



CHAPTER

3

CAREER EXPLORATION:

Process – Realities – Markets

What is available?

Your career goal is to obtain the perfect job that satisfies your broader goals in life.

The job hunter asks: What's available? The employer asks: What job do you want? It is like the classic chicken and egg confrontation that always results in an impasse.

Either you or the employer must compromise.

The issue goes much deeper. You do not want just *any* job. In reality, you are not willing to let an employer pick a career for you. You have some idea of what you want. The purpose of playing coy is to get the employer to "show his hand" so that a broader selection is available.

Few employers will display an array of jobs and say "take your pick." They have too much at stake. A poor "placement" is expensive to the employer. It is common for employers to list available positions on their career website. But you must interview for a specific position. The competencies needed for each job are different. Which one "best" fits you and your interests?

A successful placement implies that the applicant really wants the job and is willing to work hard to be successful. The employer seeks some indication of motivation. Job fit is important to most employers.

The best evidence of motivation is a candidate's understanding of his/her capabilities and the knowledge of how to apply that understanding to a specific job.

You must set a goal and then prepare a convincing story that forces the employer to believe that you are motivated to succeed on that job as well as in broader roles later with that employer.

An employer's open invitation to interview invites too many unqualified and improperly motivated candidates to apply for a job. The selection process can then become extremely tedious for the employer.





Employers improve the selection process by directing some of the responsibility back onto you. Forcing you to sort out things *first* enhances the quality of the selection process.

Employers will not set goals for you. They cannot focus their probing questions without some knowledge of your interests. To get around this, some job seekers tell white lies. They express interest in anything and everything. A trained recruiter sees through that facade quickly with only five minutes of questions.

You must set your goals *first*. You must express your interests and competencies first.

You must set your goals first. Without goals you are lost.

Goals range from broad life expectations to specific job titles. Specific job titles are necessary at the time of the job interview. There may be several different job titles of interest to you, but they usually have a common thread tying them together.

In most cases, people who seek careers in managerial, technical, or professional types of jobs require some level of college education. Most managerial, technical, or professional assignments imply a commitment to a career; an extended work experience in a given field.

There are “levels of responsibility” within a given career field. This means that you may specify a job title on a *continuum* from entry level to top levels that is consistent with your level of competency.

What are your specific goals? Which position interests you? The responsibility for setting entry, intermediate, and long-term goals cannot be left to the employer. Employers will not accept that responsibility and you should never give it up.

Exploring the World of Work

Specific job decisions must eventually be made. Decisions require choices. Career options must be developed. Developing these options is the essence of career exploration.

Career exploration is collecting data about types of opportunities in managerial, technical, and professional career fields.

Part of your strategic plan is to create the highest possible level of career awareness. The only constraints on this activity are your time, money, and interest. A wealth of career information is available. Many easily accessible websites will deliver information quickly to you.



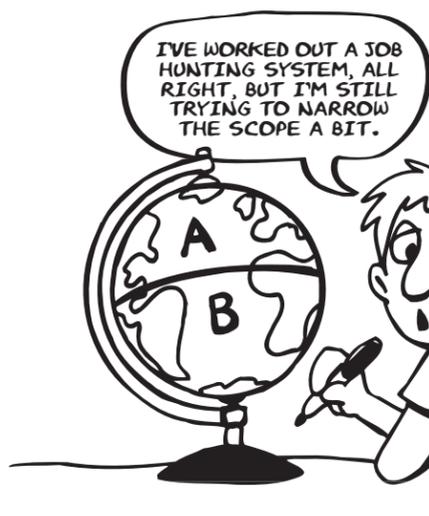
Career One Stop

This is an excellent career website that will greatly aid in your self-assessment and career exploration efforts. The United States publicly funded resource for both individuals and employers is called **Career One Stop**. The URL and description is listed below.

www.careeronestop.org

Career One Stop is designed to help you find jobs from entry-level to technical to professional to executive. It allows you to post your resume and search for jobs. Employers can also submit job





openings. This links to **America's Job Bank** (www.ajb.org) and **Careerinfonet** (www.careerinfonet.org). **Career One Stop** is turning into one of the best resources of career information available on the Web today.

There are multiple links from **Career One Stop** to many other useful links. Over one million job openings can be accessed and employers can view over one half-million resumes. The articles on the site provide some help but they often pertain to noncollege graduates and can be very basic.

There are articles on resume preparation, occupational knowledge, and just about any career topic you can imagine. A little web surfing will give you job descriptions, career profiles, and self-assessment information. The career information contains some of the best information that you are likely to find printed anywhere.

Once you surf to **America's Job Bank**, you will find descriptions of hundreds of job possibilities. These searches take you directly to the job categories that are available in any U.S. location. It will even take you to specific job listings.

Perhaps the most useful part of Career One Stop is the link to **Career-Infonet**. You can find salary information, employment trends, occupational requirements, state-by-state job market data, and contact information on millions of employers in the United States. It is massive!

Access to an extensive online career resource library opens up a rich body of career information. For practically any career profile, you can obtain a market outlook, salary data, and occupational requirements with extensive position descriptions presented in a more general manner. Your career exploration should start here!

Nearly 500 career videos are available if you have a high-speed Internet connection. These show real people in their careers, which will aid you in relating your self-assessment to that specific career. You can even see some broad industry-specific videos that might help you see if the industry and career culture fit your expectations and personal needs.

The website links are the single best resource on the Web because they direct you to so many different public and private websites. The career exploration area will take you to hundreds of career options to consider. They even help employers write job descriptions before they post jobs.

If, after reading the various career profiles, you feel that you might need further education, you will be able to locate training resources and financial aid resources that might help you finance the needed further education. The vast resource library has links to thousands of articles on the salary, cost-of-living, job search, relocation, etc.

These government websites will also link you to an occupational information network known as the O*NET consortium. The URL is listed below.

www.onetcenter.org

This site will take you to *O*NET online*, which opens even more rich occupational information to individuals, career professionals, and employers.

Career exploration is a process of accumulating information about the world of work.

View career specific videos on-line.



O*NET basically replaces the old *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, which was a massive publication used mostly by professionals. The DOT is no longer being published. This database is its replacement.

This huge database will help you find details about any occupation that you might conceive of. Given your skills and interests, you can prepare detailed or summary reports, including job characteristics and job requirements. If this database does not have what you want, it will link you to other websites that give hundreds of trade and professional associations.

For nearly any career profile that you choose, you will find a summary of the six Holland occupational types that can be connected to your personal interest so you can see if it might be satisfying to you.

The career classification categorizes skill requirements, job behaviors commonly necessary, and work style value characteristics.

The O*NET Interest Profiler is not only compatible with Holland's interest structure of RIASEC codes, it's results directly link you to over 900 occupations profiled in O*NET Online.

You will also find the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** available free online. This biannual handbook from the Bureau of Labor Statistics lists career information by occupation. It gives a job description, working conditions, educational requirements, earnings, and expected job prospects for the future. You can use keyword searches to get very specific occupations that match your VIPS.

The O*NET Resource Center was created for the general public. There are very few private career resource services that provide such a wealth of rich career information for you to use in your career exploration. It is referenced extensively.

Once you have completed your self-assessment using interest tests that give you Holland codes and after completing the MBTI or similar instruments, these results will be very useful in helping you use these government resources to refine your career exploration. Your goal is to match your self-assessment with this career information so that you will be in a position to communicate your employment needs in an interview.

These resources will also assist in identifying potential employers. Using this database, in conjunction with other web-based job boards (and your own networking), should provide you multiple opportunities for developing job prospects, which hopefully will lead to job interviews.

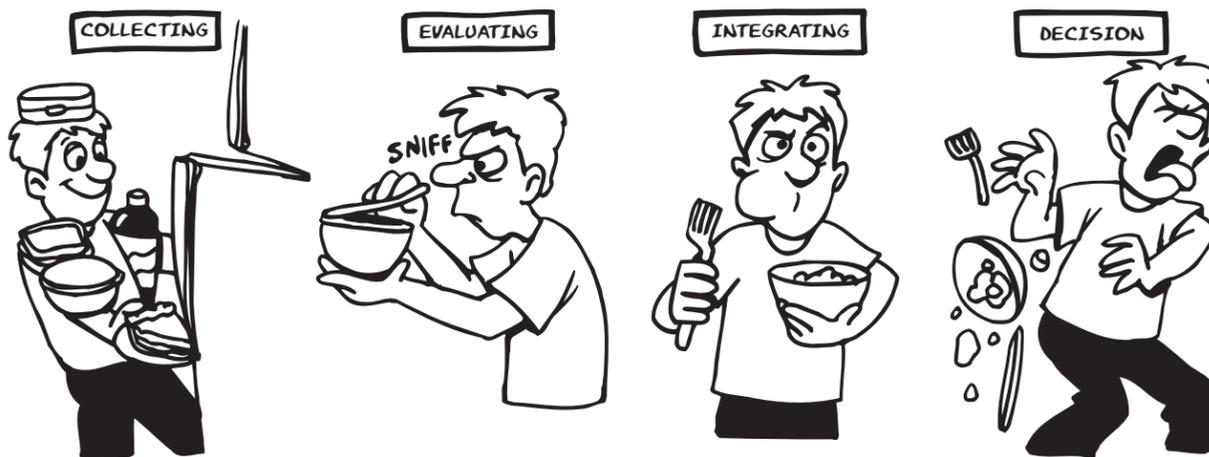


Systematic Process

Exploring career options takes planning. How can you collect career information? A consistent methodology needs to be developed. You will need this info to succeed in your interviews.

