

# Knowledge capsule

## CAREER AUDIT II: THE JOB MARKET

### Definition of career audit

A career audit is part of the professional orientation process, in which a person's characteristics are compared with the requirements and situation of the job market. Its purpose is to define a **career plan** that has the chance of being successful.

A career audit therefore looks at two aspects: **Self-awareness** (understanding one's professional profile)<sup>1</sup> and assessing the extent to which that profile matches trends and requirements in the job market. In terms of the first of these, a career audit starts with an analysis of a person's knowledge and skills, motivations and professional interests.

The professional profile and the job market are variable dimensions: just as a person's interests evolve, so the job market is also constantly undergoing change in line with changes taking place in the socio-economic environment. **This means that it is advisable to review your career plan on a regular basis to identify any potential misalignment between your professional profile and the requirements of the job market.**

### The job market and employability

The job market is where job applicants (people looking for jobs) and job offers (positions that organisations need to fill) come together.

How well a person's professional profile matches the requirements of the job market determines their **employability**. This refers to the probability that someone will be hired for a specific job at a specific point in time.



Understanding the job market helps us better analyse our position with regard to offers on the market, establish how employable we are, and design strategies to improve our search for work.

In summary, analysing the job market is the second step in any career audit. Anyone in the professional orientation process and looking for work should study the job market. This applies to people finishing their studies and looking for their

first job, or those who have been out of work for some time, the long-term unemployed, and anyone actively looking for a career change.

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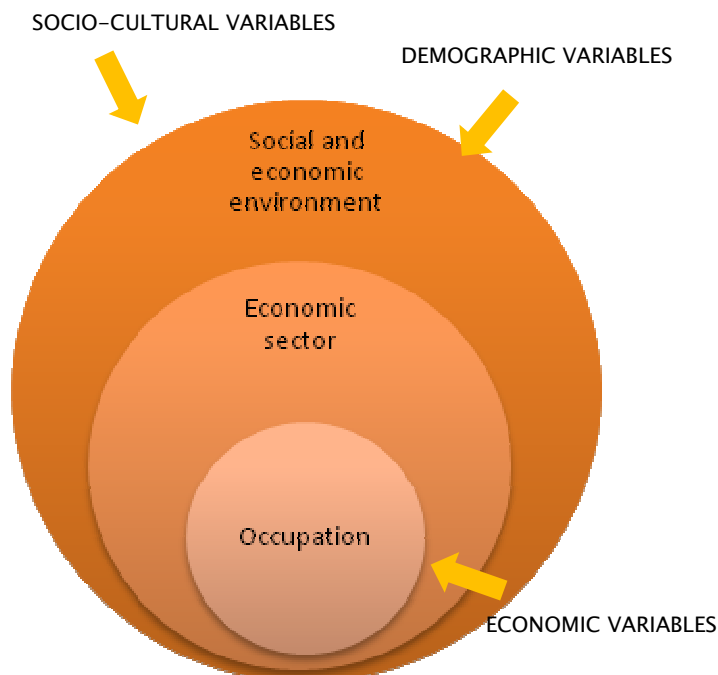
<sup>1</sup> For more information, please read the knowledge capsule "Career Audit I: Self-awareness"; see reference at end of this document.

## Analysing the job market

To analyse the job market, you need to evaluate the following three levels:

1. Analyse the socio-economic environment
2. Analyse the economic sector and professional area that you wish to work in
3. Analyse the specific occupation

You can analyse an occupation bearing in mind the situation of the economic sector that it falls under. The situation of the economic sector is, in turn, determined by the overall socio-economic environment.



## Factors that come into play when analysing the job market

For each level of the job market, the key factors that need to be explored can be identified:

**1. Socio-economic environment:** the set of socio-cultural, economic and demographic variables that influence the overall job market situation.

You need to understand the specific impact of these variables on the job market, by analysing a number of factors:

- Global market trends (economic growth or slow down, scenarios of the future, and so on).
- The impact on occupation among specific groups - for example, rates of occupation by age, sex, etc.
- Impact on occupation by industry (emerging industries compared to declining industries).
- Impact on occupation in specific spheres of activity.

### Tools for analysing the socio-economic environment:

- ✓ Specialist press: *Expansión&Empleo*, *Cinco Días*, etc.
- ✓ Reports published by the Department of Work and other public organisations: reports on the employment situation, analysis of the job market and so on.
- ✓ Keep up to date with news and other sources of information on the internet (portals, government websites and websites of other bodies, specialist forums and so on)<sup>2</sup>

**2. Economic sector:** This refers to any part of the global economic activity subdivided according to the

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, please refer to the recommended bibliography and webography at the end of this document.

type of activity carried out by the sector - for example: the food industry, health sciences industry and so on.

