

Creating a Career Plan



**Yale University
African American Affinity Group**



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**“It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from.
The ability to triumph begins with you. Always.”**

- Oprah Winfrey

Objectives

- Identify your transferable skills through analyzing select accomplishments that brought satisfaction
- Clarify interests and desired workplace culture
- Chart schools or departments in the university to explore, along with possible outside environments to create a marketing plan
- Determine existing contacts and information needed to make valid decisions about your career and the questions that can be asked during informational meetings
- Commit to how much time you will spend on a regular basis to execute your plan



Even in economically-challenged times, we need work that is the best match we can find that uses the unique skills and qualities we bring to the table. Unless we are very clear about our transferable skills, our interests and values, and how to go about creatively researching possible opportunities, we are at a disadvantage.

We spend too much of our waking time at work to not be gaining satisfaction from what we do – even when it is critical that we have an income!

Never work just for money or for power.
They won't save your soul or help you sleep at night.

- Marian Wright Edelman

Select Accomplishments

Think of 3 things that you have done throughout your life that brought you great satisfaction. At the completion of each, you felt good about what you did and about yourself. These should be things that you enjoyed doing. No one wrote about your accomplishment in the newspaper, or may have noticed at all. But you felt proud about your success.

Please be specific, rather than general. For example, rather than saying I value helping people resolve conflict, one of my select accomplishments is that I facilitated a process with two lawyers, who were colleagues, to resolve a long-standing conflict.

Some examples:

- Learned how to develop PowerPoint presentations
- Developed and delivered a training session on DISC
- Implemented a new process to consistently and successfully ensure all staff are fully informed of new information related to scheduling protocols
- Created a brochure for the Cancer Center
- Learned to drive a standard-shift car
- Solved a complex issue for boss using database query tools
- Wrote my first grant proposal and had it accepted
- Got everyone in my kindergarten class to buy into playing a game I made up

Think of 3 – 6 of your own select accomplishments:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Ability Analysis Grid

Category	Descriptors	1	2	3	T
Research	Observe, investigate, study, perceive, sense, measure, test, inspect				
Analysis	Analyze, compare, extract, correlate, derive, evaluate, differentiate, identify				
Interpretation	Explain, understand, portray, advise, figure out				
Problem-solving	Solve, trouble shoot, improve, critique, redirect, redesign, restructure				
Systematizing	Coordinate, organize, develop procedures, standardize				
Planning	Forecast, strategize, set goals, plot				
Management	Supervise, control, direct, administer, delegate, budget				
Leadership	Show the way, govern, inspire, motivate				
Follow-through	Persist, persevere, show tenacity, tie up loose ends, bring to closure				
Mentoring	Teach, help, guide, counsel constructively, help others to grow personally and professionally				
Innovation	Invent, change, develop, devise, create, design, break with convention				
Imagination	Imagine, visualize, conceptualize, invent, think of				
Vision	Ask “what if?” or “why not?”, then act to find the answer, see the future clearly				
Synthesis	Adapt, bring together with imagination, integrate, blend				
Artistry	Write creatively, draw, sketch, sculpt, paint				
Sympathy	Console, help others in need, be friendly and attentive				
Empathy	Empathize, understand feelings/needs of others, relate to issues/concerns of others				
Listening	Actively listen, probe to accurately understand the message being conveyed				
Written presentation	Write clearly, concisely and effectively; use the written word to get results				
Verbal presentation	Speak clearly, concisely and effectively; use the spoken word to get results				
Persuasion	Convince, influence, sway, overcome opposition, sell				
Negotiation	Mediate, intervene, collaborate, resolve differences				
Initiative	Be inventive and resourceful, be among the first to try				
Flexibility	Be open, cooperative, adapt easily to change,				
Team player	Work well with a team, demonstrate solidarity				
Assembly	Build, prepare, fabricate, collect, pull together,				
Installing	Set up, fit, fix, tailor, customize, test				
Operating	Run, maintain, make function, work, activate				

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Interests

Circle 3 to 6 of the topics that interest you, or add other interests in the spaces provided.

