

CAREER PLANNING

Supporting Mature Age Employment through Career Planning

Productive Ageing Centre **National Seniors Australia**

This fact sheet provides information about career planning and explains its importance for later working life. Although the fact sheet has been developed for mature age people, the information is applicable to people of all ages. It may also be a useful guide for employers to assist in staff development.



Career planning

Career planning is the continuous process of managing your career. It involves gathering information and knowledge to help you make informed decisions about your future education, training and career choices. It can help you to assess your skills and interests in order to find jobs and career paths that are right for you.

As most people today will change careers several times during their working life, career planning can be used as a lifelong process to help inform your choices and manage challenges as they arise.

Benefits of career planning

Career planning can help you control the direction of your career, determine the job skills and knowledge you will need, and how you can get them. It can help you:

- Manage your career pathway, work towards your target and monitor if you are on track
- Identify your short-term and long-term career goals
- Identify your skills, strengths and weaknesses, as well as possible areas where training may be required
- Discover suitable and appropriate career options
- Keep abreast of current industry trends, developments and changes
- Protect yourself against unemployment by ensuring your current skills match job demand and to take action to update your skills if required
- Plan your career to help you avoid/cope with any sudden or unexpected changes such as the need to change fields
- Get the most out of your working life

Career planning helps you to deal with change proactively rather than reactively

Prolonging working life through career planning

Career planning is important for people of all ages to assist in transitioning through different career phases. However it is particularly important for mature age people.

After the age of 50 some people struggle to find or keep a job. Planning for your future working life is of particular importance to help protect you against unemployment or premature retirement, e.g. by developing skills that will likely be in demand by employers in future.

Career planning can help mature age people to make successful transitions throughout different stages of their career and allow them to extend their career in ways that suit the individual demands of their lives. Appropriate and timely support can lead to more informed choices about future career paths. Extending working lives can have a strong financial benefit for individuals, employers and government. However, this requires active planning by individuals and support from employers, specialist advisers and peers.

Who should consider career planning?

There are a number of factors that may motivate you to plan for the future, e.g. you may be looking ahead toward your retirement or you may be ready to do something different to what you have done in the past. Whatever the reason, career planning can help you make informed decisions to help achieve your career goals.

Career planning may be of particular beneficial for people:

- Looking for employment
- Wanting to transition to retirement
- Wanting to change careers
- Wanting to become self-employed or start their own business

How to get started?

A fulfilling career is one that aligns with your personal goals and values, and in which you feel in control and empowered. The best way to achieve this is by developing your own career plan. The approach to developing a career plan will be different for each person. You may prefer to take a very structured approach or you may just make a few notes in key areas such as skill development, interests and types of jobs that attract you. Below is a general guide to key areas you may want to consider when developing your career plan.

Creating a career plan



STEP 1 Self-assessment

1

Think about the current status of your career:

- How satisfying is your current work?
- What do you find rewarding and enjoyable in a work role?
- What are your interests?
- What is important to you?



STEP 2 Assess skills

2

Understanding your current skills, knowledge and personal qualities can help you match them to jobs you may like to do. This can also help you identify the knowledge and skills you might need to attain to reach your career goals.

- What are your qualifications and experience?
- What are your key skills?
- What transferable skills do you already have?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What areas do you need to develop?



STEP 3 Consider your options

3

Consider your career options and identify possible jobs that match your skills and interests.

- Think about the industries that appeal to you
- Think about the types of jobs that would suit you best
- Look at job profiles to learn about jobs that interest you¹
- Explore areas where there is strong job demand or skill shortages¹



STEP 4 Develop your career plan

4

Developing a career plan will help you work out your short-term and long-term career goals and the next steps you should take to help you put your career plan into action.

- Develop your career goals
 - Write clear statements that you are able to work towards
 - Break the goals into milestones e.g. six months, 1 year, 2 years, 5 years and 10 years
- Prepare your career plan
 - WHAT actions will you take?
 - HOW will you achieve each action?
 - WHEN will you complete each action?
- There are many tools and templates to assist in developing career plans that are freely available¹



STEP 5 Review and adjust your career plan

5

Planning your career will increase your chances of achieving your career goals, but it is also important to remain flexible. A career plan developed for one stage of your career may no longer be suitable once you have reached certain goals. You need to monitor your plan to check that you are on track or make adjustments if your situation has changed.

