

chapter **2**

TAKE A LOOK AT YOURSELF

In this chapter you will:

- Document your education, work experience, and other activities related to a potential career to use in your job search and career development.
- Identify the career-related skills you developed through your education and work experience.
- Identify your personal, school-related, and work-related accomplishments.



Use the Internet to complete personal assessments for planning and confirming your career choices.

“Be courageous! Dare to explore what you love and what is most important to you. Don’t waste time assessing yourself as you are now. Dream and plan for who you want to be in the future.”

Betty Jo Matzinger Lash
Associate Director
Georgetown University Career Center

In Chapter 2, you take a complete inventory of your education, training, experience, accomplishments, values, work preferences, and performance traits. This personal inventory is an essential tool for developing or confirming your career target and for conveying your qualifications to potential employers.

KNOWING YOURSELF—A MUST FOR YOUR CAREER SUCCESS

To achieve each step (your first job, a promotion, or a job or career change) throughout your career, you must sell the product—you. Just as successful salespeople must know their products, you must know your qualifications and be able to communicate them clearly to employers in a resume, in a cover letter, and in interviews.

To help ensure wise job and career choices, you need to clarify what values and work environment preferences are important to you. The Chapter 2 Career Actions help you thoroughly inventory your training, education, skills, and work experience and identify your values and work preferences.

Your Personal Career Inventory

In this chapter, all the information you compile about yourself through the Career Action assignments will form your personal career inventory. This will be an important source of information when you develop your resumes, cover letters, job applications, and more. Employers may want this information when considering you for a job. Included in this compilation are basic personal data and information about the following:

- Education and professional training
- Work experience, skills, and accomplishments
- People you can use as references

Record Education, Training, and Organizational Activities

The first step in compiling your personal career inventory is to document your education and training, including dates, places, career-relevant courses and activities, skills, and accomplishments. You will also document your membership and achievements

in professional and other organizations related to your job and career targets. This information will help you identify or confirm an appropriate career choice, develop resumes and cover letters, and prepare for job interviews.

Complete this section of your personal career inventory thoroughly and accurately. Put yourself under a microscope, and look at every detail carefully. Ask people who know you well to help you document your accomplishments. Consider scholarships, honors, and awards you have received and competitions in which you have participated. In describing accomplishments, be as specific as possible. For example:

- Won first place in school math competition.
- Voted president of the senior class.

When identifying the skills and accomplishments you developed through your education, training, and organizational activities, consider two kinds of skills (or competencies) that employers are seeking: job-specific skills and transferable competencies.

Job-Specific Skills. Job-specific skills are the technical abilities that relate *specifically* to a particular job. For example, in accounting, preparing a balance sheet by using accounting software customized for a client is a job-specific skill. Relining brakes on a vehicle is a job-specific skill for an auto mechanic. Operating medical diagnostic equipment is also a job-specific skill.

Transferable Competencies. Transferable competencies are abilities you have that can be applied in more than one work environment. For example, both accountants and auto mechanics are required to have such transferable competencies as the ability to read, write, use mathematics, and use computers. Other transferable competencies include such abilities as working well with others, leading, organizing work and materials, solving problems, making decisions, and managing resources.

“It’s not what you’ve got, it’s what you use that makes a difference.”

Zig Ziglar

Complete Career Action 2-1

CAREER ACTION 2-1



Education, Training, and Organizational Activities Inventory



Directions: Access Career Action 2-1 on your Learner's CD, or use the form on page 22 of your text. Complete each section of the form that applies to you. Be thorough in providing details.



List Experience and Skills

In Career Action 2-2, you will document all your work and other pertinent experience and include the dates and places of these experiences. You will also list the skills and knowledge you developed and any accomplishments, achievements, or recognition you received as part of these experiences. You want to include both job-specific skills and transferable competencies.

Experience should include paid or volunteer work (e.g., volunteering on community service projects and fund-raising), internships, or cooperative education experience. Be specific about the contributions you made. For example:

- Raised 20 percent more in contributions over previous year.
- Designed a web interface for LAN bandwidth usage tracking, improving network efficiency by 45 percent.

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

Walt Disney

- Suggested new file management procedures that reduced filing error rate by 25 percent.

