



THE CAREERSCHOOLED
CAREER STRATEGY *GUIDE*



CareerSchooled



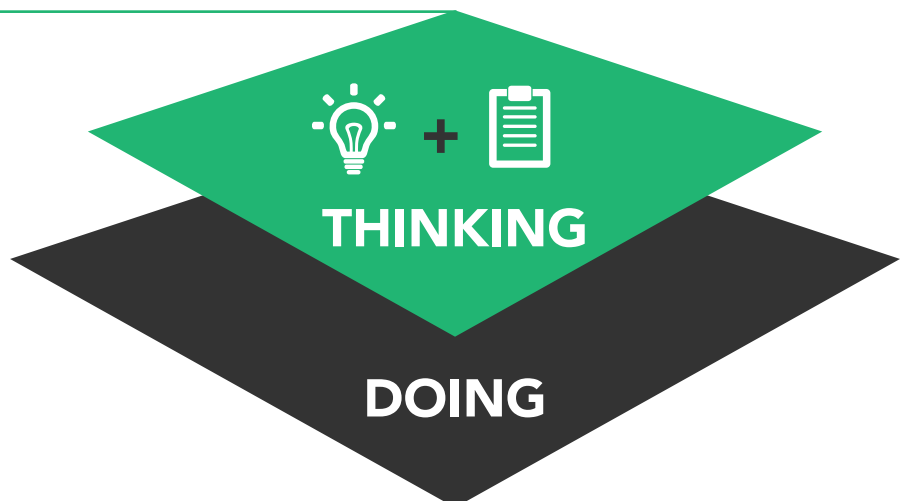
CareerSchooled

Introduction

Finding a great job and building a meaningful career is important to our readers at [Careerschooled](#). However, while many of us care deeply about jobs and careers, figuring out when and how to make your next career move is a challenging process.

To help solve all of these questions, we at CareerSchooled have created a guide to get you on your way to finding that next step in your career. This guide will give you a framework for productive thinking as you reflect on your next move, and then how to take actionable steps to make that happen.

Life is a combination of thinking and doing, and this eBook will give you an actionable framework for both to help you make the next move in your career.





Step 1: Reflect

Before we can get to where we want to go, we should start to understand where we have been, and what we have done. To do this, begin by reflecting upon your most recent work experiences and assessing them to uncover potential insights that can help you develop an idea of what you'd like to do next.

Often, what we want to do lies within what we've already done and we simply need to shine some light on it. To do this, start by writing out all the things you've done in your current and previous jobs. Identify the things you did well and tasks you truly enjoyed doing. It's important to acknowledge the things you didn't like and don't want to do again. Knowing yourself and your strengths will help you identify new jobs or professions to target.



Key Questions to Answer

What are my strengths?

What are my most impactful/best career accomplishments?

What do people consistently ask me for advice on?

When did I perform at my best, and what enabled that?



Key Activities

Self Reflection of Strengths and Weaknesses:

Evaluate your own set of strengths and weaknesses. Write them down. Consider taking self-assessments such as [StrengthsFinder](#), [Myers-Briggs](#), or [Business Chemistry](#).

Feedback from Peers: Ask for feedback from your co-workers, peers, and friends to identify your strengths and understand how others perceive your capabilities.

TIP:
Check Out how to conduct a 360 assessment here.

Future State Analysis: Using your past experiences and strengths as a starting point, write out what an “ideal” next job would look like. Consider the skills and strengths you have, the types of projects/responsibilities you want, and criteria in a company or position that are important to you.

BY THE END OF THIS PHASE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

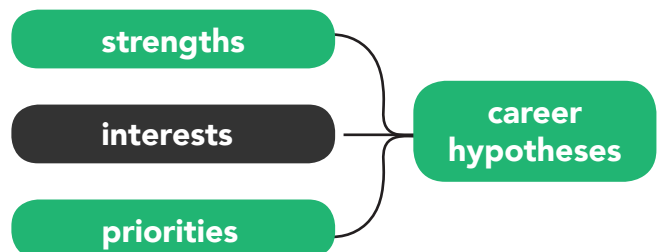
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses
- Understand what you liked/disliked about your most recent role(s)
- Confirm your strengths and weaknesses via your colleagues and peers
- Identify factors that are important to you in deciding your next career move



Step 2: Articulate

Before we can get to where we want to go, we should start to understand where we have been, and what we have done. To do this, begin by reflecting upon your most recent work experiences and assessing them to uncover potential insights that can help you develop an idea of what you'd like to do next. After reflecting on where you've gone in your career and unpacking your strengths and experiences, start to make educated guesses around possible types of jobs you want to do next.

By defining your strengths, interests, and priorities, you can begin writing out "career hypotheses" and use these hypotheses as a guiding point to learn more about potential opportunities. One of these "guesses" could be your next career move.



