

Knowledge capsule

CAREER AUDIT I: SELF-AWARENESS

Definition of career audit

The career audit is part of the professional orientation process, in which a person's characteristics are compared with the situation and requirements of the job market, with the aim of defining a career plan that has the chance of succeeding.

A career audit therefore looks at two aspects: **Self-awareness** (understanding one's professional profile) and assessing the degree to which that profile matches **job market** trends and requirements. With regards to the first dimension, a career audit starts with an analysis of a person's knowledge and skills as well as their motivations and professional interests.

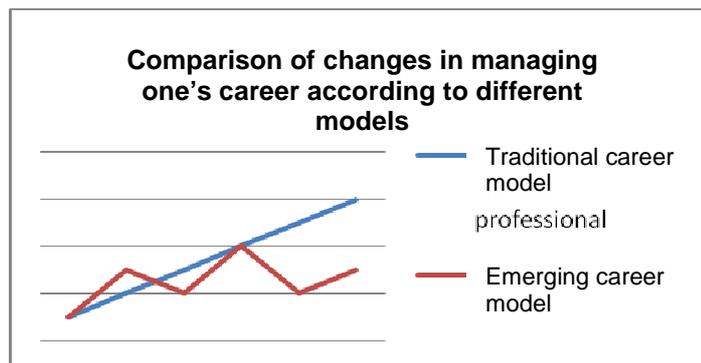


The professional profile and the job market are variable: just as a person's interests and skills set change, so the job market is constantly changing in line with changes taking place within the socio-economic environment. This means that it is essential to continually review your career plan and identify any potential misalignment between your profile and requirements within the job market.

When should you do a career audit?

A career audit is helpful at any time during your career.

The model used for managing a professional career has changed from a traditional one that revolves around one single professional objective throughout a person's working life, to a more contemporary model in which the person makes a number of career changes throughout their working life.



These career changes may result from changes in the person's motivations or changes in the employment market. A **career audit** is particularly important at these times of change.

If you are in one of the following situations you are an ideal candidate to start the process of auditing your career:

✓ **Have you just completed your studies and are now looking for your first job?**

Do you know what area you want to work in? Do you know which professional areas could be of most interest to you? Understanding your aptitude and interests and knowing how they fit into the employment market helps you set a powerful professional objective.

✓ **Are you looking to change the professional area you work in?**

Are you clear about your objectives? Are you looking to understand the skills that you have developed and how they can be applied to a new professional area? Clarifying your objectives and being aware of your skills and know-how that you can apply to new career areas can give you more chance of success when going through the process of changing direction.

✓ **Are you aiming to grow professionally?**

Assessing your skills and analysing your values and motivations helps you assess whether you are at the right stage to consider a step up in your career.

✓ **Have you been made redundant?**

In general, any career-related transition point involves the need for taking stock professionally. Are you interested in making a change to something different or do you want to continue as you have up until now? Are you interested in finding out how to apply your knowledge and skills to a new professional area?

SELF-AWARENESS

As explained above, self-awareness is the process of reflecting on and analysing your professional profile. The following are the ingredients that make up a professional profile:

1. Professional interests
2. Work-related motivation
3. Professional knowledge and skills

Below, we look at each of these in detail and consider their importance within the self-awareness process.

1. Professional interests

Professional interests are the expression of a person's personality and preferences applied to their choice of professional life. Understanding your preferred professional fields (your profile of professional interests) is the first step in any professional orientation process.

- ✓ A person's interests profile is a combination of the different fields of interest in professional activities and levels of preference. This personalised profile can be graphically reflected, as in the results from the Human Capital Interests Test.
- ✓ **Once we understand a person's profile of interests, we can compare how well it matches with the profile of interests for a specific role.** That is to say: we can look at the relationship between their fields of interest and the spheres of professional activity for a particular role, based on the nature of the functions involved in that role.

Tool for evaluating the profile of professional interests

If you would like to understand your profile of interests, take the Interests Test on our website.

This application will help you compare your own profile of interests (in blue) with the profile of interests for different Human Capital roles (in orange)¹.