Complete Career Action 2-2

Identify Job References

The final step in completing your personal career inventory is to identify job references. A job reference is someone who can vouch for your capabilities, skills, and suitability for a job. References are typically people who have been your instructors and coaches in school or your supervisors or coworkers in volunteer and paid work environments. Therefore, you should review your inventory of education and work experience for potential job references.

Identify people who can *and are willing* to confirm (from firsthand observation) your good perfor-

CAREER ACTION 2-2



Experience and Skills Inventory



Directions: Access Career Action 2-2 on your Learner's CD, or use the form on page 26 of your text. Complete each section of the form that applies to you. Be as specific and thorough as possible.





Coaches make good job references since they have first-hand knowledge of your determination to achieve goals and ability to work with others.

mance on the job, in school, or in other activities. Employers usually want at least three job references listed on application forms. Ideally, these references are supervisors, employers, or others who know your work well. Relatives or classmates are not appropriate references. The more references you have available, the better prepared you are for your current and future job campaign.

If you are qualified to work in two different fields, such as retail sales and accounting, you will get the best results by having one set of references targeted for each of the two fields, or a total of six references (three in the sales field and three in the accounting field). Some organizations ask for different types of references. For example, an employer may ask for personal as well as professional references.

Use Career Action 2-3 to identify people you can use as your references. Make note of how they know you and in what areas they can speak about your performance.

Complete Career Action 2-3

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Another important part of knowing yourself is having an accurate assessment of your personal values, work preferences, and job-related performance traits. Understanding the personal factors that influence your performance and job satisfaction will help you make good choices when setting job and career targets and when considering specific job offers.

Values

Webster's New World Dictionary defines *value* as "that which is desirable or worthy of esteem for its own sake; the social principles, goals, or standards held

CAREER ACTION 2-3

Develop a List of Potential Job References



Directions: Access Career Action 2-3 on your Learner's CD, or use the form provided on page 28. Identify at least three (but as many as possible) potential job references from your education/training and experience/skills inventories. Also consider contacts at professional associations. Record the names of your references, their addresses, and other pertinent contact information. Plan to contact each reference and ask him or her to write you a letter of reference.



or accepted by an individual.” By working in a job that matches your values, you greatly increase the chances of enjoying and succeeding in your job. Career Action 2-4 will help you identify and prioritize your values.



SUCCESS TIP

Identify your skills, abilities, work experience, values, and work preferences to achieve a good job match.

Work Environment

Most people spend a lot of time in their work environment. To maximize your success, identify the work environments you prefer and perform best in. For example, if you are an extrovert, you probably won't enjoy working in an isolated environment. Career Action 2-4 will help you clarify what is important to you in a work environment.

Complete Career Action 2-4

Personal Qualities and Work Performance Traits

To get the job you want, you must be able to sell your personal qualities, positive job performance traits, and enthusiasm to prospective employers. In Career Action 2-5, you will identify these qualities



The right career is one that complements your skills, interest, values, and environmental preferences.

and traits to help you find a suitable job target match.

Identifying your personal qualities and work performance traits will also help you decide what type of work you are best suited for.

Complete Career Action 2-5

CAREER ACTION 2-4



Values and Work Environment Preferences Inventory



Directions: Career Action 2-4 will help you identify and prioritize the values that are important to you and will also help you clarify the kinds of work environments you prefer. Remember, there are no wrong answers in defining what's important to you. Access Career Action 2-4 on your Learner's CD, or use the form provided on page 30.



CAREER ACTION 2-5

Personal Qualities and Work Performance Traits



Directions: Access Career Action 2-5 on your Learner's CD, or use the form provided on page 33. Follow the directions to complete Career Action 2-5.



SELF-ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Many self-assessment resources speed up the process of making and confirming a successful career choice. (Note that some services may have a fee attached to them.)

- **Your school career services staff and counselors.** These specialists can provide a wide variety of aptitude and interest tests.
- **The Internet.** You can find useful information on careers and jobs on the Internet. Many sites offer online tools to assess your career interests and values and to help match the results with appropriate careers and jobs.

- **Commercial software packages.** Some commercial software packages are available on the Internet and through school career offices.

Complete Career Action 2-6



SUCCESS TIP

Complete online self-assessments to help match your interests, values, and personality style to appropriate careers.