The different industries are also constantly changing due to changes in the socio-economic environment: some stop being dominant, some change as a result of new processes and the need for new knowledge and professionals; others emerge strongly.

It is helpful to differentiate the concept of economic sector from the concept of **professional area**. The term "professional area" covers a range of occupations that have specific features in common and also have common functions and/or objectives - for example: accounting/financial, human resources, and so on.

**Professional areas may cut across different fields.** For example: accounting/finance or human resources roles are needed in companies in a wide range of industries.

Keeping this distinction in mind helps you properly plan your process of making a career change. Sometimes, you might look at a change of professional field within the sector that you already know. Other times, you will prefer to make a change of industry without changing the professional area you work in or even your occupation. In other words, professional mobility can occur between different fields in the same industry or between different industries that share the same professional field.

Factors that we need to explore:

- Groups of activity that make up the economic sector (subsectors and fields of activity).
- Trends in the sector or field (economic growth or slow down, scenarios of the future, and so on).
- Sector or field occupations and characteristics (job requirements and conditions and so on)
- Impact on employment by sector or field (professional profiles that are more required etc.).

#### Tools for analysing the economic sector and/or professional field:

- ✓ Refer to specialist financial press and specific press relating to the industry. Industry specific reports (such as those on the human capital website).
- ✓ Refer to specialist financial press and industry-specific press.
- ✓ Attend conferences and events organised by bodies and institutions recognised in the industry (such as the industry sessions organised by Barcelona Activa - Human Capital).
- ✓ Stay up to date with news and other sources of information that you might find on the internet (themed portals, government websites and websites of other bodies, colleges and professional associations, specialist forums and so on).
- ✓ Directly analyse job offers that you see advertised.
- ✓ Interviews enable you to obtain first-hand information about the situation and changes taking place in a specific economic sector<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, please refer to the recommended bibliography and webography at the end of this document.

**3. Occupation:** Collect information about the occupation that you are interested in, to see if your profile fits with what they are looking for and determine your employability.

- Description of the occupation and functions
- Training requirements (approved training and supplementary training)
- Experience and skills required (technical skills and key skills)
- Working conditions (hours, pay, recruitment characteristics and so on)
- Trends (prospects for the future etc)

**Tools for analysing the occupation:**

- ✓ Refer to descriptions of professional profiles - such as the catalogue of occupations on the Human Capital website.
- ✓ Analyse job offers that are advertised.
- ✓ Use networking to obtain information. Use your network of contacts and don't be afraid to generate new contacts or request information through internet-based social networks.<sup>4</sup>

**Tools you can use in your analysis: SWOT chart**

The easiest and most effective way of relating the job market to an individual is to do a SWOT analysis. In this analysis, you compare the data from the job market analysis with your knowledge about yourself, in order to take decisions regarding your professional future.

SWOT analysis is a methodology exported from the business world that helps you order all the information and clarify it so you can select the best strategies of action. It is a table or grid into which you enter the details (in this case, the impact factors) based on their type:

- Strengths and Weaknesses → internal analysis
- Opportunities and Threats → external analysis

This tool is used particularly for orientation and helps to list out the strengths and weaknesses within your profile along with any opportunities and threats within your environment. Your professional objective acts as the reference at all times.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information, please read knowledge capsule "Networking"; see reference at the end of this document.

**Example for identifying the SWOT variables**

- ✓ **Strengths:** technical competencies (knowledge and experience) and key competencies that match the requirements of the job; professional interests and work-related motivations that match the professional objective; knowledge of the job market; good resources for searching for work and so on.

For example: 25 years' experience in the industry, leadership and teamwork skills, good network of contacts.

- ✓ **Weaknesses:** deficiencies in terms of technical (knowledge and experience) and key competencies based on the professional profile for the career objective, professional interests and work-related motivation that are incongruent with the career objective; lack of knowledge of the job market, deficiency and/or incorrect use of strategies for searching for work and so on.

For example: lack of specific training, out of date computer knowledge, limited practice in selection processes.

- ✓ **Threats:** aspects in the environment that might negatively influence the implementation of the professional plan.

For example: economic crisis, the market giving priority to younger candidates, salaries below personal expectations.

- ✓ **Opportunities:** aspects in the environment that might positively influence the implementation of the professional plan.

For example: extensive experience required for a responsible position, bonus for taking on people over 45.