A system is needed for collecting, processing, and evaluating the information. Not all bits of the research effort will be of significant value. In fact, some of the data will be largely worthless.

Some career information sources have greater credibility than others. Just because it is published does not mean it is accurate.



Develop a systematic process for collecting the information you need to make the best possible job for you. Use this process forever.

Collecting. The first phase of collecting may well begin before college and continue throughout your lifetime. When will you do this data retrieval?

Your motivation usually peaks when you find yourself seeking employment. The *systematic collecting* should begin each time you approach a career decision point.

The key to systematic exploration is organizing the information. Information flows from a variety of sources and in varying quantity, quality, and format. The data should be cleaned, filtered, and arranged to achieve a logical organization.

Evaluating. The purpose of the evaluation is to make some decision using the collected data. The evaluation represents an integration of hundreds of variables from both your self-assessment and your career exploration.

Integrating. You might face important compromises during this integrating process. You may compromise between reality and your previous

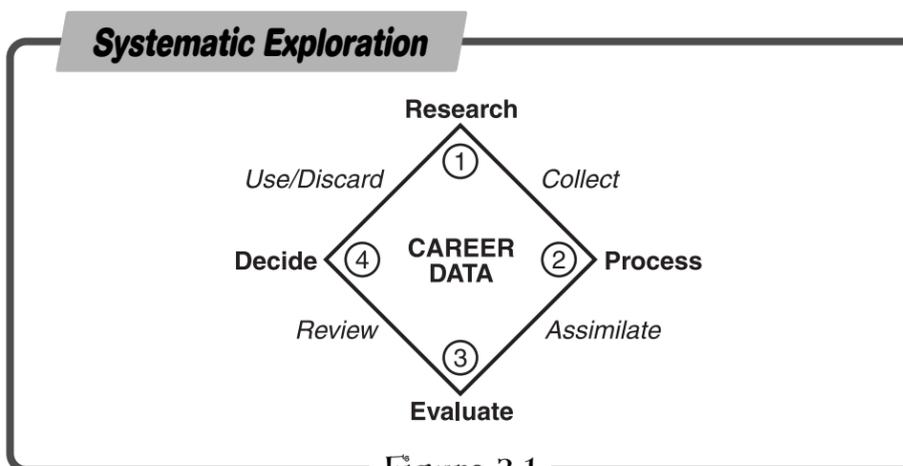


Figure 3.1



expectations. You may even reject the field that you have spent extensive time studying! You may return to your self-assessment process again.

Deciding. In the end, some type of decision filters out. The decision becomes the career objective statement on a resume or in a cover letter or your opening line at a job fair. Your *clarifications* continue throughout the search process.

The career planning process (assessment—exploration—search) occurs over time. The process can be condensed into four weeks or expanded into four years. Logic suggests that the longer the time, the better the refinement and integration with reality.

You may collect data as specific as a job in a given organization or as general as a broad definition. The goal of systematic exploration is to create a high level of awareness about many different career alternatives.

Involve yourself in an in-depth investigation into a given career option. This systematic process can be repeated with many different career options.

You will collect career information all the time. Even a simple observation of a television program, for example, may provide you additional information. You observe people in action every day in various occupations and that information is mentally processed.

Unfortunately, not all information is accurate. That is why you need to use several resources.

Career information exists in many places in several forms. Bits and pieces here and there seldom add up to sound data unless they are recorded in a usable form. How will you assimilate your research?

Career Profile

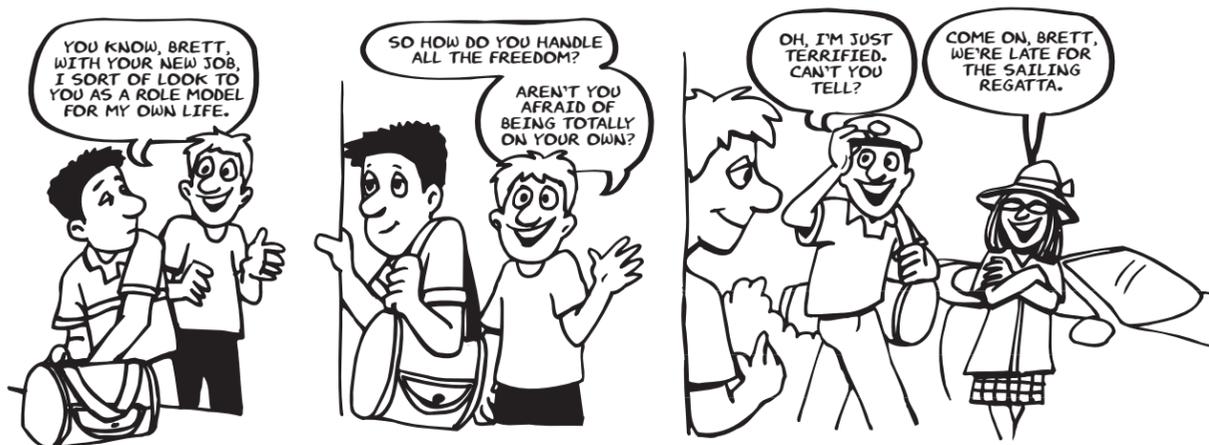
- Title(s):
- Description:
- Duties:
- Responsibilities:
- Qualifications:
- Outlook:
- Training:
- Advancement Path:

Figure 3.2

Relevant Data

Collecting information by a systematic approach expedites the process. The scheme depicted in Figure 3.2 can be helpful in sorting out relevant from irrelevant information. Searching for specific data on a given career field permits you to scan a much greater volume of information. In contrast, taking a look at all of the career possibilities often confuses people because of the massive amount of information available.

Titles. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published at www.careeronestop.org, lists hundreds of job titles.



The resume career objective statement emerges from a systematic exploration of career information facts.

Different titles can relate to similar duties, because titles and descriptions are not universally accepted.

There are many government sites on the Internet that provide information on jobs. Another such site is www.usajobs.gov and www.dol.gov.

For example, the job titles of financial analyst, budget specialist, cost accountant, and credit analyst could all have the same descriptions of duties. Job titles are often not very descriptive so you should not rely on titles alone.

Descriptions. Job descriptions give a summary of the job and list various duties and responsibilities. They also give various reporting relationships that can be helpful in observing upward mobility. The Internet is a good place to find many job listings with job descriptions.

Career Paths. When evaluating career information, investigate routes for upward mobility. Some jobs lend themselves to mobility more than others.

The need for advancement is more important to some people than others. For some professionals, such as lawyers, professors, veterinarians, and doctors, advancement is almost defined out of the job. In contrast, people in business management seem to always be striving for promotions.

Training Possibilities. Jobs vary in their provisions for training. Some offer formal, sophisticated training programs; others are mostly on the job. This type of career information is often important to you.

Outlook. The number of people needed in various occupations and specific jobs is an important factor to evaluate.

The supply/demand ratio is another factor related to career outlook that needs evaluation. Do you want to be seeking a job in a field with a very limited number of openings relative to the large number of job applicants?



Sources of Information

People and publications (hardcopy or webcopy) provide the basic sources of career information. People in occupations and career positions serve as role models to which potential aspirants might relate.

Most career knowledge comes from observing people in their day-to-day lifestyles. But appearances can be deceiving, so observation should not be the only source of career information.

Publications can also be poor because many times people write books without the best of resources. Your best plan is to use people, websites, and other publications and then personally integrate the information.

Careers in Business

www.careers-in-business.com

Careers in Business is designed to help you find a satisfying job in the business world, whether you're angling for a fast-track investment banking job or a fulfilling nonprofit career. This site brings you the latest scoop on various business career areas including job, salaries, what people are saying, and entry requirements.

Job Description.com

www.jobdescription.com

This site provides thousands of built-in job descriptions. Check out the sample on Marketing manager. This site is mostly for HR managers to use and is too expensive for individuals. It assists in writing job descriptions using sections like responsibilities, qualifications, work environment, etc. It provides good examples of what employers review before the job interview.

People. Interviewing people in selected career fields provides a "real world" appreciation of the duties and responsibilities within the fields. One or two opinions in a field, however, can be misleading, because practitioners are often biased. It takes care to see through the enthusiasm and pride to glean

out the negatives as well as the positives. Informational interviewing is later discussed as an employment strategy.

Perhaps the one best way to learn about an occupation is to work with people in the field as a sub-professional through a cooperative education or professional practice program. A ten- to fifteen-week work experience usually permits one to see most aspects of the field. The trend toward using these experiential types of programs in educational programs appears to be growing.

Publications. You may not be fortunate enough to have the opportunity to observe, act, and react with people in careers in which you have an interest. If that is the case, you will have to turn to written documents.

Sources of Career Information

People

- observation
- interviews
- experiential

Publications

- associations
- employers
- computer files

Figure 3.3



Publications are often superior to personal interaction because the information is more broad-based. Most publications are written after taking observations from large numbers of people in the occupation. The accuracy is very high; not anecdotal.

