

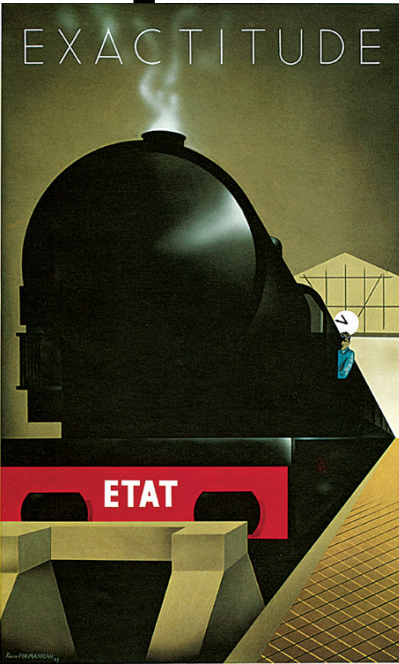


CAREERS

The Unglamorous Work of Building a Career

By Sara Tusek

So many of the most crucial chores of building a decent life are just that: chores.



Getting an education, choosing a place to live, buying a car or a house, even finding a life partner are about 10% fun and 90% work. Usually there's just enough fun involved to lure you into the process; once the process has ingested you, the hard work begins.

Building a career is no different. Although it's fun to read about people who become rich, famous and successful overnight, most of us realize that the very reason we're reading about these people is that they're unusual. We can hardly expect that we, too, will be discovered and showered with accolades with no effort on our part.

Yet the feeling persists that getting the right job, the one that's a perfect match between your talents, skills, interests and abilities and the needs of the organization, should be easy and natural. In the same way that many people expect to find their perfect

mate by casual dating and following their own instincts, we often imagine that it's just not right to try too hard to build the right career. It's not an entirely rational process, this job thing, so we should "keep our options open" and "see what comes along." As the 17th century British poet Andrew Marvell wrote, "Had we but world enough, and time..." we could let our careers develop naturally, of their own accord. But we don't.

What seems like an unimaginable number of years to work (40 or so) when we're 22, becomes so very few years when we approach our most productive years (30's, 40's and 50's); it's only then that we fully grasp that the choices we made in our 20's, those choices that seemed so offhand and easily reversible, are now bearing fruit—whether we like it or not.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In fact, it's become such a complex world, with so much freedom to pursue an enormous range of educational, travel and occupational options, that the choices are dazzling.

This is why career development exists: to help people construct a career that will be satisfying over a lifetime.

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

There's nothing mystical or magical about career development; it's simply a process through which a person can gain the necessary insights, information and skills to choose a career and begin the life-long process of career development.

- 1. Self-analysis: your own interests, values, goals and skills**
- 2. Education and job research: choosing a path and entering the job market**
- 3. Written communications; setting up interviews**
- 4. Interviewing and follow-up**
- 5. Transition into the job and beyond**

1. Self-analysis: your own interests, values, goals and skills

Self-analysis involves a thoughtful assessment of your accomplishments, dreams, beliefs, talents, gifts, and vocational aptitude. Questions to ask include personal goals (family, place to live, income, possessions, etc.) as well as job-related (do you want to manage? Perform a skill? Plan and organize? Report? Evaluate?) preferences. Exercises and group seminars help you come up with a list of career-related skills, goals and values.

2. Education and job research: choosing a path and entering the job market

What level of education is needed for a particular job? How are salaries, advancement and career paths structured in the careers that interest you? Would an internship

or summer job significantly enhance your chances of entering that career field? Do you need an apprenticeship, certification or licensure for the field?

3. Written communications; setting up interviews

Most people want to simply "write a resume" and get started looking for a job. But writing the resume comes after the self-analysis and the job research, so you know how to present the match between your abilities and the job you seek.

4. Interviewing and follow-up

Getting interviews with the people who can hire you is a skill in itself. Interviewing effectively, asking the right questions of the employer and showing your strengths as a job candidate are all key areas of getting offers for the jobs you want. Thank-you letters and appropriate follow-up communications are crucial.

5. Transition into the job and beyond

Getting job offers is the first goal; comparing them and deciding which is the best match for you and the employer is the true goal. Then the process begins again—you relocate, lose your job to layoff or recession, get more education to qualify for a different career—the process of career development doesn't end until your life ends!

To get help in the career development process, you can attend the "21st Century Jobs Seminar," led by Jarda Tusek, President of the International Leadership Institute (www.ili.cc). You can buy a copy of the course textbook, 21st Century Jobs, for \$10.00 plus postage by contacting Sara Tusek, ILI Managing Director, at stusek@ili.cc.