The aim of this analysis is to be able to decide on the most appropriate strategies to achieve one's professional objective. So, after entering the information into the chart, you need to cross the data and work out your **coping strategies**.

| SWOT CHART        | Threats              | Opportunities            |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Strengths</b>  | Defensive strategies | Offensive strategies     |
| <b>Weaknesses</b> | Survival strategies  | Reorientation strategies |

These strategies should be based on consolidating your strengths and minimising your weaknesses while taking advantage of opportunities in the job market and trying to reduce the threats. The 4 types of coping strategies that can be used very depending on the predominance of the different variables:

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|--|--|
| <p><b>Predominance of Strengths (internal) and Threats (external)</b></p>        | <p><b>Defensive strategies</b></p> <p>You are ready to tackle threats and achieve your career objectives but you need to adjust your job search strategies in order to be successful. Possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rewrite the message you send to companies and highlight your differentiating features.</li> <li>- Review the tools you use for searching for work (CV and covering letter) so that it better matches the profile for your professional objective.</li> <li>- Look for job offers across all job search channels - especially those that relate to your industry or professional area.</li> <li>- Use your network of contacts.</li> <li>- Stay motivated and keep a positive attitude.</li> <li>- Get practice in the different stages of the selection process.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Predominance of Strengths (internal) and Opportunities (external)</b></p>  | <p><b>Offensive strategies</b></p> <p>You are in a good position to achieve your objective and grow professionally. Your profile is sought after in an environment where there are plenty of career opportunities. Possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek out new work opportunities in areas and companies that you don't know.</li> <li>- Combine different job search channels.</li> <li>- Get practice in the different stages of the selection process.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Predominance of Weaknesses (internal) and Opportunities (external)</b></p> | <p><b>Reorientation strategies</b></p> <p>There are opportunities that you can take advantage of, but you need to prepare adequately to attain your professional objective. Possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand your supplementary training by doing a specific course.</li> <li>- Change or improve your job-search strategies because the ones you are currently using are not giving you the results you expect.</li> </ul>   |

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|---|---|
| <b>Predominance of Weaknesses (internal) and Threats (external)</b> | <b>Survival strategies</b><br><br>You face many threats without the necessary strengths to fight the competition. For now, you need to set aside your professional objective and focus on an achievable short-term objective. Possible options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Seek out new work opportunities in areas and industries that you don't know.</li><li>- Define a short/medium-term objective that enables you to prepare yourself with a view to improving your profile and achieving your objective at some point in the future.</li><li>- Strengthen your profile through training and work placements in companies.</li></ul> |
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Lastly, depending on the style of your strategy and personal situation (requirements around change of job, time availability, financial requirements and so on), you can design your **plan of action**. In other words, identifying the specific activities (reorientation activities, training and so on) that you need to achieve your professional objective, and be sure to give deadlines to this plan.

- ✓ It is important to bear in mind that not all professional objectives are achievable in the short term. **You sometimes need to set short, medium and long-term objectives in order to be able to reach them.**
- ✓ This also involves having one or more professional objectives as part of managing your professional career.

In summary, once you have conducted a good analysis of your profile and the job market, you will then understand the level of your employability based on your professional objective. This puts you in the best position to create your career plan with the chance of success, and backed up by a plan of action. (For example: "do a postgraduate diploma and a work placement to get experience while I look for work of a lower level than my professional objective, which will enable me to make a career change in a couple of years").

## Conclusions

- A career audit is the result of your self-awareness analysis and an assessment of how well your professional profile matches the context you are in - ie the job market.
- Knowing the job market helps you understand how **employable** you are and enables you to adjust your professional profile to an objective that has the chance of succeeding.
- In order to analyse the job market, you need to understand the three levels that it is made up of: general socio-economic environment; economic sector and professional field you want to work in; as well as your target occupation.
- **SWOT analysis** is a tool for comparing your profile with the requirements of your target job, bearing in mind job market factors.
- The objective of this analysis is to design your own **career plan**, consisting of a plan of action - that is, specific actions that will help you reach your professional objective.

## Key concepts

**SWOT Analysis:** SWOT analysis is a methodology that has been transferred from the business world and is now used extensively in marketing. Applied to the area of orientation, it consists of listing the strengths and weaknesses within your profile in relation to your professional objective, together with the opportunities and threats in your environment, with the aim of deciding on the right strategy to achieve your professional objective.

**Self-Awareness:** This is the process of reflection that enables you to gather together useful information on: how you are as a person, what you like, what you can do well and what you find more difficult, how you get on with other people, how you react to different situations and so on. The result of the process of self-awareness for professional orientation is to answer questions such as: What am I like? What do I know? What do I want to do? What am I capable of doing? What am I willing to do?

**Competencies:** This is the set of effective skills needed to do a specific task successfully. It is not the probability of succeeding in doing a task; it is a real and demonstrated ability.