Public and university libraries contain hundreds of books on many different career fields.

Most professional associations publish books, booklets, and pamphlets about careers. Although libraries contain some of these, it is appropriate to write to associations directly. Many college career service offices maintain supplies of such materials to give away.

The U.S. government also prints similar types of information, which are available in libraries, college career service offices, or from the Government Printing Office.

The U.S. government website called America's Job Bank is one of the best sources of info. Check out www.ajb.com.

Many large employers of college graduates, whether business, government, or education, publish brochures (hard copy and web versions) that describe career opportunities for college graduates with their organizations. Although you sometimes must read through the sales pitch, these give the most up-to-date descriptions of career fields.

The brochures are available from college career service offices, by writing to organizations directly, or visiting employer career websites.

The Handbook. The most useful of the government publications you should review is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, which is published periodically. It gives a brief description and the current outlook for nearly every position sought by college graduates. View it on the web.

The *OOH* is excellent for labor market re-entrants and career-changers as well. It provides the following information on every occupation listed.

The *OOH* is printed in many different locations on the Internet. Use any search engine to locate a copy.

The "Nature of the Work" section introduces you to the career field. It provides a brief description of the duties, assignments, and day-to-day work activities of people in the career field. The description helps to provide a view of the scope of the field. It frequently correlates the work to related occupations and gives an expanded list of job titles.





Many occupations are performed only in selected parts of the nation. In many occupations, different areas of the country impact upon the nature of the work. Where applicable, the *“Places of Employment”* section gives the size of the workforce by regions of the country.

The *“Qualifications”* section (including training, other qualifications, and advancement) is similar to the requirements section of an employer’s job description. It lists the skills necessary to do the job. Such items as physical requirements, educational degrees, advanced training, specific courses, licensing requirements, and so forth, are given.

The *“Employment Outlook”* section gives information on the supply and demand variables with a rationale for determining your employment chances. This section discusses growth as well as replacements needed in the foreseeable future. It covers the areas of the career field where special skills may be advantageous in improving the likelihood of employment.

The *“Earnings and Working Conditions”* section gives an indication of beginning rates usually paid to new entrants into the occupation. There are often benchmark averages given at midpoints and high ends of the salary ranges. Where applicable, it often gives the average salary of the comparable position of experienced people working for the federal government.

In many career fields there are professional associations that offer additional career literature. The *“Sources of Additional Information”* section refers you to additional booklets and pamphlets available from these associations as well as from the government. It provides addresses of specific organizations to contact.

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is the best and most resourceful publication available for initial exploration of a career field. There are many other excellent sources of information, but few sources rival the *Handbook* for preliminary data. Most of the other sources will expand and help build depth of understanding about a given career field.

One caution must be advised. Do not base your career decision solely on this source of information. The one- to three-page description for each occupation is inadequate to use alone.



The primary value of the *Handbook* is that it helps to identify specific career fields that might be of interest to you. As a follow-up investigative approach, use people and other publications to provide the in-depth detail required for decision-making purposes.

Find the *OOH* on *www* and review it.

Occupational Outlook Handbook stats.bls.gov/oco/home.htm

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is a nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earning and expected job prospects in over 800 occupations.

Job Market Realities

The job market forecast often influences career decisions.

Are there real jobs available in the career field to which you aspire?

No career counselor would suggest that you should canvass the job market, discover the field with the greatest number of current job openings, and then create a background to ensure that you can get a job in that field. On the other hand, few counselors would recommend that you close your eyes to job market realities.

A rational career decision recognizes the labor market influence. Projecting the supply of labor market entrants in a specific year is nearly an impossible job. Forecasting the number of jobs available in any field during a specific period of time is a very imprecise science.

There is no known way at this time to produce a reasonable supply-demand balance in a free society. Free market principles apply to labor as well as products. Rapid technology changes and society needs make job market planning nearly impossible.

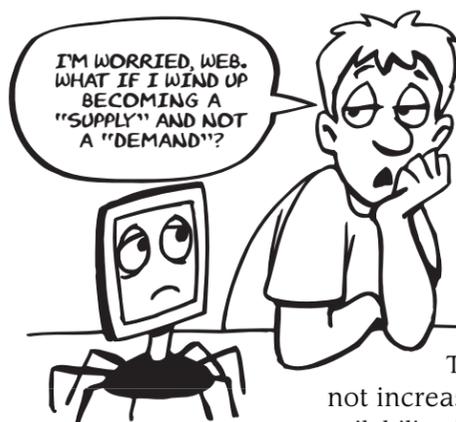
The job outlook by occupation is *one* of the variables that you must factor into a career decision. The job outlook, however, must not be the overriding variable. There are jobs available in almost every field. What is the job outlook for the job you are seeking?



Supply/Demand Relationships

The relationship between “supply” of job candidates and “demand” influences career decisions. No prudent individual permits supply-demand relationships to dictate a career choice; yet, the prudent person cannot afford to stand naive to the complex and uncertain characteristics of supply and demand factors generated by changing market conditions.

The analysis of the marketplace becomes part of the career planning process. The market will not control your job choice but it should influence it.



Demand. The demand side of the equation is largely influenced by economic factors. This is true whether jobs are in the private or public sector of the economy. The public sector must rely on revenues which come from taxing individuals and corporations. Tax revenues decline in periods of slow or no growth in the economy.

Unemployment rises rapidly during recessions. The numbers of professional, technical, and managerial jobs do not increase during recessions, and that has a negative influence on job availability during those periods.

Given the imprecise ability to predict the state of the economy in the short run, it is nearly impossible to forecast the number of new jobs being created during any immediate (within 18 months) period of time. Over a longer time period (3 to 5 years), economic planners hold a better forecasting record.

In essence, the economists level-out the cyclical nature of the economy over longer periods of time. Therefore, it is possible to better forecast long-range demand variables and estimate the number of new jobs to be created within a three or more year timeframe.

The *number of people* in an occupational group depends to a large extent on the demand by others for their services. Some occupations will thus be in growth periods, in terms of new entrants to the field, while others may be declining.

The general economic level could be booming while employment is declining in occupations for which the need for the employee’s services is declining.

Changes in industrial *growth rates* also affect the availability of jobs in certain occupations. Many occupations are directly related to certain industries. For example, a major decline in automobile manufacturing is sure to negatively influence the demand for mechanical engineers because a high percentage of them work in that industry.

The selection of an occupational field is closely related to the selection of an industry in which one plans to work.

Using information on the demand for goods and services, advances in technology, changes in business practices, and other factors, government economists can estimate the number of workers who will be employed in an occupation if present trends continue. Such estimates are based upon some realistic assumptions about world stability, economic conditions, technology, social value stability, government policies, etc.

Growth rates in various occupations are influenced by related industries’ economic outlook.



Job applicant supply forecasts are reasonably accurately estimatable.

In the long term, the U.S. Department of Labor can fairly accurately estimate the increase in the number of positions available in the managerial, technical, and professional fields. These projections are based on the number of people currently in occupations, expected retirements and deaths, and the upgrading of lower-level positions. Replacements and upgrading are fairly predictable.

The difficulty arises in forecasting the economy, the stability of which is the underlying assumption for manpower projections. The estimate for growth in a particular occupation can thus vary considerably in any given year.

On the demand side, growth in jobs created is one of the economic variables. Retirements, deaths, and other labor-market-exit reasons such as illness, return to school, child rearing, etc., all enter into the analysis of the availability of job openings. Based upon time-tested statistical methods, census data, and labor market surveys of major employers, the availability of openings can reasonably be estimated in the long term.

A sophisticated set of techniques aid economists in determining the "demand for people" side of the equation. To the extent that the underlying assumptions do not change, projections can be reasonably estimated and they normally fall within a predicted range of error.

The supply of applicants for professional jobs will be in near balance with the demand for them in the next few years.

Supply. The supply of candidates entering a given occupation is more accurately predictable. Most professional, technical, and managerial assignments require a college degree, advanced training, or special skill development. The U.S. Department of Education regularly collects information on enrollments in various types of educational institutions and they have done this for many years.

Over time the Department has a reasonable idea of the number of trained people who never enter the occupation for which they trained, those who leave the occupation, and those who are otherwise not available. Because most occupations require several years of training and individuals often specify their intentions upon entering the program, there is a reasonable estimate of the newly trained entrants.

Colleges produce the largest number of new entrants into an occupation each year. By factoring in a reasonable estimate for returning entrants who have temporarily left the occupation to raise families, to obtain additional schooling, due to illness, etc., a reasonable estimate of supply is possible.

Consensus. During the next decade, most experts are forecasting a reasonable balance in the supply of candidates and demand for their services.

Even though the experts forecast a near balance in total during the next decade, great dislocations may occur in certain occupational fields and in certain college major areas. Many occupations require specific fields of study, but many other fields of academic study do not directly correlate to specific occupations. The mix of candidate qualifications may not match the occupational requirements.

In practice, the mix problem produces extreme shortages of qualified people in some occupations and creates a pool of highly trained people vying for a limited number of openings in certain other occupations.

The supply/demand in specific occupations may produce extreme shortages of certain professionals.





More Education = Less Unemployment

More education has always reduced the probability of unemployment according to figures released by the U.S. Government in publications like the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* and the *Monthly Labor Review* magazines.