- As a general rule, it is helpful to revisit your career plan every 6-12 months
- A career plan should be a living document that is regularly updated as you progress through your working life
- Reviewing your career plan will help strengthen your thinking, decide if you need to modify your plan, and determine if you need to seek further assistance to help achieve your career goals

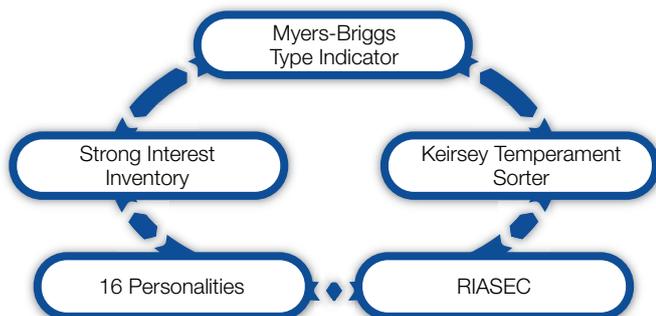
¹See the 'Advice and Help' section of this factsheet for further information.

Changing careers

There can be many reasons to consider a career change. These reasons may include no longer feeling like you are growing in your career, you being interested in moving to a different line of work, or wanting to start your own business. Whatever the motivating reasons, when considering a new job or a change in career direction, career planning can help guide you through the process by making you think about your skills, experience and personal needs.

There are a variety of resources and tools that can help you identify your interests, priorities and strengths. Completing career quizzes and personality tests can help you on your journey to identifying jobs that best fit your interests and skills.

Most people will change careers at least once in their lifetime



Quizzes and personality tests

- Career Quiz: joboutlook.gov.au/careerquiz.aspx
- My Career Profile: myfuture.edu.au/mycareerprofile

Note: These quizzes and personality tests should be used as a general guide. They do not provide definitive answers to your future career path. All decisions about your career should be based on a range of information gathered from a variety of sources, some which are discussed in this Fact Sheet.

Other useful starting points

- myfuture's 'Getting started' section can help you plan your career and decide what jobs suit your skills: myfuture.edu.au/getting-started
- myfuture's 'Change Direction' section has tips on how to change jobs and information to help you consider your job options: myfuture.edu.au/Change%20Direction.aspx
- myfuture's 'My career profile' is a personalised career exploration tool. It allows you to complete activities and then compiles occupations that may suit you based on the information you have entered: myfuture.edu.au/mycareerprofile
- You can also contact a professional career adviser if you need advice or help with making important career decisions (See the 'Advice and Help' section of this Fact Sheet for further information)

On average a person will change careers 6 times during their life

Career change checklist

- Explore career options
- Explore industries
- Take career assessment tests
- Consider training needs
- Read through career profiles
- Research salaries
- Seek advice
- Define your transferable skills

See the 'Advice and Help' section of this factsheet for further information.

Almost 50% of workers aged 50 years and over expect to be in their current job for less than 5 years

What jobs are in demand?

When planning your career it is important to consider what jobs are likely to be in most demand and where demand is decreasing. Every year the government releases employment projections by industry, occupation and region for the next five years ahead. There are five industries that are projected to provide more than two thirds of the anticipated employment growth over the next five years.

Top five industries projected to have the most employment growth by November 2018



1 st	Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to make the largest contribution with one quarter of the projected total employment growth. (increasing by 229,400 workers positions or 16.3%)
2 nd	Education and Training (increasing by 118,800 workers or 13.3%)
3 rd	Retail Trade (increasing by 98,200 workers or 7.8%)
4 th	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (increasing by 88,700 workers or 9.9%)
5 th	Construction (increasing by 83,500 workers or 8%)

More information on skill shortages and Australia's labour market can be found by visiting the following sites:

- The Australian Government Department of Employment's research findings on skill shortages in the Australian labour market employment.gov.au/skill-shortages
- The Labour Market Information Portal provides detailed information about industry employment trends and industry prospects, as well as information about Australia's labour market lmp.gov.au/

Future-proof your career through planning

Industries, careers and jobs are changing at a rapid pace, so it is important to plan what actions you can take now, to ensure your knowledge and skills are sought-after in the future. When putting together a career plan to identify how you can future-proof your career, these are some important factors to consider:

Stay up-to-date: Careers are constantly changing so stay up-to-date on employment trends that may affect you, your job and your industry. Also be aware that new jobs are being created and how they may apply to your skills.

Network: Keep track of people you meet, stay in contact with former colleagues and join professional networking groups (e.g. via online tools such as LinkedIn).

Learn: Lifelong learning is essential to ensure your skills and knowledge are up-to-date. Ensuring you are developing cross-functional skills that can be transferrable outside your current job scope to increase your employability.