CAREER ACTION 2-6

Online Self-Assessment Test



Directions: Use the Internet to locate and complete two or three career self-assessment tests that measure your interests, values, or personality style. Print the results for your Career Management Files Binder. Some versions of tests to search for include (a) The Career Key, (b) The mini-Myers Briggs Type Indicator quiz, and (c) The Kiersey Temperament Sorter. Resources for this assignment include the following:

1. The *Your Career: How to Make It Happen* web site at www.levitt.swlearning.com. Access the Links page; then click on the Self-Assessment links category. From there, review the self-assessment links and select assessment tests you are most interested in completing.

Also check out "Efficient web researching links" for more information on conducting Internet research.

2. Your favorite search engines

Conduct a search using a search string such as *self-assessment*.





PERSONAL BEST

Professional Ethics

A code of ethics is a set of principles—written or unwritten—that guides your behavior. These principles are based on your personal values. For example, if you value honesty, honesty will be part of your ethical code.

How will your behavior in the workplace reflect your personal values and ethics? If everyone else plays computer games during work hours, will you? According to Kenneth Blanchard and Norman Vincent Peale, authors of *The Power of Ethical Management*, you should ask yourself three questions when faced with an ethical dilemma.

Is it legal? Will you be breaking any laws or company policies by engaging in this activity?

Is it balanced? Is it fair to all parties in the short term as well as the long term? Is this a win-win situation for all those involved?

Is it right? Does this action go against your conscience? How does this decision make you feel about yourself?

✓ CHECKLIST:

Self-Assessment

Check the actions you are currently taking to increase your career success:

- Identifying skills, abilities, work experience, values, and work preferences to achieve a good job match.
- Completing self-assessments to help match interests, values, or personality style to appropriate career and job targets.

critical thinking *Questions*

1. Why is it important in career planning and a job search to assess and document thoroughly your education, training, work experience, and accomplishments?

2. Why is it useful to identify your work performance traits and career-related personal qualities?



Education, Training, and Organizational Activities Inventory

Directions: This inventory of your education and training contains four sections: (1) High School Inventory, (2) Business, Career, or Technical Education Inventory, (3) College or University Inventory, and (4) Seminars and Workshops Inventory. Complete each section that applies to you. List information related to your career target. Be thorough in documenting your accomplishments and achievements.

HIGH SCHOOL INVENTORY

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Attendance: _____ to _____ Date of Diploma: _____

Grade Point Average: _____ GED (Date): _____

1. **Career-Related Courses.** List the career-related courses you completed.

2. **Career-Related and Organizational Activities.** Describe your involvement in school, extracurricular, community, and other activities (examples: clubs, sports, organizations, and volunteer work).

3. **Career-Related Skills.** List the skills you developed in high school and through other activities. Include both job-specific skills and transferable competencies (examples: operating a computer, calculating numbers, persuading others, using specific tools/equipment, leading others, and working in a team).

4. **Accomplishments, Achievements, and Recognition.** List all special accomplishments, achievements, and recognition you received in high school and through other activities (examples: selected to play lead in musical production, selected to serve on state debate team, and awarded first place in competition). List any scholarships or honors you earned. Also summarize praise received from instructors, peers, and others.

Continued on next page.

CAREER ACTION 2-1 (continued)



BUSINESS, CAREER, OR TECHNICAL EDUCATION INVENTORY

Directions: Complete one set of questions for each school attended. Duplicate the form if you have attended more than one business, career, or technical school.

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Attendance: _____ to _____ Date of Diploma: _____

Grade Point Average: _____ GED (Date): _____

1. **Career-Related Courses.** List the career-related courses you completed.

2. **Career-Related and Organizational Activities.** Describe your involvement in school or extracurricular activities, in professional or career and technical associations, in the community, and in other activities (examples: sports, clubs, volunteer work, and student organizations such as Business Professionals of America).

3. **Career-Related Skills.** List the skills you developed through your classes and other activities. Include both job-specific skills and transferable competencies (examples: operating a computer, using specific software, presenting and creating oral and written communication, calculating numbers, persuading others, operating specific equipment/machinery, using specific tools, organizing and leading others, working as a team member, studying, analyzing, and researching data).

4. **Accomplishments, Achievements, and Recognition.** List all special accomplishments, achievements, and recognition you received for school and other activities. List any scholarships or honors you earned (examples: awarded second place in state business education skills competition, earned service award, earned perfect attendance award, served as class officer, inducted into National Vocational-Technical Honor Society, and restored two-bedroom apartment).