Education has become an increasingly important criterion for success in the job market. Although the supply of both high school and college graduates has grown significantly in the past years, there has almost always been a relatively greater increase in demand for college graduates. Lower unemployment rates for college graduates suggests that employers highly value education attainment.

In addition, the growth in occupations that require a college degree has traditionally been greater than those requiring only a high school degree. Business cycle fluctuations impact college graduates less because the high school graduates tend to work in blue collar manufacturing jobs which are more susceptible to swings in employment changes. College graduates tend to work in service sector jobs, which are less susceptible to downturns.

It is likely that the competitive advantage held by college graduates will continue in the future.

In a free society, the only factors dictating a college major are the interest of the individual student and the resources of the educational institution. The job market might temporarily influence the selection, but given a minimum of four years' leadtime and the uncertainties of the economy, few students base their choice of a college major entirely on job possibilities.

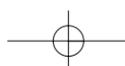
Recent evidence, though, suggests that the labor market is becoming one of the many factors that students consider in selecting college majors. Because certain major subjects relate more to given occupations, a decided shift toward vocationally related majors appears to be a trend at many colleges.

A few years ago, less than 12 percent of college students elected to major in business, in contrast to over 20 percent today. Very few seats go begging today in a number of other vocationally attractive fields like engineering, journalism, and the sciences.

Many college students elect to major in subject areas where the potential for employment is less than favorable. Many people believe that the purpose of higher education is primarily to develop the whole individual and that less concern should be placed on the particular academic major.

The concept of a liberal education implies that any individual properly prepared can adapt to the work environment with a minimum of difficulty.

Whatever a person's point of view, few people argue with the importance of collecting career information before making long-term investments in time, money, and other resources.





America's Career InfoNet

www.acinet.org

This site provides occupational and economic information. Search by industry to find out what occupations are included or search by occupations to find out what industries employ them. The resources library will connect you to more resources on-line if you need more information.

Employment Projections

If you agree that supply and demand variables are two pieces of information that you must factor into your career planning model, you are probably wondering how to obtain such information.

Short Term. For short-run impressions, newspapers and news magazines do a fair job of printing stories based on opinions of people who are close to the employment scene.

Good journalists use reliable sources that they have come to know over a period of years in such employment reporting. To some extent, the reporters' research for a story saves you valuable time. On the other hand, some of their sources may not be totally reliable.

There are great short-term employment fluctuations in given geographical areas, and many fields change rapidly. You should, therefore, do some investigation on your own before accepting feature articles in current periodicals as the total picture.

The type of people closest to the employment scene are college career services professionals, major employers of people in given occupations, employment agency counselors, and search firm consultants. Few people want to be bearers of anything but good news.

College faculty members want to perpetuate their employment, so their perception of the market is always that it is good. Career services professionals believe that their graduates are superior because of the reputations of their schools, so things are usually rosy-appearing to them. Keep a critical mind as you read about employment projections.

If you have access to any of these sources, use them, but do not rely on everything they say as truth. Put the ideas and comments from the various sources together and see what the consensus suggests. By consulting four to six different people close to your occupational area, and merging their opinions with news stories, you can begin to put a true short-term picture together.

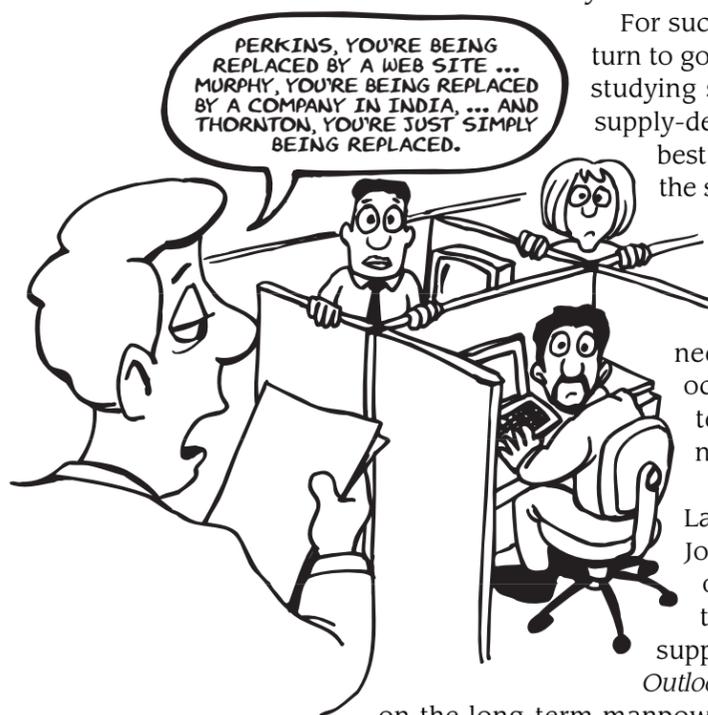
You will find extensive career information on the various job board websites. The professional associations in career fields of your interest provide some of the most objective short- and long-term projections of supply and demand. Professional associations, and the job boards offer the best resources for your short term career planning.



A thorough understanding of the job market realities is an integral part of sound career planning and job search.



Long Term. For career decision-making purposes, you want more than a short-term view of the situation in your occupational area of interest. What does the three- to five-year outlook hold? What about ten years out?



For such longer-term projections you will need to turn to government economists who make careers of studying such concerns. Again, like the short-term supply-demand picture, the figures are suspect. The best estimate is the opinion of experts who study the situation—occupation by occupation.

The government experts tend to be much more objective than the people who write books and articles extolling the virtues of their professions, but you also need the ideas and opinions of people in the occupation. In spite of all their faults, long-term projections by unbiased experts add a needed element of credibility.

On a regular basis the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics prepares a report titled “The Job Outlook in Brief.” The report forecasts openings by several hundred occupations through the next decade. This report when supplemented with the Bureau’s *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is the most authoritative report

on the long-term manpower outlook. Both publications and related extractions are available at:

www.careeronestop.org

The U.S. Government has developed a listing of technical, professional, and managerial jobs for which a college degree or some college education is necessary. These jobs are listed and described on this website.

Using these government resources, the “Occupation Table” listed in Figure 3.4 was prepared. This lists occupations typically classified in technical, professional, and managerial position descriptions. These should be key words to use in job boards and search engines as you research various careers.

There are literally thousands of other jobs that people hold in the technical, professional, and managerial fields, so this is not an all-inclusive and exclusive list of career fields. However, it does represent a high percentage of the normally available opportunities. Many positions, with slightly different titles, can be related to the positions.

Projections of supply and demand by occupation are made by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. The projections of long-term trends largely ignore short-term fluctuations caused by economic circumstances. As underlying assumptions change, the projections become less accurate.

Employment & Training Administration

www.doleta.gov

Many states are setting up Department of Labor, Employment and Training Career Centers to help you write resumes, search for jobs, and take self-help classes. The America’s *One-Stop Career Center* System lists nearly

The “Occupational Outlook Quarterly” is one of the most authoritative periodicals available on supply and demand. See the www for a copy.

Occupation Table

This is a thorough but incomplete list of occupations for which a college degree is required or very helpful. Most professionals in the jobs are among the highest paid talent working in the United States.

Accountants	Mining	Programmers
Actuaries	Petroleum	Psychologists
Air traffic controllers	Engineering technicians	Public relations assistants
Airline pilots	Entrepreneurs	Purchasing agents
Anthropologists	FBI agents	Radio and TV announcers
Architects	Financial	Range managers
Architects: Landscape	Advisors	Registered nurses
Astronomers	Analyst	Sales representatives
Auditors	Credit analyst	Automobile
Bank officers	Investments	Managers
Business managers	Managers	Manufacturing
Buyers (retail/commercial)	Security analyst	Real estate
Chemists	Security sales	Retail trade
Chiropractors	Venture capitalists	Securities
City managers	Food technologists	Travel agent
Claim representatives	Forest technicians	Wholesale trade
Clergy	Foresters	Scientists
Computer programmers	Geographers	Agricultural
Computer specialists	Geologists	Atmospheric
Computer systems analysts	Geophysicists	Biochemical
Conservationists	Health administrators	Environmental
Construction inspectors	Health care managers	Life
Correctional officers	Health inspectors	Life and physical
Counselor (college)	Historians	Marine
Counselors (employment)	Hotel managers	Political
Counselors (rehabilitation)	Inspectors (Manufacturing)	Social
Counselors (school)	Insurance representatives	Soil
Credit managers	Lawyers	Social workers
Dental hygienists	Librarians	Sociologists
Dentists	Management consultants	Soil conservationists
Designers (industrial)	Market research managers	Speech pathologists
Designers (interior)	Mathematicians	Statisticians
Dietitians	Medical lab. technicians	Supervisors
Economists	Medical record admin.	Surveyors
Engineers	Merchant marines	Teachers:
General	Meteorologists	College
Aerospace	Newspaper reporters	Secondary
Agriculture	Oceanographers	Elementary
Biomedical	Optometrists	Therapists:
Ceramic	OSHA workers	Occupational
Chemical	Personnel/Human Resources	Physical
Civil	Pharmacists	Urban planners
Electrical	Physicians	Veterinarians
Industrial	Physicists	Web designers
Mechanical	Podiatrists	Writers: technical
Metallurgical	Police officers	

Which of these occupations interest you?

