Creating a Professional Development Plan

EDUCAUSE Midwest Conference Program
March 2010
Creating a Professional Development Plan, revised 2010
Jenny Mehmedovic, Assistant to the Provost
University of Kansas

Creating a Professional Development Plan, revised 2008, 2009
Linda A. Cabot, Vice President and CIO
Cardinal Stritch University

Creating a Professional Development Plan, 1st revision
Pattie Orr, Vice President for IT & Dean of University Libraries
Baylor University

Material from the following sources are incorporated in this booklet:
Financial and Resources Management Individual Development Plan Advisor. NASA.

Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 4

Creating a Professional Development Plan .................................................................................................. 5
  Self Assessment Resources .............................................................................................................................. 5

Worksheets
  Current Career Issues Worksheet .................................................................................................................. 7
  Pinnacle/Foothill Activity Description ........................................................................................................... 8
  Pinnacle Worksheet ......................................................................................................................................... 9
  Foothill Worksheet ......................................................................................................................................... 10
  Self-Assessment Worksheet .......................................................................................................................... 11
  Action Steps Worksheet ................................................................................................................................. 12
  Professional Development Worksheet (Complete at Home) ........................................................................... 13

Reference Materials
  Skills Assessment List ...................................................................................................................................... 15
  Values Assessment List .................................................................................................................................... 16

Goal Development Questions (Complete at Home) ....................................................................................... 17
Why should you be concerned about planning your career? It is your career. If you don’t take responsibility for the success of your career, then who will? Considering all the time and energy you spend at work; why not ensure you get maximum satisfaction from your work and career? The workplace has been affected by a number of significant changes or trends, which have definite ramifications for your career planning:

**Less job security:** Gone is the era of high job security, with the same employer for life, where good employees automatically move up well-defined career ladders. Even in higher education, downsizing will continue to eliminate some jobs in response to increased pressures to reduce costs. Workers will, of necessity, need to be more mobile in finding the right job.......and employer.

**Up is not the only way:** In higher education, there are trends toward flattening of organizational structures. The traditional linear career patterns will be less available. Employees will need to be more flexible, adaptable and creative in identifying their next job, and may need to consider lateral moves or rotational assignments to broaden their experience or leverage their skills.

**Technical knowledge and skills obsolescence:** Rapid advancements in technology and state-of-the-art knowledge require employees to upgrade their skills and “re-tool” themselves just to remain current with their job requirements.

**Going Green:** Concerns about environment – nationally and globally – have employers and employees thinking and discussing alternatives to the traditional office, desk, place approach. Technology enhances mobility and variations to the traditional approach may impact your future career choices.

It is definitely to your advantage to position yourself for long-term employability in the rapidly changing world of work. Begin preparing now for the future!
Creating a Professional Development Plan

**Reflect**
Taking time to write and reflect on your career can increase your self-awareness and help you organize and synthesize your thoughts. Set aside regular amounts of time to journal. If journaling isn’t your thing, think about your Professional Development Plan as the opportunity to practice project management on a personal level. Class exercises will get you started, but you’ll need to make your PDP a priority.

**Gain Self-Awareness**
A professional development plan is a concept that emphasizes gathering input from many sources. First you will need to do some self-analysis on aspects of work that give you satisfaction and aspects which do not bring satisfaction. During the Management Program you’ve explored the concept of Emotional Intelligence, and completed the StrengthsFinder 2.0. These are but two of a multitude of tools that can help you gain valuable insight into your personal competencies and how they may relate to your career aspirations. Here are some others you may find helpful:

**DISC Profiles** ([http://www.discprofiles.com/](http://www.discprofiles.com/))
This is a personality and behavioral profile that specifically identifies patterns of behavior. This particular instrument will help you assess management skills, productivity and relationship interactions in the context of the work environment and potentially guide career goals and options.

**Keirsey Temperament Sorter** ([http://www.keirsey.com/](http://www.keirsey.com/))
A personality instrument that helps identify your personality type (a variation of the Myers-Briggs). Using the identified personality traits, you are better able to objectively address your qualities and shortcomings or your strengths and challenges and how those may impact your career and professional choices.

