research and development) department of a large firm; the banker that leaves the financial industry to pursue a career in politics, etc.
- **Entrepreneurial Career** – An entrepreneurial career differs from the previous examples. This career progression is when individuals decide to develop their own business idea, and be “their own boss”. An entrepreneurial ambition can develop any time, or it cannot develop at all: it really depends on the personal ambition of the person and their willingness to embark on this journey.

STEP 2 – Start setting the guiding pillars

Once you visualise your career preferences (with the understanding that they might change at any moment in your life, based on the experiences that you make throughout the process) it's time to reflect on what might keep you on the right pathway and allow you to align to your ambitions.

Let's take three different scenarios:

- **Person A** wants to increase its expertise in 3D programming and motion design, and wishes to collaborate in the near future with the best animation studios operating in the industry. Person A seems to be focused on a horizontal career, that will allow them to collaborate with the best player in the market and have the flexibility to move from company to company with relative ease due to the “standardised” nature of their roles and responsibilities.
- **Person B** wants to work in the credit administration department of a large bank and reinvest later in the market as a self-employed financial consultant, open its small business, and operate autonomously. Person B is focused on a spiral career that starts with a focus on specialisation and shifts towards an entrepreneurial ambition.
- **Person C** wants to work in the sales department of a multinational firm, be the best salesperson in the sales network and climb their way to the Chief Sales Officer position. Person C is focused on a typical vertical pathway; with their final intention being to reach the top of the chain of command.

All three people share a common denominator: regardless of the differences in jobs and occupations, industries and professional pathways, they all have to answer the same questions to start planning their career – Now it's time for you to consider them.

To become more self-aware of the DOs and DON'Ts that put you in the right track for success, complete the following table:

What I should start doing...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ...
What I should keep doing...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ...
What I should stop doing...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ...
What I should start doing better...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ... • ...

STEP 3 – Trace the coordinates

This exercise of introspection reflects on how you see and consider other elements of your surroundings that have impact and influence over the courses of your action(s).

When you realise your DOs and DON'Ts, you can start working on other features of your character that are critically relevant for your personal and professional success.

Here below for your reference a list of sample questions that can support you to set the pace of your progression, make well-informed decisions, and improve your self-awareness:

1. How willing are you to adapt and embrace uncertainty?
2. What are your key drivers and what helps you to stay focused and committed?
3. What can you do to make the most out of your mistakes so that they help you in moving forwards?
4. What is “success” to you?
5. What are your short, medium and long-term plans?

6. What could a mentor do for you right now?
7. What do you need to step-out of your comfort zone and master new skills/competences?
8. What will bring joy to your job?
9. What do you need to pursue to meet your goals?
10. What are the people from your network doing right now that inspires you and motivates you to do better?

STEP 4 – Keep track of the route

According to many professionals, regularly checking in on your professional journal is beneficial for reaching your professional development goals.