A career hypothesis is merely an educated guess about the type of job, role, function, or industry that you would like to pursue. Base this educated guess on your evaluation of your strengths and interests. Ideally, there is some correlation between the hypotheses and some of the advantages and skills you already have. Just as scientists form hypotheses and later determine if they are true or false, career hypotheses are the same. Some of these will end up being right and will be the path you want to pursue, while others will not. The point is, you don't need to be 100% certain, you just need to start with an educated guess!

Examples of Career Hypotheses:



Finally, begin the process of updating key documents such as your resume, LinkedIn profile, and other social media outlets to ensure you're ready for the job application process. These will come in handy as you start to look for job postings, network with peers, and apply to jobs.



Key Questions to Answer

What types of job characteristics are essential to me? (ex: function, role, geography, company size, industry)

What role names interest and excite me?

How do my skills and experiences stack up against these roles?

What strengths/skills do I have that can be valuable in these potential roles?

What kind of company culture is best for me?

Where do I do my best work, and what do I need to do my best work?

Who are the types of people I want to work with, and what are some of their characteristics?



Key Activities

Review Past Work Experiences:

Write down your past work experiences, projects, and key achievements

Develop Career Hypotheses:

Create between 2-3 different hypotheses about roles you want to do next (Tip: Check out examples of a career hypothesis here)

Update Key Documents:

Update your resume and LinkedIn profile to reflect skills and experiences accurately



BY THE END OF THIS PHASE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Identify skills, tasks, or responsibilities that you would like to do in your next job
- Develop a resume that accurately reflects your skills, experiences, and strengths
- Create a few (recommend between 2-4) potential "career hypotheses" you could take for your next job
- Identify characteristics of company culture that are important



Step 3: Discover

Now that you have a few potential careers or positions in mind, test these thoughts and beliefs by researching information, talking to people, and learning about the intended roles. Look at the feasibility and availability of job opportunities that currently exist and what requirements each job has.

This next step involves a mix of individual research using tools online, personal one-on-one conversations with people in your network and the field, as well as some synthesis of what you've learned about yourself. In this phase, you may also uncover you don't actually want to do some of the jobs that you thought you did, and that is okay!



One of the best ways to find out if you'd be a good fit for a career hypothesis is to talk to someone in your network that's in the field. By speaking to them and learning about their experience, what skills they need to do their job, their career outlook, and general guidance, you can begin to determine which career hypotheses lend more credence and which ones you might discard.

You can also learn valuable information about the interview process, keys to getting hired, and gain potential connections that can help identify job opportunities and navigate the interview process.

Another thing to do is to start reviewing job postings for roles that are of interest and match your career hypotheses. Using places like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and Indeed, you can identify jobs you're interested in and review the job descriptions to evaluate interest and fit for the role.

By reviewing these roles, you can get a sense of the jobs that are out there and what types of skills and experiences are needed to do these jobs. This will help serve as a reality check and will ensure you are applying to jobs that exist and that you are qualified for.

Finally, while you should absolutely use job boards, remember this: At least 70% of jobs are never posted online! To find opportunities, you're going to have to rely on your network and finding information through informational interviews. Make sure you take the time to identify people in your network that you can talk to, build relationships with, and learn more about companies and roles.

If you're not sure where to turn to network, consider using LinkedIn to find the following types of people in your network:

- Alumni from your undergrad who work at companies you are interested in
- Alumni from undergrad who have the title or work in the function that you are interested in
- Friends of friends in your network who are at companies you are interested in (ex: ask a friend if they know anyone who works at Company X?)



Key Questions to Answer

What can people in my network provide me with more about a company or role I'm interested in?

What do I want to learn from people in my network about the roles and jobs I'm interested in?

Does this specific role or job make use of my skills and strengths?

Do I currently have the specific skills and experiences that are required to do this role or job

If I don't, are there ways I can get the necessary skills?



Key Activities

LinkedIn Review - Search on LinkedIn for information on companies and people that are relevant to our job search

Informational Interviewing - Speak to professionals who work at companies we are interested in, or, who have jobs that we are similar to our career hypotheses.

Job Post Matching - Review job postings for roles we are interested in and compare our skills and experiences with the skills and experiences that are required in the job posting

Glassdoor Review - Review **Glassdoor** to get a sense of other company cultures, and what one might resonate best with you

*TIP:
Check out how
to conduct an
informational
interview here.*

BY THE END OF THIS PHASE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Have knowledge and insight on the skills and experiences needed for your career hypotheses
- Conduct informational interviews to learn more about roles and opportunities
- Understand how accurate your career hypotheses are, and if you are a good fit for these roles/jobs



Step 4: Target

Using the information you learned in the discovery phase, you can begin targeting roles, companies, and applying to job postings. You can start finding these roles and job postings on traditional job boards, company websites, and through word of mouth, as well as by using your network and contacts to connect you directly to recruiters and hiring managers.