Accounting	Finance	Politics
Aging	Fishing	Photography
Advising	Food Preparation	Politics
Animals	Gardening	Parenting
Antiques	Geography	Retail
Arts and Culture	Genealogy	Race Relationships
Architecture	Graphic Arts	Recycling
Archeology	History	Real Estate
Astronomy	Health	Research
Audio Visual	Hiking	Religion
Aviation	Housing	Singing
Biology	Interior Designing	Security
Books	Information Technology	Social Justice
Children	International Affairs	Sociology
Chemistry	Journalism	Science
Civil Rights	Knitting	Sports
Construction	Languages	Theater
Cooking	Law	Travel
Community Service	Law Enforcement	Web Design
Construction	Learning	Women's Issues
Crafts	Libraries	Weather
Creative Endeavors	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual Issues	_____
Current Events	Machines, Mechanics	_____
Cycling	Music	_____
Disabilities	Medicine	_____
Economic Empowerment	Math	_____
Engineering	Mentoring	_____
Education	Native Americans	_____
Environment	Opera	_____
Ethics	Other Cultures	
Fashion	Psychology	

Values

Being content with my work <input type="checkbox"/>	Advancing my career <input type="checkbox"/>	Pursuing excellence <input type="checkbox"/>	Being well-known <input type="checkbox"/>	Being loyal at work <input type="checkbox"/>
Having major accomplishments <input type="checkbox"/>	Making my own decisions <input type="checkbox"/>	Having low stress <input type="checkbox"/>	Having power <input type="checkbox"/>	Challenging myself athletically <input type="checkbox"/>
Being well-liked <input type="checkbox"/>	Being competitive <input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time with family & friends <input type="checkbox"/>	Being independent <input type="checkbox"/>	Being active in the community <input type="checkbox"/>
Being creative <input type="checkbox"/>	Having a high income <input type="checkbox"/>	Helping society <input type="checkbox"/>	Having job security <input type="checkbox"/>	Gaining new knowledge <input type="checkbox"/>
Serving others <input type="checkbox"/>	Having status <input type="checkbox"/>	Having flexibility <input type="checkbox"/>	Taking risks <input type="checkbox"/>	Influencing others <input type="checkbox"/>
Having authority over others <input type="checkbox"/>	Choosing my work location <input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborating with colleagues <input type="checkbox"/>	Having interests outside of work <input type="checkbox"/>	Being part of a team <input type="checkbox"/>
Inventing something new <input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling needed and appreciated <input type="checkbox"/>	Room for advancement <input type="checkbox"/>	Being self-motivated <input type="checkbox"/>	Having a boss I like and respect <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

My Transferable Skills, Interests, and Values

My top 3 - 5 transferable skills:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

My interests:

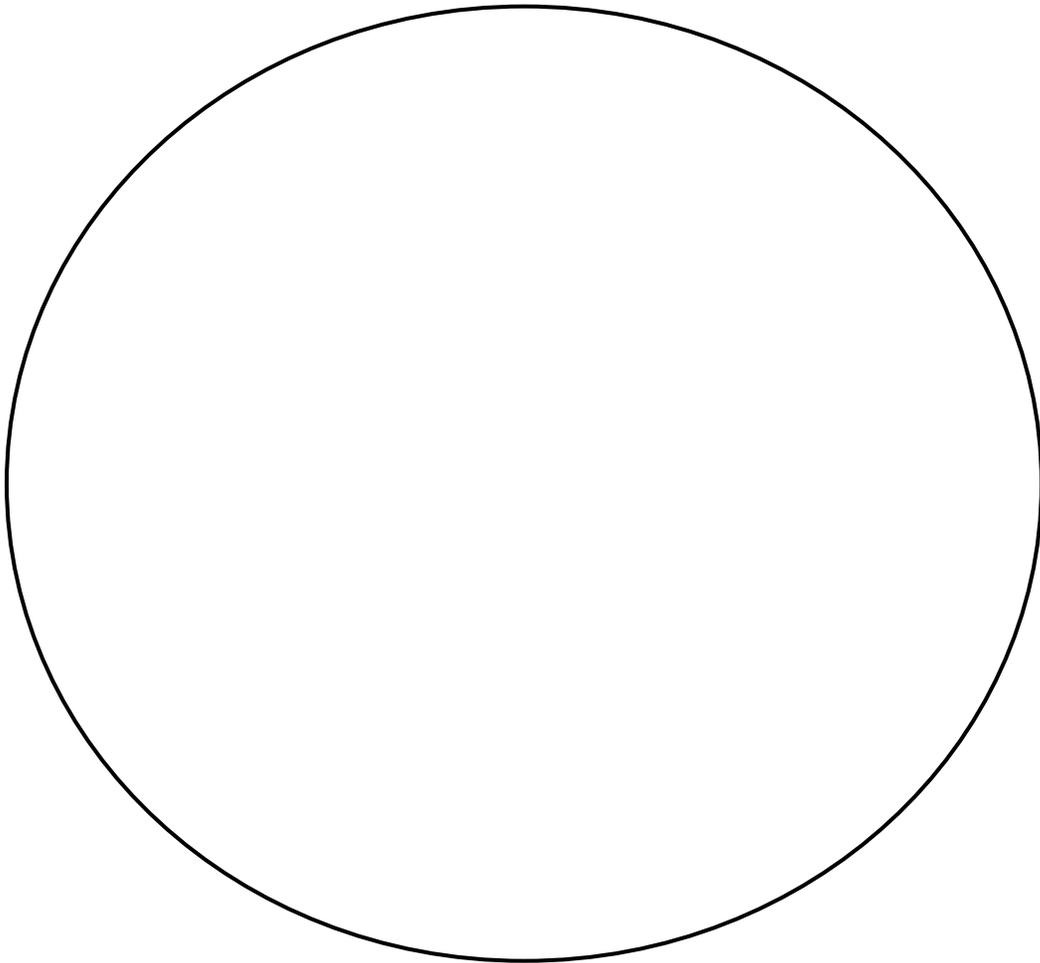
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