Figure 3.4



Job forecasts are rarely accurate. The margin of error may be very high.

one million jobs each year by region and job skills. From there, job seekers can apply for unemployment benefits, register for state job service, and talk to a federal/state career counselor.

Job outlook statistics by occupational field look so factual that the unenlightened may want to believe them as the unalterable truth. Always remember that “rough estimates” vary widely. Do not accept government projections at face value.

Even government planners readily admit the tenuous nature of forecasting the supply of jobs and the availability of job candidates in a short-run period of time. It is worthwhile to examine the figures in detail during the career exploration process, but refrain from making judgments until you have more facts.

Specific Jobs. In what occupations do the majority of professional, technical, and managerial people work? When you consider that the Careeronestop website lists thousands of specific job titles, you begin to realize that narrowing in on a specific occupation and then a specific job title is no simple exercise. The job board, like monster, careerbuilder, hot jobs, etc., even add to this list!

Nonetheless, the many thousands of job titles can be grouped into clusters of related jobs. These clusters can be further massaged into broad occupational categories that are more closely related to the part of the working population into which you want to fit your career—namely, the professional, technical, and managerial group.

The “Occupation Table” lists the specific occupational fields. The list is not inclusive of every imaginable appropriate career field, and it does not focus on narrower sub-specialties that are included in the broader classification. However, the list presents a fair listing of the majority, probably over 80 percent, of the available occupations in the professional, technical, and managerial fields.

Make a point of reviewing the list in its entirety. If you do not find the career field in which you have an interest listed, you should begin to make some more in-depth and specific supply-demand analyses of your own before investing a great amount of time in a field that may be so narrow that the demand is next to nonexistent. The government, professional associations, and job boards will help you narrow your research.

A significant amount of grouping has been done to narrow the list to a manageable number of occupations and career fields. There are many levels of responsibility and different job titles in each of these groupings.

The job titles listed can be misleading. The one word, “Occupation,” is designed to start your further investigation.

Magnitude. It is human nature to look at projections and say you want to go where the greatest growth possibilities are likely to be. Most people have been conditioned to equate “growth” with “good,” and in most instances there is a positive relationship.

But the “growth trend” is only one indicator of future job prospects. More jobs become available due to people leaving the labor force than to economic growth. Large occupations that are growing very slowly may offer more jobs





A positive growth trend in a career field does not always translate into better job prospects for you in that field.

than small, fast-growing occupations. Technology continually creates new job titles.

Growth Trends. Some occupations will experience dramatic growth in terms of the number of jobs available while others will show declines in the next decade.

Based upon demand variables by occupation, economists forecast the average yearly job openings anticipated for each occupation. For each occupation, they calculate the percent increase in number of jobs.

In career planning terms this means that if you elect to go into a “non-growth” field, the number of new entrants into your field is not going to increase any faster than the national average. It could mean that you may have to search harder to find employment initially in the field or when you change jobs within that field. The concept also may have some implications to *geographical* considerations as well.

You should be aware of the growth trends in employment in the career field that you select. How you elect to utilize that piece of information is a personal choice. It may have no impact whatever on your choice, and yet it may be a factor that forces you to look at other options. For slow growth fields, you must develop superior credentials, given your competition for each job.

Competitive Prospects. Employment success depends on more than growth and the size of the workforce. It also depends on the number of people competing for that same kind of position.

Many occupations correlate directly with academic subjects and formal training. A more accurate estimate of supply is available in this case.

For example, the supply of graduate electrical engineers is fairly easy to predict given that they are in college and have selected that major. The number of available seats is not growing rapidly, and most of them will be full. Both the number of labor market re-entrants and occupational drop-outs is low and predictable. There is a good estimate of supply of electrical engineers to compare to the number needed annually; thus a fairly accurate estimate of the supply-demand ratio is possible.

Other occupations have no correlatable college major on which to base an estimate of supply. For example, many liberal arts graduates will accept employment in sales, supervision, counseling, etc. Estimates in many occupations must simply be made on an aggregate basis given what is generally known about supply and demand relationships in these occupations. The forecast accuracy is much less precise.

Many people feel that the competitive prospects projections for employment in their chosen occupations mean very little because they have confidence that they will be among the chosen few even if the competition is extremely keen. Other people prefer not to analyze the employment prospects until they complete a basic education. These are choices that you personally must make.

As a good career planning strategist, you may conclude that competitive prospects mean nothing. You may also be at the other end of the continuum that believes that employment prospects are the whole ballgame.

Understand the competition for the job you seek!





Regardless of where you fall on this continuum, having the information available is sound career planning. How you use the information, if at all, is clearly dependent upon your values, interests, personal qualities, and skills. You may have incredible job competition in some fields and need superior credentials if you are going to be successful in your two to four job searches in that field during your career timeframe.

Salary Concerns

One important element of career information is salary data. No one makes a career decision on the basis of one variable alone, but in every ranking of variables that are important to career choice, salary consistently ranks somewhere within the top ten factors.

The relative ranking of the factors important to career choice varies considerably based upon your personal value system.

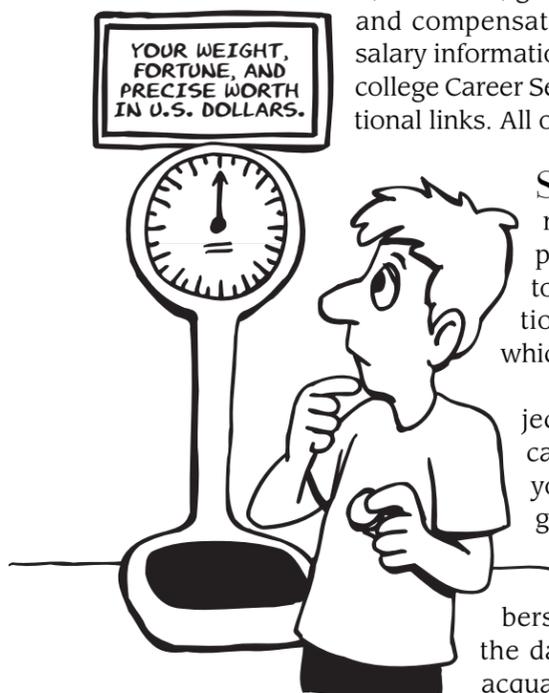
Sources of Information

Many different sources of comparative salary data are available if you investigate thoroughly.

Finding hard, accurate salary information often requires perseverance and digging. Salary averages change rapidly.

Some employers tend to resist releasing personal salary information even though the aggregation of personal data guarantees anonymity. Surveys can be misleading because people tend to lie a little because they want others to feel that they (or those in their profession) are better off than others.

Authors of books seldom print salary averages because such information rapidly becomes obsolete. As a result, the best sources of salary information for you are survey data available from college career service offices, associations, want ads, government agencies, newspaper and magazine articles, and compensation websites. There are several websites that contain salary information. Several sites are listed at the end of this section. Your college Career Services Office website can probably provide you with additional links. All of the big job boards link you to salary websites.



Salary Surveys. For the job seeker, valid salary information is difficult to obtain, but it is available readily to professional compensation experts who make it a practice to obtain comparative information. Corporate compensation experts are members of professional associations, which exchange information on a confidential basis.

Most employers are very well versed on the salary subject by given position classifications. There are very few career fields in which a compensation expert could not give you very accurate statistics based on educational background, years of experience, and level of responsibility.

A number of professional associations conduct salary surveys on an annual basis among their membership. Usually, you must be a member in order to receive the data. Given an area of interest, it is a good idea to get acquainted with several people currently working in the field.





These people are in a position to answer questions on an individual basis or to help others obtain copies of salary surveys for you.

Some professional organizations publish salary surveys on their websites. Some trade magazines annually survey its readers. Several other groups publish results on their websites. Each year, *Business Week* publishes salaries of top executives. A review of the periodicals in your area of interest may provide salary data.

Under the provisions of the Federal Pay Comparability Act of 1970, the government must set pay rates for federal white-collar workers that are comparable to those found in private industry. A survey is conducted to obtain information for comparative purposes. A bulletin giving the results of the survey is available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. You can surf to these salary averages from this website:

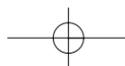
www.careeronestop.org

For people who have worked five or more years, salary information is slightly more difficult and expensive to obtain. A readily accessible information is in classified want ads in newspapers and trade journals. Unfortunately, it is not always accurate because many employers advertise high salary ranges simply to encourage more applicants.

Entry Rates. The most accurate salary information available is that reported for college graduates who have recently entered the workforce. It is extensive, accurate, and available for a very broad marketplace.

Although it is not directly applicable to most people with three or more years of work experience, the information does serve as a realistic base from which to make educated guesses.

Graduating students tend to be honest and cooperative in sharing salary information with each other. Their starting salaries usually fall within a narrow range. Most graduates report all offers they receive to their college career service office with the position title and monthly base dollar amount.





Several hundred college career service offices participate in a national salary survey with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), a nonprofit professional association. Periodically, each college placement office sends NACE survey data that gives the degree level, major subject, industry, and base salary for every offer reported for tabulating. Names are not sent.

Many employers—through the applicants' college career service office—also provide salary data to include in the survey.