You should note that in this phase you'll be doing a lot of things on a continuous loop. You will start (and continue to search) for jobs on a weekly or daily basis, and you'll apply (and continue) to apply to jobs on a weekly and daily basis. A quick note here: Some people will naturally gravitate towards measuring their progress by the sheer amount of jobs they apply to or applications they submit. While it's important to keep track of these measures, it's vital that you're applying to jobs that fit your requirements and where you'll be a good fit. Sure, you can't be too picky, and well, to score, you need to take a shot! But merely applying to job after job after job is not the most effective way to make progress in a job search.

Finally, as you begin to apply for and get referred for different opportunities, you can start honing and practicing for your interviews to ensure you are prepared and adequately telling your story.



Key Questions to Answer

Who are people in my network that work at companies I am interested in?

What resources can I use to search and identify open job postings that are relevant to me?

How does what I want to do and the skills/experiences I have fit the description of what a company is hiring for?

What are the essential characteristics and compelling experiences that I want to make sure I share with recruiters and hiring managers?

How does the job posting match up against the key criteria I initially developed?



Key Activities

Job Searching - Use job boards (ex: LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor) to identify jobs you are interested in

Job Posting Outreach - Reach out to people in your network who work at companies where you'd want to work, don't be shy to ask for help with referrals

Recruiter and Hiring Manager Outreach - Connect with recruiters and hiring managers to get a leg up in the interview process

Interview Prep - Prepare in advance for interviews by doing research, preparing for answering common questions, and thinking about what value you might add to a particular role/organization.

*TIP:
Check out how you
can prepare for an
interview here.*

BY THE END OF THIS PHASE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Connect with employees at companies you are interested in applying to
- Connect with employees who can refer you for open job postings
- Apply to job postings
- Interview for a job

Summary

Determining The Next Step in Your Career Journey is a Process That Requires Reflection and Planning

Figuring out how to find the next step in your career is often challenging because you don't know where to start. The following framework will help you identify where to start as well as a step by step process of determining the next level in your career.

REFLECT

- Take time to think about your career journey – what you have accomplished and what you want to do next
- Reflect on your most recent job – what you liked and disliked about the role
- Determine which factors are most important in your next position (e.g., location, industry, compensation) taking into consideration professional and personal motivations

ARTICULATE

- Articulate the key takeaways from your reflection around strengths, weaknesses, personal branding, and what you want next
- Develop paths and hypotheses about the next job you want to take
- Develop your resume based on your unique accomplishments and skillsets
- Build/update your LinkedIn profile to augment what you're highlighting in your resume



DISCOVER

- Begin searching for opportunities that intersect with your interests, preferences, and skillsets
- Network and develop relationships with key people, such as recruiters, friends, colleagues, and people in your desired industry
- Learn which jobs you are most interested in by combining your informational interviewing with research on companies, industries, and positions you are interested in

TARGET

- Tailor your resume for jobs you are interested in
- Contact Recruiters and Employees who work at companies you are interested in to get referrals and warm introductions
- Keep networking and researching for new potential opportunities
- Polish your interviewing skills and prepare for each interview by studying the company and industry – be sure that you have a crisp message around your value proposition



Conclusion

While the job search and interviewing process can be frustrating at times, it can also be exciting, fun, and full of learning. Your career is a journey, filled with twists and turns along the way. Inevitably, there will be moments of excitement and moments of frustration, but with any long process, it's important to keep a positive attitude, be patient and persistent, and stay focused on the end goal.

Our Career Strategy guide along with our other career resources is a great start to finding your next step in your journey to a meaningful and rewarding career.

TIP:
For details on how I followed this in my most recent job search check out my post here.

About the Author



Hi there!

My name is Al Dea, and I am the Founder and Editor of CareerSchooled and MBASchooled. Over the course of my life I've had thousands of conversations with people of all walks of life over one key question: **how do I build and grow my career?**

To answer this question, I created **CareerSchooled** and **MBASchooled**, and have written, blogged, podcasted, tweeted, about this topic in hopes of sharing my thoughts, ideas and learnings with as many people as possible. I fundamentally believe that everyone has the right to a rewarding and meaningful career, and my goal is to help as many people as possible to achieve that.

In addition to running these two sites, I'm also a career and leadership development coach, and I advise and coach people through career transitions, accelerations and leadership development.

I write and speak on these topics, and his work has been featured in outlets such as the *The Muse*, *Fast Company*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Sloan Management Review*. To keep me busy during the day and to work towards my own career success, I'm a Product Marketer at a Salesforce, and previously was a management consultant at Deloitte Consulting LLP.

I hope this ebook helps you think about what you need to do to make the next career move and gives you actionable to-do's to take the next step, and would love to work with you to make that happen.