My most important values:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

'Market' Research

Market Research is work for the investigative reporter in us. We need to connect with people in our network to collect the information we need to make sound decisions about the next step in our career. What are other jobs and work environments like?



Setting Up an Informational Meeting

6 Degrees of Separation

Research in sales and marketing shows that we can get in touch with anyone in the world within 6 contacts. So, if some of my interests include people, psychology and research, I might want to know more about the work of the Psychology Department at Yale. I most likely know someone, who knows someone, who knows someone who knows someone that works there.

John, who I know, gives me a name of someone, Tracey Peters, who has a colleague that used to work there.

I contact Tracey and say or email:

Hi Tracey; My name is Sandra Young. John Smith, who I used to work with, gave me your name. He thought it was a good idea for me to connect with you. I'm doing some research to make some decisions about my own career, and one of the areas I want to learn more about is the Psychology Department at Yale. John said that you have a colleague that formerly worked there.

I am wondering if you might give me his name so that I might contact him to gather some information. I'd also appreciate it if I could use your name when I contact him.

I contact Joshua and say or email:

Hi Joshua. My name is Sandra Young. I'm doing some research to make some decisions about my own career, and one of the areas I want to learn more about is the Psychology Department at Yale. Tracy Fagan suggested I talk with you to learn about what you used to do there. Could we meet for 30 minutes so that I can ask you some questions to begin learning more about what you know about this department?

I don't expect that you know of any current openings, I'd just like to learn more about what they do. *[See page 12 to learn more about what you can ask when you meet with Joshua.]*

Referrals from Joshua:

When I meet with Joshua, one of the last things I will ask is, "Do you know anyone else who currently or formerly worked in this department that I might ask for additional information?" "Are there other Yale departments that focus on psychology in any way?" "May I could use your name when I contact him/her?"

Follow up with a thank you:

Everyone likes to be appreciated. Be sure to follow-up with a thank you note to everyone who provides information or contacts. If you see any article pertaining to their interests, be sure to send that information along to them. We want our name to be in front of the people in the network we develop as much as possible. In the future, if they hear of an opening in an area that we've expressed interest in, we want them to think of us.

Kinds of Questions to Ask

- What do you like best about your work?
- What do you like least?
- How did you get to where you are now?
- Tell me about your career
- What kind of different jobs are there in this department/company/school/organization?
- What is the work environment like here?
- I read _____ about your department/company/school/organization. Can you tell me more about it?
- Can you tell me if there is room for advancement [*or whatever it is you value*] in this department/company/school/ organization?
- My strengths are in mentoring, leadership and innovation. [*or whatever yours are*] Are there any kinds of positions in this department/ company/ school/ organization that require these?
- Do you have any ideas of what else I should be investigating to satisfy my interest in _____?
- Is there any advice you'd like to give me as I continue gathering information to help me make decisions about the next steps in my career?
- Is there anyone else you know that I might ask for additional information about _____?
- May I use your name when I contact him/her?

My Plan

1. How much time I commit to spending each week on my career plan:
2. Who I can ask to support me in this effort:
3. What I need to do first:
4. Who I will contact first:
5. What I need to do to keep the ball moving:

“We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.”

-Jesse Owens