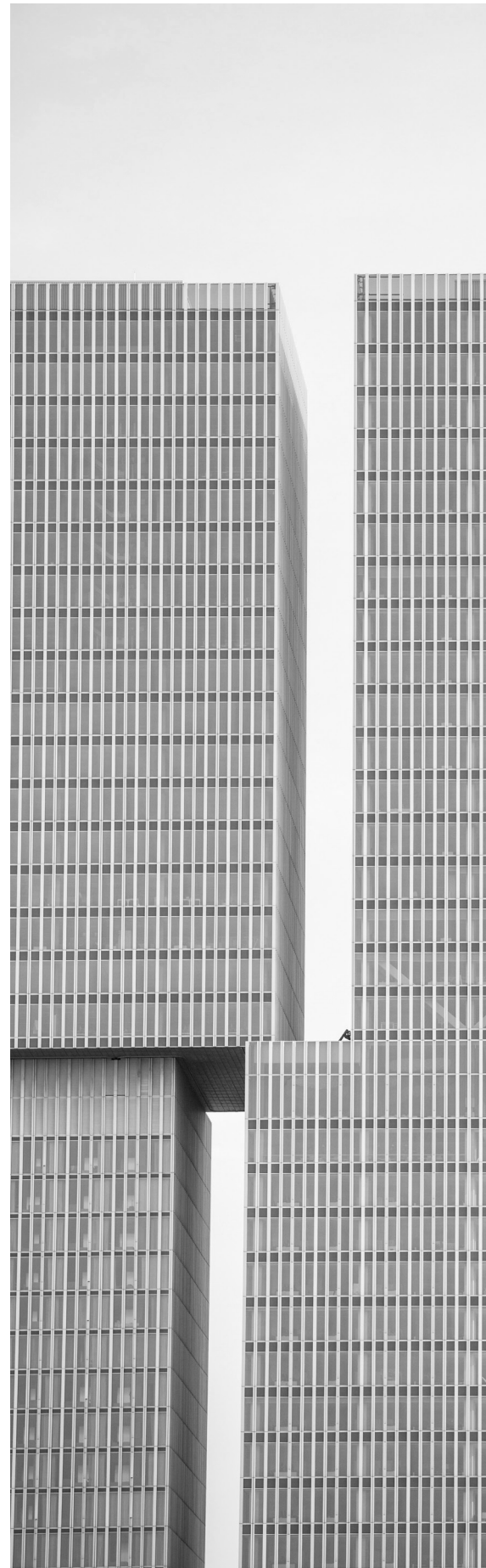
A “career journal” serves as a formalised version of a personal diary, allowing individuals to document their goals and concrete actions taken or planned to achieve them. It also serves as a record of work-related feelings, lessons learned, ideas, general thoughts, and significant events. Essentially, it narrates and testifies to one’s work history, helping visualise objectives and the steps taken toward them. Reviewing journal notes keeps experiences, accomplishments, and lessons from mistakes alive. There’s no specific time recommended to start a journal; it can be initiated at any career stage. People often begin when entering a new phase in life, aiming to approach it strategically. The decision to start a career journal is subjective, driven by intrinsic motivations, and the format is adaptable to individual preferences, moods, and commitment levels. While there’s no standard format, a few simple rules are recommended for those choosing to maintain a career journal.

- Be transparent about your intentions
- Define for yourself the motivations that you have in keeping a career journal: the clearer are the reasons, the easier will be for you to remain consistent.
- Pinpoint ideas and food for thought
- Formalise objectives and ambitions, milestones and desired results
- Tracking achievements, professional satisfactions and recognitions
- Reflecting on behavioural patterns and outcomes that they generate
- A combination of all of the above

- Choose a support format: Some people prefer keeping their career journal as an excel sheet and maintain it very formal-looking, others opt for a more narrative approach...this really depends on your preferences and style. If you like writing for instance, you might like the idea to keep your journal in a notebook and write your thoughts by hand.
- Decide on the content: Whatever is the content of your journal about, it should at least include what are your own professional goals. Goals should be settled in a way that:
 1. They are clearly defined
 2. Their outcomes can be easily measurable
 3. They are realistic, motivating, challenging and achievable with the considered resources and in the given timeframe of reference
 4. They are aligned to your ambitions, consistent to your expectations and coherent to your motivations
 5. They can be putted in a timeline
- Stick to a rule for their updating and review: There is not a standard guideline/recommendation on when and how many times you should update your journal. This might depend on any of the points discussed above. You can work on it daily (e.g., post-dinner hours), on weekends, on a monthly basis, or in conjunction with specific events of whatever nature. You can also follow a freestyle approach, meaning you write in it whenever you feel like doing so... the important thing is that:
 1. You come up with a schedule that fits the purposes of the journal.
 2. You demonstrate commitment to this schedule.
 3. You monitor, assess and evaluate your progress and take time to reflect on what is not going according to plans and what can be done to correct the course of events. This third phase is the most important as it really helps you to put things into the right perspective and rest assured that your expectations are manifesting concretely.

Explore some career journal templates developed by Notion (lead company providing for productivity software) that can help you in working on your first development plan. You can take these models as references and use them to inspire the content and format of your career journal:

- [Personal development plan](#)
- [Individual development plan](#)
- [Personal growth plan](#)
- [Annual performance self-review](#)
- [Performance improvement plan](#)
- [Annual Performance Self-Tracker](#)





Lotus

Resilience in VET Education



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