**Employability:** The probability of someone being hired for specific role at a specific time. Employability is affected by self-awareness, variables that impact on the job market, and the strategies/attitudes used when accessing the job market.

**Professional plan:** This is the definition of the professional objective for the future along with the plan of action - ie the steps needed to achieve the objective. The actions contained in this professional plan must be well set out and set to a timetable.

## Bibliography

**Learning to Explore the World of Work: Diagnosis of Exploratory Skills and Intervention Proposals.** Rodríguez Moreno, María Luisa. Ediciones Aljibe (1999)

“Profesiones” magazine. Unión Profesional Asociación (periodical)

## Webography

**Work Observatory.** Public body.

Most recent available data collected by this organisation, regarding reference indicators for economic activity, employment, unemployment and training in Catalonia, Spain and the European Union

<http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/observatoritrebll/menuitem.ee60a2ce1faea1b298740d63b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=69e3ee36df38f110VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=69e3ee36df38f110VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

**Collective agreement search engine.** Useful link.

Tool for looking up agreements and pacts reached under collective negotiation procedures, published in the official bulletins of the Catalanian and Spanish governments. This can be done via specialist search (direct search for an agreement) by company name or by economic sector.



<http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/treball/menuitem.7c312755b8c91fe0a6740d63b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=fe1f604d1b9af110VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=fe1f604d1b9af110VgnVCM1000000b0c1e0aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

**Sources of work-related information.** Useful link.

This link gives you direct access to many sources of information that will help you to understand the job market and opportunities better.

[http://www.cat365.net/Inici/FetsVitals/TrobarFeina/PerOnComenco/III2\\_Sl\\_MostrarInformacio.htm?ruta=%2FChannels%2FAutors%2FInici%2FFetsVitals%2FTrobarFeina%2FPerOnComenco%2FCAT1512FontsInformacioLaboral&l=1](http://www.cat365.net/Inici/FetsVitals/TrobarFeina/PerOnComenco/III2_Sl_MostrarInformacio.htm?ruta=%2FChannels%2FAutors%2FInici%2FFetsVitals%2FTrobarFeina%2FPerOnComenco%2FCAT1512FontsInformacioLaboral&l=1)

**Statistics Institute of Catalonia.** Public body.

Indicators and statistics on occupation and the economy in Catalonia.

<http://www.idescat.cat/>

**Find out about jobs better.** Useful link.

SOC occupational data. Works using a keyword search.

[http://www.oficinatreball.net/socweb/opencms/socweb\\_ca/ciudadans/index.html](http://www.oficinatreball.net/socweb/opencms/socweb_ca/ciudadans/index.html)

**Tu salario.es.** Useful link.

Using a salary comparator enables you to find out the average salary for a given occupation. It also acts as a salary information portal, offering information regarding rights, latest news on the topic and so on.

<http://www.tusalario.es>

**Employability factors.** Useful link.

Description of certain psychosocial employability factors that can help you when doing your SWOT analysis.

[http://prometeo.us.es/recursos/la\\_orientacion/pag4.htm](http://prometeo.us.es/recursos/la_orientacion/pag4.htm)

**Questionnaire of psychosocial employability factors.** Useful link.

Questionnaire that helps you identify the psychosocial factors that affect your employability.

<http://www.ich.es/Empleabilidad/FactPsicoOcupa/FactPsicoOcupa.php>

**The Four Steps to Being Employable. Tools for Constructing Your Employability.** Digital article.

This article offers you help to improve your chances of finding work. Understand your working environment, analyse your application, as well as who your competitors are and what they offer, and lastly how to take charge of your employability.

[http://ve2.bumeran.com/aplicantes/contenidos/zonas/a\\_articulos.ngmf?ZH=0&IDART=26170&IDZONA=4&IDSUBZONA=2](http://ve2.bumeran.com/aplicantes/contenidos/zonas/a_articulos.ngmf?ZH=0&IDART=26170&IDZONA=4&IDSUBZONA=2)

**Decalogue for employability.** Digital article.

Short article that advises stopping to reflect when looking for work in order to avoid sending your CV indiscriminately.

[http://www.miquelbonet.com/ficha\\_articulo.asp?ID=6](http://www.miquelbonet.com/ficha_articulo.asp?ID=6)

### **Webography for Human Capital**

Within the Human Capital website, there are a number of user paths you can follow to expand your knowledge on the job market:

[Market > Economic Sectors > \(Choose sector\)](#)

[Person > Job Search Channels](#)

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

[Person > Job Search Channels > Networking \(awareness capsule\)](#)

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