In January, March, and July NACE prepares a multipage report that is sent to participating colleges. Information is then released to the news media in the local area and posted on NACE's website. If you miss seeing the report, call or visit your college career service office for the current information.

Salary information released by the local placement office and NACE is a most valid source of salary statistics. Data are released by degree level, major field, functional field, and industry classifications. The NACE website is: www.jobweb.org.

Averages, medians, ranges, and the number of offers give you a wealth of new information to include in the career decision-making process.

Salary Determinants

Salary levels are based on three major factors: employer policy, supply and demand, and the candidate's credentials.

Policy. Some employers view themselves as salary leaders and pay top dollar to attract supposedly the top graduates each year. Many employers hire many of the top candidates, place them in very competitive situations, watch the "cream" come to the top, and then keep the best and lay off the rest.

Other employers prefer to come in at the salary midpoint and hire candidates from a broad spectrum of backgrounds.

Many hire exactly the number of new employees they need and provide a development program to build the qualifications of those who are less productive.

Still other employers focus on hiring the "diamonds in the rough" who through perseverance and hard work will outperform the "barn burners" at the top of the class. There are as many different employment and salary policies as employers.

Demand. The second major factor influencing salary levels is the local supply and demand situation. Salaries vary by parts of the country, economic

The local marketplace establishes the base salary for most positions.

conditions in certain sectors, environmental settings (urban/rural/suburban), and cost of living considerations. Salary schedules often center on the local factors, and new employees must be merged into the schedules with a minimum of disruption of existing staff relationships.

Credentials. Finally, your qualifications and competitiveness enter into the determination. Your worth may be dictated by considerations outside the immediate control of the employer.

The most influential factors are years of related work experience, education (degree, major, grades), geographical location, and leadership potential.

Salary Basis

The majority of employers start with a base dollar amount depending upon degree level, academic major, and experience. The base amount results from the employment policies and the supply-demand situation. The amount may be above or below national averages.

Generalizations about salary differences are usually wrong. Get the facts, not hearsay.

Calculations. Amounts often referred to as “adders” make up the final figure. The “adder” amounts supposedly correlate with a judgmental opinion of what it might take to hire you, yet, adders must be consistent with salaries being paid to current employees of the business. Few employers offer salaries that exceed the salaries of current employees who are doing similar work.

The most directly related “adder” is previous full- or part-time work experience, preferably former “job-related” experience. Some employers reward superior academic experience, while others use it only as a selection factor.

The number of years of highly productive work experience is the major determinant of salary growth.

Most employers recognize other factors such as leadership activities, related interests, maturity, personality, and communication skills as part of the salary determination or selection factor. In essence, all of these add up to competitive variables that distinguish your offer amount from that of other job candidates.

Differences. National standards for starting pay in the private sector, state and local government, and education do not exist. Even the published federal government salary schedule contains elements of flexibility. Because

of changing economic variables and individual competitiveness, free market forces determine rates of pay.

A low-paying sector of industry often contains several employers that represent salary leaders. The reason some industries pay more than others is often because they recruit more technical personnel where the demand exceeds the supply. Other industries may have most of their facilities in areas where there are high unemployment rates and hence pay less than the average.

Salary rates are employer and individual specific. You must estimate a reasonable range of your worth.

Candidate-Related Salary Factors

- Degree Level
- Academic Major
- Work Experience
- Academic Record
- Leadership Activities
- Geographical Location

Figure 3.5



Salary relates directly to job performance and the worth of the job to the organization.

Trends. Salary rates change over time. In the past ten years, starting salary percentage increases for recent college graduates kept only slightly ahead of the rate of inflation.

There are so many uncontrollable influences on salary rates that you cannot realistically and accurately make forecasts.

Past trends suggest that starting salaries will increase by an annually compounded rate near the current rate of inflation. Employers will probably increase salaries of the *top* performers in the range of 2 to 4 percent above the cost of living.

Given certain assumptions about inflation, job performance, job mobility, etc., to double one's starting salary in ten years is not an unreasonable prospect. It can be done by getting a 7 percent salary increase every year, but that is far above normal expectation.

Salary Caveats. Salary information must be interpreted with care. In the final analysis, salary relates directly to job performance. Employers hire people to produce results.

College graduates get paid higher salaries for their "potential" performance rather than for their actual performance the first year on the job.

Starting salaries often exceed those of long-term blue-collar workers whose immediate contributions add more to the bottom line in the short run. Salaries paid to experienced employees are usually more indicative of the true market than those paid to inexperienced new employees.

In addition to the investment in salary and benefits, employers often lay out an additional investment of \$30,000 to \$40,000 in facilities, equipment, trainers, and supporting staff for every new "hire." The moment the potential for adding more than cost to the bottom line disappears, the prudent employer is faced with a termination decision.

Many new hires live on "potential" for six to eighteen months. At some point, your contribution must exceed your cost. The feedback comes in the form of the performance review.

In general, the higher the initial salary, the sooner the employer expects a reasonable contribution to the organization. In some assignments, particularly those above entry level, employers may expect an immediate contribution.

All of the concern about salary washes out quickly. Salary advancement depends upon performance. Within one year, no one remembers or cares about starting rates. Starting rates are determined by a rather inexact method. Any inequities usually disappear as rates are determined by more objective criteria related to job performance.

No employer can pay you more than you contribute. Your earnings include base salary and benefits. Once your earnings reach a level where your efforts are not adding to profit, it will not be long before your termination.

Realistically, if your actions do not help the employer make a "reasonable profit," your job security is very weak. Your only job security is your ability to contribute to corporate profit. Even in the not-for-profit job sector, you can price yourself out of a job.



Some employers make paying lower than average salaries part of their employment philosophy. Their philosophy is to leave a wider latitude for rewarding top producers.

Usually the upward limit on salary progression is based on salaries of current employees in the same job classification. Many employers prefer to leave as wide a gap between the new hires and current employees as possible in order to provide motivation for the new hires to excel and to reward loyalty for existing employees. The websites below will give you some idea of salaries by several variables.

www.salary.com
www.salaryexpert.com

Salary should not be a major concern. In the final analysis, the decision to join a given organization is usually based on factors more related to advancement potential, people, location, honesty, lifestyle, etc. In the short run, differences of \$50 to \$100 per month between employers impact little upon later career success. Your long term success is the most important variable.

Salary can be a negotiable item, especially for experienced hires. The starting point is normally your current salary. To entice an experienced employee, most firms expect to pay at least a 10 to 20 percent premium over his or her current salary. The percentage increase over current salary is rarely greater than 30 percent. The 10 to 30 percent increase range is the usual negotiating range. If a firm pays you more than you add to profits your job security is very weak. To command high earnings, your results must warrant higher earnings.

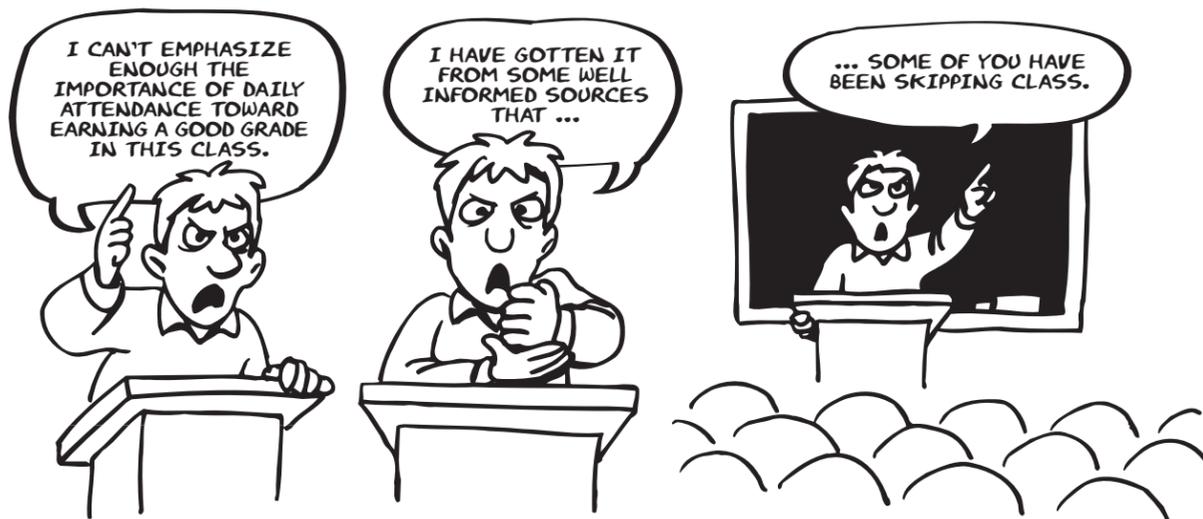
Job Markets and Work Settings

You do not have enough time to explore all possible careers that might interest you. You can explore those of highest interest.

Exploring can be accomplished by clustering a variety of related career fields based upon common elements in the work settings. Avoid relying on stereotypes.

Stereotypes influence images of work settings, organizational structures, and various career positions. Stereotypes are often false. The only way for you to determine the truth is to actively investigate each career option.





Private business, government, education, nonprofit, and the professions provide jobs for nearly all employed professionals.

Look at the “broad context” in your career. The goal is to explore career options as they relate to specific “work settings” and to destroy inaccurate stereotype images.