Continued on next page.



CAREER ACTION 2-1 (continued)

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY INVENTORY

Directions: Complete one set of questions for each school attended. Duplicate the form if you have attended more than one college or university.

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Attendance: _____ to _____ Date of Diploma: _____

Grade Point Average: _____ GED (Date): _____

1. **Career-Related Courses.** List the career-related courses you completed.

2. **Career-Related and Organizational Activities.** Describe your involvement in school and extracurricular activities, in professional or other associations or organizations, in community activities, in volunteer work, and in other activities (examples: clubs, offices held, volunteer work, and community projects or programs).

3. **Career-Related Skills.** List the skills you developed through your classes and other activities. Include both job-specific skills and transferable competencies (examples: supervising, marketing, finance, sales, teaching, accounting, computer operation or programming, nursing, care taking, physical fitness/therapy, specific software, electronic applications, oral and written communication, calculating numbers, persuading and leading others, working as a team member, and researching).

4. **Accomplishments, Achievements, and Recognition.** List all special accomplishments, achievements, and recognition you received for school activities. List any scholarships or honors you earned (examples: served as class officer, won scholarship, prepared lesson plans in student teaching that were used as model for campus, selected for only paid internship in business department, and won regional award).

Continued on next page.

CAREER ACTION 2-1 (continued)



SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS INVENTORY

Directions: List the seminars or workshops you have attended. If necessary, add to the list of seminars and workshops (a) by keying in the additional information if you are using a computer for this activity or (b) by using additional paper if you are handwriting this activity.

Name of Seminar/Workshop: _____

Offered by: _____ Date(s): _____

Career-related concepts or skills I learned: _____

Name of Seminar/Workshop: _____

Offered by: _____ Date(s): _____

Career-related concepts or skills I learned: _____

Name of Seminar/Workshop: _____

Offered by: _____ Date(s): _____

Career-related concepts or skills I learned: _____

Name of Seminar/Workshop: _____

Offered by: _____ Date(s): _____

Career-related concepts or skills I learned: _____

Name of Seminar/Workshop: _____

Offered by: _____ Date(s): _____

Career-related concepts or skills I learned: _____



Experience and Skills Inventory

Directions: Complete one set of questions for each position or project (cooperative work experience, internship, volunteer/paid work experience, military experience). Begin with the most recent experience, and continue in reverse chronological order. Two copies of the form are provided; duplicate the form for additional job experience.

POSITION TITLE: _____

Name of organization _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: _____ Salary (if paid experience): _____

Circle Type of Experience: (1) Cooperative (2) Volunteer (3) Internship (4) Paid Work

Dates of Employment or Involvement: _____

Supervisor Name/Title: _____

1. **Career-Related Skills.** List the job-specific skills, transferable competencies, and responsibilities you developed in this position.

2. **Accomplishments and Achievements.** List your accomplishments in this position, preferably in measurable terms (examples: increased sales by 20 percent, reduced order processing time by 15 percent by developing more efficient processing methods, named employee/volunteer of the month, and supervised evening shift of eight employees).

3. **Praise Received.** Summarize praise received from employers, coworkers, and customers.

Why did you leave? _____

Performance rating (circle one): Excellent Very Good Good Needs Improvement Poor

Continued on next page.



CAREER ACTION 2-2 (continued)

POSITION TITLE: _____

Name of organization _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: _____ Salary (if paid experience): _____

Circle Type of Experience: (1) Cooperative (2) Volunteer (3) Internship (4) Paid Work

Dates of Employment or Involvement: _____

Supervisor Name/Title: _____

1. **Career-Related Skills.** List the job-specific skills, transferable competencies, and responsibilities you developed in this position.

2. **Accomplishments and Achievements.** List your accomplishments in this position, preferably in measurable terms (examples: increased sales by 20 percent, reduced order processing time by 15 percent by developing more efficient processing methods, named employee/volunteer of the month, and supervised evening shift of eight employees).

3. **Praise Received.** Summarize praise received from employers, coworkers, and customers.