Be tech savvy: Having up-to-date technological skills is required in most jobs nowadays. Increasing use of mobile technology and the globalisation of many companies means being tech savvy is going to be a necessity for most workers in the future.

Keep track: Keep a record of your experience, achievements and training completed so that when needed the information is readily available. There are online resources, such as *ePortfolios*, that can help you record your achievements and learning (see the 'Advice and Help' section of this factsheet for further information).

Be flexible: Keep an open mind to how your skills and qualifications may be adaptable to other roles so you are not locked in to one type of work.

Resources

There are many resources and tools that can help you develop your career plan. The following section lists a few resources and tools to help get you started.

Websites

Myfuture Website	Australia's national career information and exploration resource, helping people to make career decisions, plan career pathways and manage work transitions. The website provides facts about specific jobs, including information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Their related courses and qualifications▪ Other similar occupations▪ Your personal requirements▪ Their duties and tasks myfuture.edu.au/
The Job Guide	Provides detailed information on a range of occupations and education and training options to help people to make informed decisions about their career. jobguide.education.gov.au
Job Outlook	This website is an Australian Government initiative that provides information about employment characteristics, trends and prospects for specific jobs. The site allows you to select a job to find out if your skills, abilities and knowledge match the job's requirements. It also provides information on current vacancies, salaries, and other job statistics. joboutlook.gov.au
Job search	This is also an Australian Government website that contains information on job statistics, salaries, training options, job seeking tools and job match profile tool. jobsearch.gov.au
Job Guide	This site provides detail on a wide range of occupations (around 1500), education required, training pathways and contact details where you can find out more information about identified occupations. It also provides guidance on how to identify occupations that suit you based on your skills and abilities. jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au
Local TAFE and Universities	You can browse the websites of your local TAFE and Universities to research careers and courses. australianuniversities.com.au/colleges/

Tools

Career planning templates	This is one example of a career plan template that can assist you to develop your own career plan and goals careers.vic.gov.au/uploads/career_planning_toolkit.doc . However, there are many more templates freely available that you can find by conducting a web search for 'career plan template' (e.g. using Google).
ePortfolio	This is one example of an online tool that can help you create a space to keep track of your experience, achievements and learning foliofor.me . Again, there are many other resources freely available that you can find by googling 'ePortfolio'.

Job and career expos

Job and career expos provide useful advice on career pathways from industry employers, education and training providers, government agencies and community groups:

National Careers and Employment Expo	ncee.com.au
Reinvent Your Career Expo	reinventyourcareer.com.au/career-expos
MyFuture website	myfuture.edu.au/explore-careers/talk-with-real-people-about-your-career/see-what-career-events-are-happening-near-you

Peak Career Industry Bodies

Career Industry Council of Australia	Represents national, state and territory career practitioner organisations. cica.org.au
Career Development Association of Australia	A national organisation of career development professionals that delivers services to industry, government, education, small businesses and community organisations. cdaa.org.au

Books

There are many books that can assist with career planning. These are a few examples and you can also visit your local library to see what are available:

- Scudamore, P & Catt, H. (2003). *Managing your own career*. UK Hodder Headline, London, England.
- Bolles, R.N. (2014). *What color is your parachute?: A practical manual for job-hunters and career changers*. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, USA.
- Bisbee, B. (1997). *Steer your own career*. Australia Penguin Books, Ringwood, Australia.
- Sher, B. (1999). *I could do anything if I only knew what it was: how to discover what you really want and how to get it*. Dell Publishing, San Francisco, USA.

Professional career advice

Career advisers (also known as career counsellors, coaches or practitioners) can help you develop a career plan and find a career that suits your skills and interests. They can help you to:

- Identify your career goals
- Assess your current skills and skills you may wish to develop
- Explore different career options
- Develop a tailored career plan
- Deal with significant change e.g. moving to a new occupation can be confronting and overwhelming.

Even if you are working in an area you like, or know where you wish to be working, you may still want to seek professional career advice to help achieve your career goals:

- Identifying opportunities to advance your career
- Improving your network of contacts
- Transitioning to retirement

Finding a career adviser

- Many Career websites also provide information on finding career advisors
- The Yellow Pages, online searches and local newspapers
- The Career Development Association of Australia is the largest association of qualified career advisers in Australia. To find a registered career adviser visit: cdaa.org.au/?page=SEARCH%20practitioners
- Some private recruitment firms offer career advice services. Search online or in the Yellow Pages to find recruitment firms and agencies near you.

This fact sheet was developed using information from the following sources:

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- careers.vic.gov.au/exploration/a-fair-workplace
- myfuture.edu.au/

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