An assessment that uncovers your specific interests and how they relate to a broad range of occupations. This inventory can help you validate your current career path and professional goals or provide options you may want to explore before locking in on any specific path.

In our session at the EDUCAUSE Institute Management Program you will consider a few high and low points to look for self-knowledge in this area. Continue to write about other events and analyze those situations to learn more about what elements you would want to include and emphasize in your career. You may want to write about work you’ve done in the community or volunteer work or other jobs you’ve held in the past in order to look for nuggets of information about the important areas that future jobs should include in order to bring you satisfaction.
Seek Outside Input
Work to gain more information from others in order to have the full picture about yourself. Talk to your supervisor, your EDUCAUSE Institute Management Program Faculty, your mentor or coach at work, your peers or staff at work to gain information.

Each professional development plan should be uniquely tailored to the needs of the individual and the organization. You might identify extensive skill training; or might emphasize a more academic approach. There is no set pattern -- the term “individual” is basic to the concept -- especially as it applies to your willingness and capacity to learn and grow. You should explore resources that may be available through your campus either via Human Resources or with the Career Planning and Placement office to help you or your staff develop your personal professional development plans. Many campuses are creating executive series and job rotation assignments to help individuals gain exposure to different work environments to help develop their future career paths.

Develop Action Steps
How can you get from where you are to where you’d like to be? How can you improve your satisfaction with your career? First, determine something you would like to change in the very short term. Then list concrete steps you can take to move yourself toward that change. Here are some examples of action steps:

- Update my resume
- Ask for new assignments in my current job
- Rotate to a different project/job
- Seek a mentor(s) -- Volunteer for a task force or process action/reengineering team
- Obtain on-the-job guidance from someone who is more expert in a specific area
- Attend seminars/conferences (on-site and off-site)
- Enroll in university courses
- Attend commercial/contracted courses
- Experience self-paced learning (books, videos, computer-based instruction)
- Pursue an academic degree or certification program
- Conduct informational interviews
- Move to a new job within my division
- Move to a new job within the College or University
- Read EDUCAUSE publications
- Join a discussion group on topics I want to learn more about
- Read books from the EDUCAUSE Institute Management Program Reading List

Set Longer Term Goals
After you have begun to identify new areas you want to explore, work with input from your supervisor and coach/mentor to set goals which cover the bigger picture for the next three years. The worksheets on pages 12 and 13 may be helpful in guiding this process.
Current Career Issues Worksheet

What are your career issues?

How much time and effort you need to spend at any one step in the process depends on your career issues. It is important to be clear about these career issues, so that you can develop an effective strategy for dealing with them. Career issues cover a broad spectrum, ranging from getting up to speed in a new job, to making a major career field change, or planning your retirement. The following is a list of statements that reflect the full range of career issues people face at one time or another. Which ones are relevant for you now?

Place an “X” in front of statements that are true for you at this time. Move quickly through these items.

____ You are new in your job and must learn the basics to get up to speed and feel comfortable and productive.

____ You have been in your job for a while and are striving for increased competence, in general.

____ You have been in your job for a while, but have a new boss or organization leader.

____ You need to improve your performance in certain areas of your current job.

____ You need to update your skills or expertise to keep up with the changing technologies or state-of-the-art knowledge in your line of work.

____ Your job duties have changed recently (or will change), requiring some new skills or expertise on your part.

____ Your job may be eliminated due to reengineering or restructuring, and you want to begin “re-tooling” to be ready for future opportunities.

____ You want to prepare for a promotion or move to the next higher level of responsibility.

____ You want to broaden your skills or expertise to allow yourself more flexibility for future job moves.

____ You want to change jobs within your current job category, and...

____ Stay in your current division at your current institution

____ Change to a different area at your current institution

____ Change institutions within higher education

____ Stay in higher education

____ Leave higher education

____ You don’t see much of a future if you remain in your current job, but aren’t sure of your options.

____ You want to plan your retirement.

____ Other ?

________________________________________________________________________
Pinnacle/Foothill Activity

The purpose of this activity is to increase your self-awareness of elements of work which energize you (Pinnacles) or drain you (Foothills). You’ll work with a partner to help you clarify and summarize. Recognizing your “Pinnacles” helps you create a direction for your career.