The employment climate is not identical for every work setting. That fact must be incorporated into your career decision-making process.

“Who can I work for with a major in my field?” is one of the most frequently asked questions by students of college career counselors. “What can I do with my background?”

You cannot explore *all* of the possibilities. You clearly must make some tentative initial decisions.

A starting point is to look at the possible “*settings*” for the work you choose to do and determine if and how specific settings mesh with your perception. A further step is to look at specific employment organizations. The work setting may not be profit oriented.

An overlay of the “world of work” reveals five major work settings: government, education, not-for-profit organizations, private enterprise, and the professions. Within these work settings, there are two major categories: exempt (salaried) and nonexempt (hourly). These categories are defined by the government.

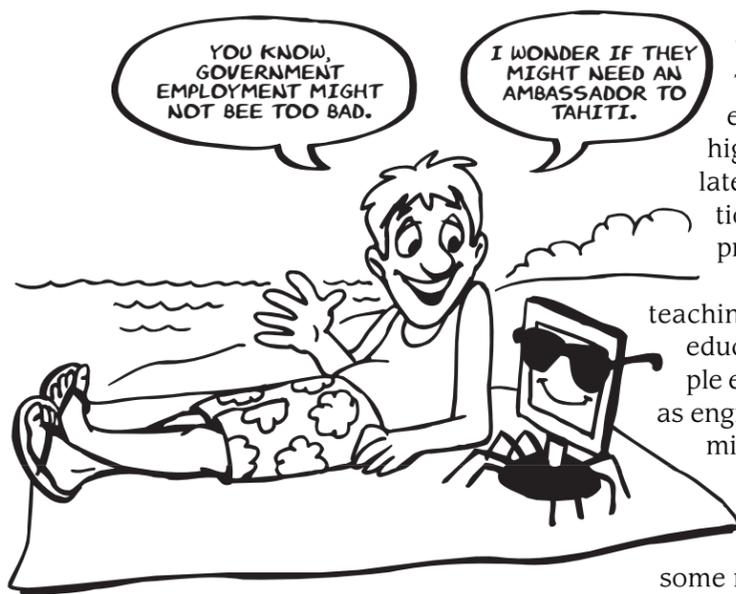
Employment in government, education, and private business includes workers from each category. Most professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.) are in private practice as independent entrepreneurs, but some of them work for employers in salaried capacities also in both the public and private employment sectors.

College-educated people are employed in all five of the major work settings. Within these occupational categories, college graduates most frequently work in white-collar jobs as managers, administrators, technical staff, professional sales, and in the professions. Analyze each work setting from a practical employment perspective.

Major Work Environments

- Education
- Government
- Not-For-Profit Organizations
- Private Enterprises
- The Professions/
Self-Employment

Figure 3.6



Jobs in Education

The primary sources of employment in education are elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions, although related components include preschool, vocational education, special education, proprietary schools, etc.

Most of the available jobs involve teaching, counseling, and administration, but educational institutions also hire a few people each year with special technical skills such as engineering, accounting, computer programming, and so forth.

Very few employment sectors in education forecast any significant growth in hiring. Because of high turnover and some retirements, several thousand job open-

ings will develop, but the competition for each job is keen as qualified teachers, women returning to careers, and current graduates vie for these jobs.

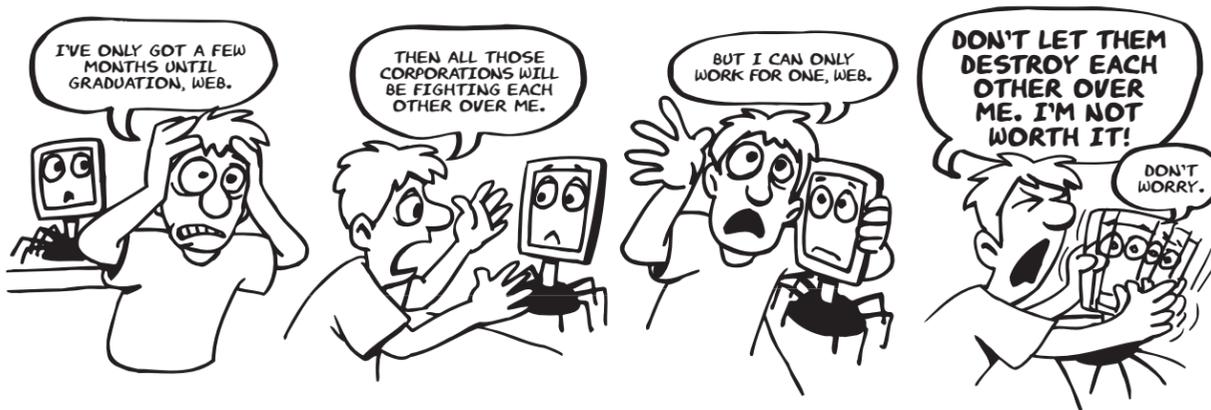
Most school systems, including higher education, receive hundreds of applications for available jobs. Young, inexperienced candidates often obtain jobs sooner because of lower salary demands.

A tough job challenge should never deter you from entering a chosen profession. You should, however, recognize the competitive situation in order to best prepare a set of superior credentials and aggressively hit the job market.

Not all areas in education deserve the competitive rating given the field in general. Many experts regularly research the outlook for elementary and secondary teachers by teaching field. Your employment prospects can be enhanced greatly if you put two or more teaching specialties together and agree to work in less-desirable geographical settings.

You should consult your alma mater's educational career service office for the most current outlook, because the national picture is not applicable to all geographical regions.

A tough job market should never deter you from your chosen endeavor. Jobs come to those who work smart at searching.





Positions in elementary and secondary teaching almost always require a *teaching certificate*. More opportunities are available in inner-city locations than in suburban schools.

A doctorate is rapidly becoming a requirement in higher education. With the glut of doctorates in many fields, even community colleges and small colleges can often demand a doctorate. Although a doctorate is not currently required in many administrative assignments, the trend leans toward that direction.

Jobs in Government

Government employs many millions of staff in federal agencies, state governments, counties, cities, and municipalities. Governments hire people from nearly every occupational group. The federal government gets the most press coverage yet it employs only 20 percent of all government employees. State governments employ 25 percent and local governments about half.

As a greater percentage of federal money returns to local governments, employment at state and local levels is increasing while it is stabilizing or downsizing at the federal level.

Federal Jobs. Federal employment practices may be characterized as: high competition for jobs; low attrition of current employees; internal attention to upward mobility programs; and budget reductions. This may change as baby boomers near retirement.

This means that it is necessary to start job campaigns early and to be well informed about available positions and procedures for application if you are interested in federal government employment.

Most new college hires enter under as professional, scientific, administrative, or support personnel. About 15 percent of all federal white-collar workers work in Washington, DC. Only 2 percent work overseas.

Your chances of employment depend upon how well you compare with others in experience and education, the geographical location in which you will consider employment, and the minimum grade (salary level) you will accept. You may effectively eliminate yourself from consideration by restricting location and/or grade on the application form.

Obtaining a job with the federal government requires a thorough knowledge of the process and an early start in the search process.

Representative Federal Employment Positions

The government offers many positions found in the private sector and can often offer comparable pay with greater job security.

Accountant	Food and Drug Inspector	Oceanographer
Administrative Trainee	Forester	Park Ranger
Aerospace Technologist	Geodesist	Patent Examiner
Air Traffic Controller	Geographer	Personnel Specialist
Alcohol Tax Inspector	Geophysicist	Pest Controller
Animal Husbandman	Historian	Pharmacist
Architect	Hospital Administrator	Physicist
Archivist	Housing Intern	Plant Scientist
Astronomer	Hydrologist	Prison Administrator
Attorney	Illustrator	Psychologist
Bacteriologist	Intelligence Analyst	Public Information
Biologist	Internal Revenue Agent	Range Conservationist
Budget Analyst	Investigator	Realty Assistant
Cartographer	Landscape Architect	Refuge Manager
Chemist	Librarian	Revenue Officer
Claims Examiner	Loan Examiner	Social Insurance
Community Planner	Management Analyst	Social Worker
Computer Programmer	Management Intern	Sociologist
Contract Negotiator	Manpower Specialist	Soil Conservationist
Customs Inspector	Manual Arts Therapist	Special Agent
Customs Specialist	Marketing Specialist	Speech Pathologist
Customs Technical Aide	Mathematician	Statistical Assistant
Dietitian	Medical Record Librarian	supply specialist
Economist	Metallurgist	Tax Technician
Education Officer	Meteorologist	Teacher
Engineer	Microbiologist	Therapist
Entomologist	Museum Curator	Urban Planner
Equipment Specialist	Nurse	Veterinarian
Estate Tax Examiner	Occupational Therapist	Writer and Editor
Financial Examiner		

Which government positions are of possible interest to you?

Figure 3.7

You can obtain federal job information from your local U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Some agencies require a standardized test for inexperienced applicants with nontechnical degrees. These tests measure several ability areas (verbal, mathematical, judgmental, aptitude, etc.). You are referred on the basis of your scores to agencies listing vacancies, which utilize the various ability categories.

Appointments are usually made at the GS-5 and GS-7 levels, mostly at the lower level. Competition is intense.

You must take statements about deadlines very seriously. Referral of candidates is done according to specific rules.