¹ See reference at the end of this document (Human Capital webography)

2. Work-related motivation

Your motivation towards work consists of the principles and values that guide the way you act and the decisions you take in your working life. These are the attributes that each person brings to his or her work, and they are based on their beliefs and mental maps. This means that they are highly personal factors that are difficult to change.

Understanding your motivations towards your work is fundamental to your personal well-being and to how well you fit in to the company you work for and the requirements of the job. If you are aware of your motivations, you can anticipate changes in your interests or changes in your working environment. It is then easier to anticipate potential work/identity crises and better manage your career.

The **Theory of Work Adjustment** (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) defines six different occupational values:

Value	Definition:	Key questions:
Achievement - self-realisation	People with this value are results-oriented and seek out jobs that enable them to develop their skills and abilities in order to achieve their objectives.	Do you like jobs that offer you challenges?
Independence	People with this value look for occupations where they can work autonomously and take their own decisions.	Do you prefer to work autonomously and according to your own criteria?
Support	People with this value seek out occupations where they are offered support and clear supervision.	Is the most important thing for you to receive clear instructions and feel that you are supported by your boss in your day-to-day work?
Working conditions	People with this value look for work that offers security and good financial conditions.	Is the best job for you one that offers you the best employment conditions?

Recognition/Power	People with this value seek out prestigious occupations that offer potential for professional growth and leadership.	Is the most important thing for you to find a job that is prestigious and offers promotion opportunities?
Relationships with others	People with this value seek out professions that ideally enable them to provide service to other people within a cooperative working environment.	Does the opportunity to establish good relationships with your colleagues interest you most in your work?

- ✓ As with interests, a person's profile of work-related motivations is not made up of one single value, but rather a combination of different values and preference levels which, taken together, define an individual's profile.
- ✓ **We can consider motivation towards work as needs that have to be satisfied in order to achieve the maximum possible level of personal well-being.** The potential for satisfying these needs depends on three factors:
 - The implicit values of a job
 - The culture of the organisation or environment
 - The organisation's general context
- ✓ We are only able to anticipate the implicit values of a given role. Before taking up a job, we are not able to understand in detail the values of the organisation's culture and the context in which it operates. Nevertheless, your **motivation towards work is what forms the backbone of your professional careers: understanding and learning to identify your needs enables you to take the right decisions and make corrections to the course you are following when necessary.**

3. Competencies

Competencies are the skills that enable you to do your job properly. There are different types of competency:

3.1. Technical competencies: this is the set of theoretical or practical knowledge required for a specific occupation. Technical competencies are developed through training (regulated and supplementary) and professional experience.

Whenever someone wishes to change occupations, they need to check that their knowledge and experience fits with the profile required to achieve their professional objective.

3.2. Key competencies: these are the skills, attitudes and abilities that, taken together, enable somebody to do their job properly. Key competencies therefore manifest themselves through specific

ways of acting and behaving. Examples of key competencies include: initiative, teamwork, self-confidence, communication and creativity.

“Key competencies are personal characteristics that differentiate people who achieve superior results in their work... in each company, based on its structure, strategy and culture” (Hay/MacBer).

- ✓ Key competencies can **apply to a range of different occupations**. But in each case, they are essential for doing a specific job.
- ✓ The **competency management model** currently predominates in human resources thinking. It involves looking for the strongest potential match between the competencies required to do a job successfully and the competencies of the employee. It is therefore helpful to understand our competency profile and determine whether it fits with the competencies required for the occupation defined in our professional objective.
- ✓ **You can improve your competencies through the experience you accumulate throughout your working life and through specific training to develop a competency.**²
- ✓ **There are different levels for each competency**. Thus, a low level of competency will imply simpler actions than a more advanced level for the same competency.

Tool for assessing your competency profile

You can assess your competencies by doing tests such as those included in the Human Capital Key Competencies application. This also includes an interactive dictionary of the competencies that are most sought in the job market. You can also explore your competencies by analysing your professional life³.



Conclusions

- A career audit is an analysis and evaluation of a person's knowledge and competencies, aptitudes and motivations; its aim is to define a career plan that is realistic and aligned with the

² See competency development activities under the activities programme.

³ Try doing the exercise “Identifying Competencies and Values”; see reference at the end of this document (Human Capital webography).

job market.