For this activity you will:

1. Reflect and write by yourself
2. Team up with a partner and take turns to share and summarize

- **On the Pinnacle Moments Worksheet (page 9).** Think about your career and some of the events or projects that went especially well for you. Try to think of examples of things that you have done that were very energizing and satisfying. Write some bulleted items or a few sentences to describe two or three examples of those moments. Write down some adjectives, phrases, or a few sentences that describe what was satisfying about the events. **This doesn’t need to be perfect prose, phrases are fine. This is for your own use.**

- Team up with a partner and take turns sharing information **verbally** about one of the Pinnacle events you have written about. After listening to your partner describe their moment, reflect back what you heard in your own words. Come up with adjectives, phrases, or create a “newspaper headline” to summarize what you heard. Make this fun! Each person should jot down a summary statement and then switch and do the same for the other partner.

- **On the Foothill Moments Worksheet (page 10)** do the same **exercise for your Foothill Moments.** Write some bulleted items or a few sentences to describe unsatisfying events in your career. Write two or three examples on your worksheet. Think of something that drained you and was not energizing.

- Team up with a partner and take turns sharing information **verbally** about one of the Foothill events you have written about. After listening to your partner describe their moment, reflect back what you heard in your own words. Come up with adjectives, phrases, or create a “newspaper headline” to summarize what you heard. Make this fun. Each person should jot down a summary statement and then switch and do the same for the other partner.
Pinnacle Moments Worksheet

**Pinnacle Moment #1**
*Description:*

What was energizing or satisfying? (adjectives, phrases)

**Pinnacle Moment #2**
*Description:*

What was energizing or satisfying? (adjectives, phrases)

**Pinnacle Moment #3**
*Description:*

What was energizing or satisfying? (adjectives, phrases)

**Summary**
Choose one of your moments to share with a partner. Ask the partner to help you summarize qualities that this pinnacle moment reveals about you that you might want to consider for your professional development or career planning. In your pinnacle moments were you drawing upon your strengths? Jot down the summary here:
Foothill Moments Worksheet

Foothill Moment #1
Description:

What was draining or unsatisfying?

Foothill Moment #2
Description:

What was draining or unsatisfying?

Foothill Moment #3
Description:

What was draining or unsatisfying?

Summary
Choose one of your moments to share with a partner. Ask the partner to help you summarize qualities that this foothill moment reveals about you that you might want to be cautious about for your professional development or career planning. In your foothill moments were your strengths in play? Jot down the summary here:
Self-Assessment Worksheet
To gain a better understanding of yourself, answer the following questions and be prepared to share action steps with your group at the end of the session.

1. Of the new and recent developments in my organization or field, what interests me the most? What are my current skills and strengths for pursuing these interests? (See page 15 and your StrengthsFinder 2.0 results for suggestions.) What do I need to do to reposition my career so that I can get involved in these new areas?

2. What is most important to me in my work? What values guide the kind of work I want to do? Examples of guiding principles include: must agree with the organizational mission, must be allowed innovation and risk taking, and must honor family values for a balanced professional life. (See list of values examples on page 16.)

3. What things are “must haves” for me in a job? Examples might be flex time, on-site day care, etc.

4. What are my limiting factors? These are things that put limits on the type of job you can take. Examples could be health concerns, geography, not willing to move, must not involve extensive travel, must stay in place until kids graduate, must not need an advanced degree, or maybe a barrier or challenge such as a poor relationship with immediate supervisor. If you have none, you are most flexible and positioned for change.

5. Is it time for me to consider working outside of my institution? If I am considering a complete career change, what experiences and learning would help reposition my career in the direction of my new interests?
Action Steps Worksheet

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Start an action list. (See examples on page 6 of your booklet.)

Think about the gap between what your career is like now and how you would like for it to be. Think of an area you would like to improve. List some steps to move yourself from where you are now toward where you’d like to be. For example, you might decide to take a class, or volunteer to head a team for a project, or learn a new computer language, or read books on the area you would like to improve, etc. You can ask for help/advice from your faculty member as needed.

