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## Career management

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### Summary

- A career generally means a steady progression in a particular field, with each position building on the experience of the ones before.
  - Some people are unable to effectively manage their careers because previous choices have left them few options.
  - Self-employment can be a risky venture, so research your idea thoroughly and seek professional advice.
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A career generally means a progression in a particular field. The progression may be in many different directions - upwards, sideways or into another related field. Some people are unable to effectively manage their careers because previous choices have left them few options. They may not have continued their education or updated their skills. Other issues that can affect a person's ability to manage their career are labour market and workplace changes which are beyond their control.

You can get help choosing or managing your career from a number of government and private agencies, including Centrelink and Job Network.

### Choices that can narrow your career options

Some people are unable to effectively manage their careers because previous choices or workplace changes have left them few options. Common reasons include:

- Dropping out of high school.
- Failing to complete a tertiary degree, postgraduate training, or specialised short courses.
- Having the attitude that a job is simply a way to make money and get the bills paid, rather than an opportunity for growth and fulfilment.
- Ambivalence, fear of change or lack of self-awareness which prevent career development.
- Failing to keep up with new technologies.
- Lacking career-related self-reliance skills.

### Avenues available to you right now

You have a number of choices about your career, which may include:

- Do nothing and stay in your current position.
- Take on extra responsibilities at work to enrich your current position.
- Work towards getting a promotion. For example, you could do additional training.
- Ask your employer to shift you to a lower paying and less demanding job within the company.
- Do another job within your company that offers about the same salary and exacts similar responsibilities as your current job.
- Apply for a new job with another company in the same field.
- Retrain for another career.

### If you hate your job

If you hate your job, it helps to work out why. You can make smarter career choices once you understand the reasons behind your job dissatisfaction. Some factors and possible solutions to consider before you quit include:

- **Conflict with workmates** - you could try to negotiate better working relationships. Start by approaching difficult people in a friendly (or at least civil) manner.
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- **Boredom** - consider training for a promotion or taking on additional activities.
- **Stress** - talk to your manager about ways to reduce your workload.
- **No promotion prospects** - don't assume there is no possibility of advancement. Talk it over with your manager.
- **Other factors** - other issues in your life, such as financial problems or unsatisfying personal relationships, may be influencing your feelings about work.

### Choosing another career

Perhaps you are no longer interested in your chosen field and wish to make a career change, or maybe you have held a succession of unrelated jobs and want to have a career instead. Suggestions to help you choose a career include:

- Most hobbies and interests can be expanded into careers. Look at your interests.
- Analyse your skills from both paid work and hobbies. What are you good at?
- Think about what things you have liked and disliked in your previous jobs. For example: Do you prefer to work alone or in a team? Indoors or outside? Flexible hours, shift work or nine to five? Other issues to consider include commuting time and minimum salary.
- Find out everything you can about your chosen field from employment assistance agencies, the Internet, trade magazines and people already in the industry.
- The 'Job Guide' is a publication that details the training, responsibilities and opportunities of various professions. You can access 'Job Guide' from libraries, Centrelink and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).
- Some industries require qualifications. Study time must be taken into account. In some cases, you may be able to retrain (at nights or weekends) while you remain working in your current job.
- Consider doing voluntary, freelance or part-time work in your chosen field. This will give you contacts, industry experience and resume credits - perhaps even a job.
- Plan for a reasonable length of time to make the transition - it can take around 18 months to two and a half years to swap from one career to another.
- Be prepared to start at the bottom (or close to it) and work your way up.

### Starting your own business

Starting your own business requires skill, motivation, hard work and a back-up fund of money to tide you over until your venture starts making a profit. Self-employment can be a risky venture, so research your idea thoroughly and seek advice from professionals, including:

- Bank manager
- Accountant
- Financial advisor
- Business advisory service
- Business enterprise centre.

### Suggestions for the school leaver

If you have left school or soon will, it is important to think about what you want to do with your working life. Suggestions include:

- If you don't know what career to choose, look at your interests. Most hobbies can be translated into career choices. For example, an interest in cooking could blossom into a career as a chef.
- Another option is to consider the things you excel at. For example, if your strongest subjects in school were English and woodwork, you could consider a career in either journalism or carpentry.
- Learn everything you can about your potential career. Ask your career counsellor at school or check with your local Centrelink office for detailed information.
- Find out what sort of qualifications and experience you need for your chosen field.
- Voluntary or part-time work in your chosen field can give you a better feel for the industry.

- Voluntary or part-time work will also give you valuable credits on your resume.

### Where to get help

- Centrelink Tel. 132 490
- Job Network Information Line Tel. 1300 363 365
- Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) Tel. (03) 9920 4777
- Australian Association of Career Counsellors at [www.aacc.org.au](http://www.aacc.org.au)
- Psychologist.

### Things to remember

- A career generally means a steady progression in a particular field, with each position building on the experience of the ones before.
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- Self-employment can be a risky venture, so research your idea thoroughly and seek professional advice.

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