- A career audit can be done at any time during a person's professional life. However, it is particularly important at times of change (changing career, first job, redundancy and job promotion).
- A career audit looks at two main aspects: **self-awareness** (how well do you understand your professional profile) and an assessment of how well your profile matches the context of the **jobs market** today.
- Self-awareness consists of the following independent elements: professional interests, work-related motivation and key competencies.
- **For more details about analysing the job market, please refer to the second part of this document: knowledge capsule **Career Audit II: Job market**⁴.**

Key concepts

Competencies: This is the set of effective skills needed to complete a specific task successfully. It is not the probability of successfully executing a task; it is a real and demonstrated ability.

Management by competency: This is the human resource management model that can be applied to all personal management spheres - from selecting specific candidates through to training and performance evaluation and potential for promotion.

Professional interests: These are the professional activities that arouse someone's curiosity and attention and which they are inclined towards when making choices in terms of their training/career path.

Work-related motivations: These are the values and principles that guide the way you act and the professional decisions you take. That is to say, the attributes you apply to work. Work-related motivations are based on beliefs and mental maps and cannot therefore be easily changed.

Career plan: This is a definition of a person's professional objective for the future together with a plan of action - ie the steps needed to achieve the objective. The actions contained in a career plan must be well laid out and set to a timetable.

The theory of work adjustment: Developed by Dawis & Lofquist, this theory is based on the hypothesis that job satisfaction can be predicted by looking at the match between an employee's needs and the company's reinforcement systems. Thus, the relationship between job satisfaction, and lack of it, determines the amount of time that an employee will remain in any one job. Where there is a discrepancy between an employee's needs/competencies and the requirements of the job and its competencies, a change should be made within the employee or in the working environment.

⁴ Please see reference at the end of this document (Human Capital website)

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Webography

Discovering your interests. Useful link

What is an interest? How do we identify our interests? This link helps you understand what your interests are. And in particular, it gives you guidelines to identify your professional interests, by analysing the different aspects that lie behind them and which generate attraction or rejection.

<http://www.mi-carrera.com/descubr.html>

The 40 Most Frequent Questions Regarding Work Competency. Useful link

The International Labour Organisation website offers useful information on work-related competencies: basic concepts, mechanisms for identifying work competencies as well as training strategies and competency-based human resource management.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/complab/xxxx/esp/index.htm>

Definition of Career Plan. Digital article

If you want to define your career plan, you first need to analyse what you are like as a person and what you want to do.

<http://campus.monster.es/articulos/proyecto/>

Self-Awareness. Looking for Work. Digital book

This chapter looks at the initial steps in planning a strategy for finding work: Reflecting on the characteristics of the personality, work-related values, professional preferences, work and training situation and the socio-economic situation.

http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/portal/com/bin/Contenidos/PSE/orientacionyatenciondiversidad/orientacion/Publicaciones/1164098580331_autoempleo.pdf

Orientation Programme: Tools to Help Reflect and Take Good Decisions. Useful link

Would you like to understand yourself better? This link offers exercises that help you analyse your professional profile: your values, interests, aptitudes and attitudes.

<http://www.terra.es/personal2/arc46b/guiaperfilpersonal.htm>

Psycho-active. Psychology and Intelligent Leisure. Useful link

This website arises from the need to adapt one's psychology to new technology. The test section is particularly interesting and you will find different free guidance tests that can help you in the process of self-awareness.

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Self-awareness. Useful link

Website that explains the barriers to self-awareness and the techniques that can be used to understand yourself better.

http://prometeo.us.es/recursos/la_orientacion/pag3.htm

Webography for Human Capital

There are a number of user paths you can follow within the Human Capital website to expand on the information relating to your self-awareness.

[Person > Professional Interests > Professional Interests \(application\)](#)

[Person > Key Competencies > Key Competencies \(application\)](#)

[Person > Definition of Career Plan > Career Audit > Career Audit Capsule II Job Market \(awareness capsule\)](#)

[Person > Defining your Career Plan > Work-Related Motivations > Exercise to Identify Competencies and Work-Related Values](#)

Use the SEARCH FACILITY for a more complete list of resources: books, articles and links of interest. It's very easy - simply SEARCH by keyword.