Perhaps you are more comfortable or familiar with a project/continuous improvement model to develop your first steps. Borrowing from Deming’s modified quality improvement model*, one of your most important projects to manage is yourself! By successfully managing your own professional development project, you will potentially be a resource to others.

- **Plan** – Plan for change, your own as you progress, or for others as you mentor. Analyze where you are, what tools/skills/experiences you have and how to best leverage those for the future.

- **Do** – Make decisions based on what you know or learn, then map out small steps that you can control to move you towards your destination.

- **Check or Study** – For each new step or new opportunity, take the time to stop and assess. Does this still fit for me? Does it feel right? Do I find what I am doing rewarding and in sync with my values?

- **Act** – Based on the answers/responses in the previous step, do I need to take further action to perhaps improve my plan and choices OR do I need to re-group based on my latest experiences?

This is a lifelong project – either yours to manage or to leave the process up to others to manage for you – which do you prefer?

- List some steps to move from where you are now toward where you’d like to be

- Categorize the steps as immediate, medium term, or long term actions.

- Be prepared to share one of your action items with the group.

---

* Cycle of activities designed to drive continuous improvement. Originally developed by Walter Shewhart, then modified and popularized by W. Edward Deming.
Professional Development Worksheet

Complete later on your own with input from your Management Program Faculty Member, a mentor, coach, or supervisor.

Answer the following questions to identify what is currently going on around me, and what changes I expect to occur in the near future:

1. How is the mission of my organization changing? What other changes are occurring regarding our customers, services, work processes, organizational structure, reporting relationships and personnel?

2. What are the organization’s changing needs regarding the workforce and what new expertise and skills will be required or desirable?

3. What opportunities are available for developing this new expertise and skill (work experiences, training, rotational assignments, professional conferences, mentoring, etc.)?

4. How might my role (job) change in my organization? How can I prepare for or develop new skills for these changes? How can I use my strengths to my advantage as the organization changes?

5. New expertise and skills my organization wants me to learn include...

6. What new missions or projects appeal to me? What are the organization’s future needs? What kinds of development activities would help position me for participation in another work project?
7. In what areas do my interests, strengths, and personal plans overlap with the changing needs of my organization?

8. What knowledge, skills or abilities are important for increasing or maintaining the quality of my performance in my present assignments?

9. What knowledge, skills or abilities would help prepare me for opportunities or roles I might have in the future?

10. What kind of opportunities might there be for someone with my unique combination of strengths? (refer to your StrengthsFinder 2.0 results)

11. Compared to the development needs suggested by these factors, other interests for development that are important to me include...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Assessment List*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapt tools, machinery and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit or balance financial information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget time, resources, or materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculate numerical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compile research data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete projects or tasks on schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skills: Note all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualize ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct statistical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct market research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct or assemble things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create advertising/marketing materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create graphs/charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique or review others’ work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate how to do things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design flyers, brochures, booklets, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-oriented person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detect problems or errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose technical problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispense medicines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit written material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective listening skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage productivity in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish policy and/or procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate space or cost requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine products or processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test others or objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat ill people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use multimedia equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use sophisticated equipment, instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use scientific/medical instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other skills you may possess? List them here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values Assessment List*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring new knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy in job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful work surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being around interesting people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blending of family and career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rules and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from pressure and stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other values you may possess? List them here.

Goal Development Questions For My Journal

*Complete later on your own using a journal dedicated to this purpose.*

A goal is a statement of a desired outcome or accomplishment that is specific, observable and realistic. Based on the data you have generated about yourself on the previous worksheets and your specific career issues, write some career goals for the next 1, 2 and 3 years and answer the following questions in your journal.

1. What I want to accomplish and the Knowledge/Skills I want to acquire or improve by this time next year are...

2. What I want to accomplish and the Knowledge/Skills I want to acquire or improve by the end of the second year are...

3. What I want to accomplish and the Knowledge/Skills I want to acquire or improve by the end of the third year are...

4. What barriers or obstacles might prevent me from accomplishing my goals on time (e.g., time, money, and other commitments)?

5. What can I do to overcome these barriers or obstacles? What resources are available to help me?