



By
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Effectively managing our own career is the most important financial asset for most of us, yet it is rarely pursued on a strategic or informed basis. Career planning, especially in the technology field, increasingly is the responsibility of the individual, especially since most people work for numerous employers. Researching, establishing, and pursuing career plans at different stages, along with progress reviews and enhancements, provide a basis for more successful career management.

Despite living in the information age,

ages 18 to 34; middle, from 35 to 55; and later, beyond 55. Frequently, early career choices are highly influenced by parents, relatives or close friends. The choices of technical schools, colleges or graduate schools, as well as majors, begin to focus interests for career paths.

It is critical for people in the early stages of a career plan to carefully make choices, as initial decisions can have a significant impact on long-term success and happiness.

Mid-stage career planning usually reflects the initial experiences one has had with his or her early career and is generally an extension of that experience. At this stage,

there may be a thread of a career track, but job moves during this phase that are not well planned can result in significant career-growth constraints.

Late-stage career planning frequently results from the need to find a position in one's career after an early retirement or a reduction in force. Career choices at this stage generally reflect more entrepreneurial, part time, or flexible working arrangements as traditional employment limitations as well as long-held interests and passions come more into focus.

How can you best pursue career planning at each stage? Use these steps:

- **Take stock of your career.**

Define your career and objectives at regular intervals.

- **Look around.** Research and identify potential career options that could meet those objectives.

- **Take stock.** Evaluate your skills, personality, training and experience so you are ready to pursue your objectives in the near and medium term.

- **Pick a winner.** Determine which career options are best and establish action plans in the short, medium, and long term to pursue your objectives.

- **Watch carefully.** Monitor progress against that action plan and refine it.

It's critical for individuals to invest in career planning during each stage of a career for short-, medium- and long-term success. Are you pursuing an informed career path or merely a series of jobs? **BR**

Build a Career Plan

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there is limited comprehensive career information and planning resources available online. Exploring career versus job information is more readily available once you have focused on a path, such as technology or even further, within the insurance arena. Career training in college largely is teaching how to interview and write a resume as well as exposing students to potential employers. There is limited information available about career choices.

Employers generally provide training, successive jobs, and a career path to the degree that it meets the organization's needs and objectives. Career coaches usually work via large employers and focus on building leadership skills, not on developing career plans. Outplacement counselors generally help people with job searches rather than career plans. Recruiters are looking to fill job positions with top candidates for employers who are their clients and usually do not provide career planning services for individuals.

Career planning generally has three major phases: early stage from

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Your eventual success depends on the choices you make—starting now.