Occupations requiring technical degrees or specialized backgrounds are filled by individual agencies, and several do not require an exam. Some positions require written tests more related to the jobs. You often are evaluated on the basis of education, experience, and ability to reflect your credentials clearly and accurately on the job application, which may be electronic.

You often must complete several applications. Complete these clearly and with great care and detail, because answers are weighted in terms of the requirements for particular positions. Give much detail about extracurricular activities, volunteer work, part-time experiences, and all full-time work. Successful candidates normally are geographically flexible. Patience is an important virtue. Start early.

Federal salary scales change annually. The rates are set to be competitive with comparable jobs in private industry. Rates are available on websites.

The federal government operates a system of federal job information centers located in most major cities. These centers provide current information about employment opportunities, open announcements, testing, and application centers.

Certain federal agencies manage separate hiring systems. These agencies and quasi-agencies must be contacted directly. Figure 3.8 gives a partial listing of some of the more active hiring groups.

State Government Jobs. The size and scope of government operations vary considerably from state to state. States also differ in the processes by which they hire new employees.

Most states have personnel offices, but the functions are not always the same. Some certify and recommend candidates to agencies, some directly

Employment at the local government level may be political as well as based on a merit system.

Independent Government Hiring Organizations

Federal Reserve System
 Central Intelligence Agency
 Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Foreign Service of the U.S.
 International Monetary Fund
 Judicial Branch of Government
 Legislative Branch of Government
 National Science Foundation
 National Security Agency
 Organization of American States
 Tennessee Valley Authority
 United National Secretariat
 U.S. Mission to the U.N.
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 U.S. Postal Service
 World Bank and IFC

Figure 3.8



Typical State Employment Functions

Conservation
 Criminal Justice
 Education Programs
 Elections
 Employment Services
 Financial Operations
 Health Services
 Highway Operations
 Law Enforcement
 Legislative Liaison
 Mental Health Services
 Parks and Recreation
 Prison Operations
 Social Welfare
 Transportation Systems
 Unemployment Services

Figure 3.9

hire for agencies, and some provide a central application and candidate repository service.

There is no consistency among the states in the utilization of testing, position classification systems, publicizing of open positions, use of patronage, and recruitment. Each state personnel office must be contacted directly.

States obviously hire people for roles similar to those in the federal government, but the applicant has a maze of fifty states to contact in order to learn the rules of the games. Some states have residency requirements.

Local Government Jobs. Local governments (counties, cities, towns) offer employment opportunities in a variety of fields. Total employment in local governments dwarfs federal and state employment numbers combined. Although many governments have excellent merit or civil service systems, many have nothing equivalent and yet hire hundreds of people. It is common for individual agencies to do their own hiring, even at the managerial and professional levels. Patronage and residency requirements often constitute barriers for some applicants.

Locating vacancies can be an expensive and complex process. The best approach is to visit each local jurisdiction and talk with staff responsible for hiring in each agency. The website has improved the search process slightly.

Figure 3.10 identifies the services normally provided by local governments. A review of the services provided might give you an idea of how you could fit into the local government employment picture.

Not-for-Profit Organizations

A few organizations that employ college graduates do not lend themselves to the government or private organization classification. Most of these are not-for-profit corporations.

Not-for-profit hiring organizations include hospitals, museums, symphony orchestras, art galleries, professional associations, labor organizations, consumer unions, industry trade groups, lobby and special interest groups, foundations, trusts, convention centers, auxiliary enterprises of educational institutions, etc.

The number of job possibilities with these organizations is not large, but these organizations do need qualified people. They need accountants, public relations specialists, marketers, engineers, negotiators, managers, etc. Unfortunately, there is no organized employment market for them, so each

Typical Local Government Services

Tax Assessment
 Tax Collection
 Elections
 Courts
 Law Enforcement
 Urban Planning
 Sanitation
 Health
 Social Work
 Welfare
 Roads and Streets
 Parks and Recreation
 Fire Protection
 Public Records
 Financial Services

Figure 3.10

unit must be contacted independently. Professional associations play an important role in the employment process. Review a number of relevant websites for specific information.

Nonprofit Websites. There are several websites that either specialize or strongly support dissemination of information on full-time and internship jobs in the not-for-profit job sector. Many of these have an altruistic philosophy. Some even list many volunteer types of employment possibilities.

Experience in the nonprofit job sector can be very valuable to you and your career planning as well as helpful to society. You might want to explore websites early in your college education to see if an internship, summer job, or volunteer assignment might make sense for you.

All types of work experiences and additional information add to your exploring process. Later, you will discover the experience to be very helpful in your job search process. Commitments to your beliefs provide a strong signal to potential employers

that you have the type of attitude, work ethic, and characteristics that are important for many types of career options.

Here is a list of selected websites that you might wish to explore.

International Service Agencies

www.charity.org

The International Service Agencies mission is “to help millions of people overseas and in the U.S. who suffer from hunger, poverty, and disease or from the ravages of war, oppression and natural disasters.” Many diverse member agencies contribute information and volunteering possibilities.

Cool Works.com

www.coolworks.com

The best site for finding temporary jobs with an outdoor twist. Find jobs at resorts, at national parks, on ranches, on cruises, and at campus. For the college graduate not inclined to join corporate America this is an excellent resource linking them to unconventional and alternative career fields.

Health Care Job Store

www.healthcarejobstore.com

Over 325 health-related sites are available through this “magna” network. The site emphasizes career opportunities with hospitals, health-care corporations, long-term care facilities and other health-care organizations. Opportunities available in the fields of nursing, physicians, marketing, financial, administrative positions, and nearly every other medical specialty. Access the fully searchable job database or sign up for their Job



Search Agent and receive jobs via e-mail that match your search requirements. Also post your resume for free and let employers find you. Many options are with nonprofit organizations.

www.nonprofitcareer.com

This website is dedicated to the nonprofit sector of today's business and economic world. It is a complete, one-stop resource center for nonprofit organizations, individuals seeking job opportunities in a nonprofit organization, and people who wish to volunteer.

Internet Nonprofit Center

www.nonprofits.org

What you gain from visiting the Internet Nonprofit Center is immediate access to almost every nonprofit organization in the United States and many abroad. If you have a target organization in mind, chances are high that you can find the organization via this site. One nice feature is the mapping utility, called the Nonprofit Locator, which can find over a million tax-exempt organizations for you. After you find an organization, you see all the pertinent information, such as income, assets, and contact name.

Opportunity NOCs

www.opportunityNOCs.org

This site provides a leading source of nonprofit jobs and career opportunities. If you're a job seeker looking for a challenging new position in the nonprofit world, this site connects you with a full range of employment and human-resources-related information and services. To find the perfect job, do a quick search, or use the advanced search to see jobs listings by city, state, or organization or position type.

Peace Corps

www.peacecorps.gov

Anything you would ever want to know about "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love." From general agency information to online application, it's all here.

Philanthropy Journal

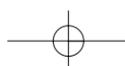
www.philanthropyjournal.org

Philanthropy Journal, a publication of the A. J. Fletcher Foundation in Raleigh, N.C., is an online newspaper that reports on philanthropy and nonprofits. Publishing philanthropy and nonprofit news every weekday on and every Monday in an e-mail bulletin. Posts nonprofit classified jobs from entry level to the experienced.

Idealist

www.idealists.org

In this site, a project of Action Without Borders, you will find: 22,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 150 countries, which you can search or browse by name, location, or mission; thousands of volunteer opportunities in your community and around the world, and a list of organizations that can help you volunteer abroad; and the best Nonprofit Career Center on the Web, with hundreds of job and internship listings. In addition, you can use Idealist to define what information you'd like to receive by e-mail from among the job openings, volunteer opportunities, internships, events, and resources posted here by organizations all over the world.



The private employment sector, largely business, offers the greatest number of jobs.

Private Enterprise

About 85 percent of all employment in the United States is outside the realm of government. Most employment growth in our society during the next decade is likely to come in the private sector.

Even if you think employment in the private sector is not for you, you must at least investigate its opportunities.

Work activities are similar in many various employment settings, but the methods you use to seek employment in different settings are very different. That does not imply that it is easier or more difficult to obtain a job in a given sector; rather, it means that the approach you utilize must be designed for the option you select.

Some jobs in the private sector have no counterparts in the public and quasi-public sectors and vice versa. In the vast majority of situations, however, the duties have common counterparts. You must understand the setting (and what it implies) before you can completely understand the jobs.

The work structures, organizations, and work concepts have similarities but are also very different in government, education, and private enterprise work settings. Concepts such as security, job performance, earnings, productivity, values, and interpersonal relationships have different meanings in the different work environments.

Private enterprise employment is such a strong probability for most people that it needs to be understood by everyone, regardless of whether they are seeking employment in that sector or not. Your life, regardless of the work setting you choose, is affected by people working in the private sector.

Organizational concepts such as industry groupings, organizational structure, functional careers, and responsibility levels should be thoroughly understood. The likelihood of your working in the private sector is great.

Therefore, the next several chapters are devoted to exploring career options in the private enterprise sector of our U.S. economy. Even if you know exactly what you want to do today, putting your plans into perspective with other career options will enhance your long-term career planning. It is unlikely that you will remain with

one employer or one career path the rest of your life. Make this assessment an important phase of your career planning strategy.