Why did you leave? _____

Performance rating (circle one): Excellent Very Good Good Needs Improvement Poor



CAREER ACTION 2-3 (continued)

Name: _____

Title and Organization: _____

Address: _____
Street
City
State
ZIP Code

Telephone: _____
Home
Work
Fax

E-Mail Address: _____

How I know this reference: _____

Date permission received to use as a reference: _____

Date of reference letter on file: _____

Date of last personal contact: _____

Name: _____

Title and Organization: _____

Address: _____
Street
City
State
ZIP Code

Telephone: _____
Home
Work
Fax

E-Mail Address: _____

How I know this reference: _____

Date permission received to use as a reference: _____

Date of reference letter on file: _____

Date of last personal contact: _____



Values and Work Environment Preferences Inventory

PART 1: VALUES

Directions: Review the values listed below, and rank the importance of each as it relates to your career and job goals (H = high, M = medium, and L = low).

Value	Ranking (H, M, L)
1. Adventure (risk taking, new challenges)	_____
2. Education/Learning/Wisdom	_____
3. Social Needs (need for relationships with people)	_____
4. Self-Respect/Integrity/Self-Discipline	_____
5. Helping/Serving	_____
6. Recognition/Respect From Others	_____
7. Freedom/Independence (working independently with minimal supervision)	_____
8. Security (job, family, national, financial)	_____
9. Spiritual Needs	_____
10. Expression (for example, creative, artistic)	_____
11. Responsibility (reliability, dependability)	_____
12. Balance in Work and Personal Life	_____
13. Others (List other values below and rank each one.)	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Continued on next page.

CAREER ACTION 2-4 (continued)



PART 2: WORK ENVIRONMENT PREFERENCES

Directions: In the boxes to the right, place a check mark next to each work environment condition you prefer.

Work Environment	Check Those Preferred
1. Indoor work	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Outdoor work	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Industrial/manufacturing setting	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Office setting	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Working alone	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Working with people	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Working with things	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Working with data	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Working with ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Challenging opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Predictable, orderly, structured work	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Pressures at work	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Standing while working	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Sitting while working	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Busy surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continued on next page.



CAREER ACTION 2-4 (continued)

Work Environment

Check Those Preferred

- 17. Quiet surroundings
- 18. Exciting, adventurous conditions
- 19. Safe working conditions/environment
- 20. Creative environment
- 21. Opportunities for professional development and ongoing training/education
- 22. Flexibility in work structure
- 23. Teamwork and work groups
- 24. Opportunities to supervise, lead, advance
- 25. Opportunities to make a meaningful difference
- 26. Using cutting-edge technology or techniques
- 27. Integrity and truth in work environment
- 28. Stability and security
- 29. High-level earnings potential
- 30. Opportunities to participate in community affairs
- Others (List other conditions you are seeking in your job target.)

CAREER ACTION 2-5



Personal Qualities and Work Performance Traits

Directions: Rate yourself on each of the personal qualities and work performance traits listed below by using a scale of high, average, or low (H, A, or L). For example, if you think you have a high degree of dependability, write H in the space to the right of *Dependability*. Be sure to list other qualities or traits that are important for success in your targeted career. In preparing your resume and preparing to interview well, you should be able to prove that you possess these traits by giving examples of how you have used them successfully. At the end of the form, write at least five brief, positive examples of how you have used these qualities or traits.

Personal Quality or Work Performance Trait	Rating (H, A, L)
1. Initiative/Resourcefulness/Motivation	_____
2. Dependability	_____
3. Punctuality	_____
4. Flexibility	_____
5. Creativity	_____
6. Patience	_____
7. Perseverance	_____
8. Humor	_____
9. Diplomacy	_____
10. Intelligence	_____
11. High energy level	_____
12. Ability to work well with a team	_____
13. Ability to set and achieve goals	_____
14. Ability to plan, organize, prioritize work	_____
15. Outgoing personality	_____
16. Ability to handle conflict	_____
17. Optimistic attitude	_____
18. Realistic attitude	_____

Continued on next page.



CAREER ACTION 2-5 (continued)

Personal Quality or Work Performance Trait	Rating (H, A, L)
19. Enthusiastic attitude	_____
20. Willingness to work	_____
21. Orderliness of work	_____
22. Attention to detail	_____
23. Ability to manage time well	_____
24. Honesty and integrity	_____
25. Ability to multitask	_____
Others (List and rank other positive personal qualities or work performance traits.)	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Examples: List at least five positive examples of how you have used some of these qualities and traits in the past.
