

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The initial step in beginning a job search and developing the required marketing plan is to conduct a thorough self-assessment. This step is critical for all individuals, even if they think they already know what type of position/situation they want next. The assessment process offers a number of important benefits:

- Helps you set **realistic** goals and allows you to pursue them with confidence.
- Prepares you for various aspects of the search (resumes, interviews).
- Gives you the information required to make quality decisions, and reduces the chances of having to make these decisions under unreasonable time pressure.
- Teaches you things about yourself that will benefit you in later life.

It is somewhat frustrating, but very wise, to postpone active searching until you have completed the self-assessment.

The assessment and analysis forms that follow all have one objective: **To make you aware of facts about yourself and your current situation that will increase the efficiency and practicality of the search you are about to begin.** It is critical, therefore, that you give this section more attention than your initial reaction to its title may lead you to believe is necessary.

Yes, some of the exercises are tedious; yes, you may already know what you want in your next position; and yes, you may already be aware of your strengths and weaknesses. However, can you afford to risk not gathering the information that will eventually be the basis for all the actions you will be taking over the next several months?

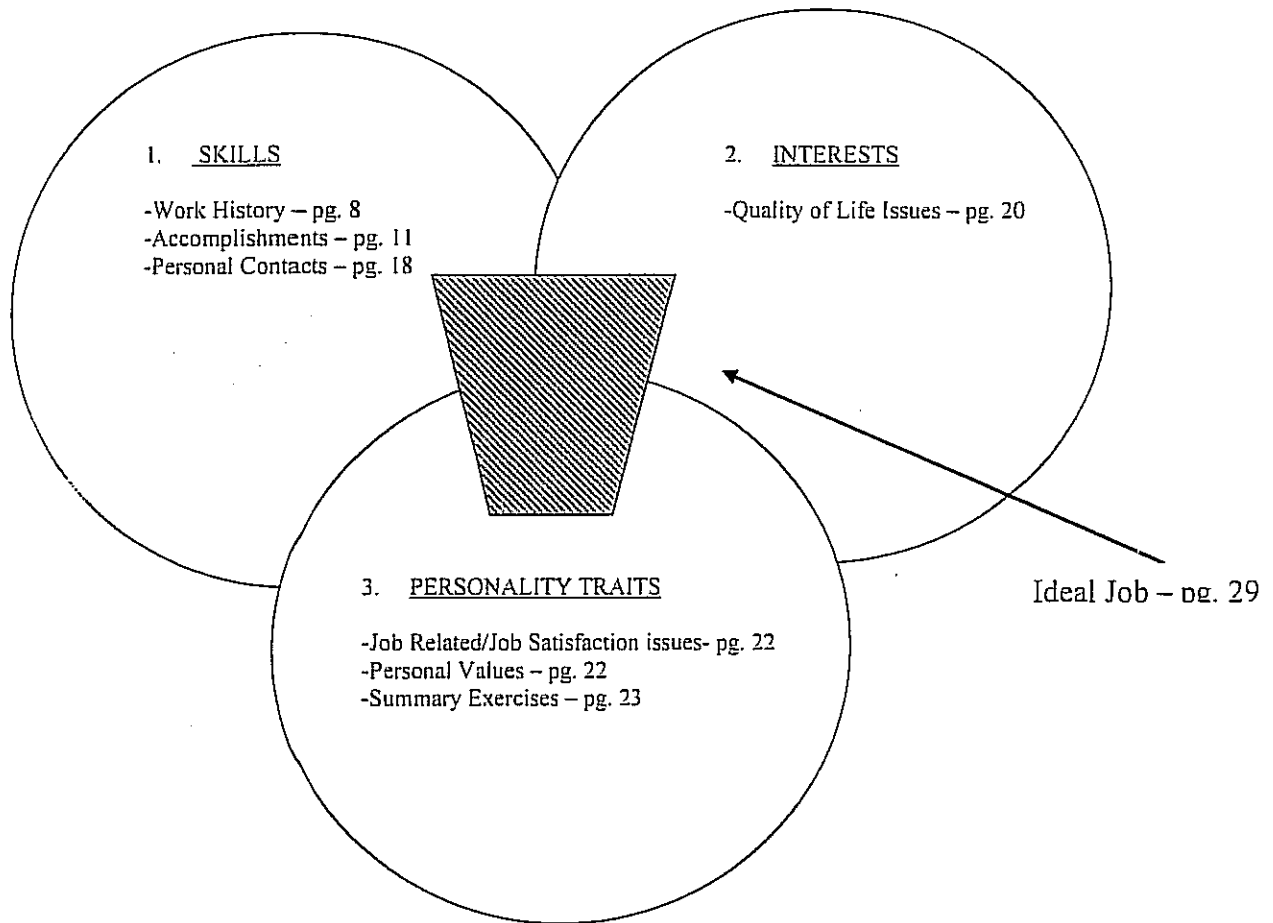
Remember, we are directing our self-assessment efforts at roughly defining the ideal position for you. This position should contain a blend of your **skills, interests and personality traits**:

- The skills which are required for satisfactory performance.
- The interests which will increase your motivation and satisfaction.
- And finally, to be comfortable, you must possess the personality traits that the job, organization, or situation will require.

This brief period of activity is actually the foundation of your search; and, just like a skyscraper, a search without a solid foundation is doomed. It's just a matter of time!

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- How long can I afford to be in a job search?
- What is the minimum salary I can make?

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

These items generally refer to family needs and your job-related needs and desires. It's critical to discuss and evaluate the importance of these items prior to establishing a goal or beginning a job search.

Discuss the items below with your family. Be sure to carefully discuss the pros and cons for each item. Finally, prioritize the items in order of importance, reaching consensus when necessary. Also, be sure to discuss the implications of your work needs with the family. Since these items affect family members, too, it's wise to give your family an opportunity to comment.

	YOU	FAMILY	CONSENSUS
• Geographic location (unwillingness to relocate may extend search time dramatically; consider also climate, standard of living, etc.)	_____	_____	_____
• Access to specific types of recreation	_____	_____	_____
• Neighbors/friends (culture of Los Angeles is quite different than the culture of Bangor, ME)	_____	_____	_____
• Other income—ability of spouse/children to find income in new area	_____	_____	_____

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES (cont.)

	YOU	FAMILY	CONSENSUS
• Special requirements (access to special facilities, e.g., medical, education, etc.)	_____	_____	_____
• Job travel requirements	_____	_____	_____
• Job time requirements	_____	_____	_____
• Job security	_____	_____	_____
• Income level and potential	_____	_____	_____
• Relocation potential (future)	_____	_____	_____
• Growth potential	_____	_____	_____
• Public vs. private company	_____	_____	_____
• Large vs. small company	_____	_____	_____
• Other _____ (specify)	_____	_____	_____

PERSONAL VALUES

Our values strongly affect our job satisfaction level and determine how comfortable we are going to be in any environment. It would be wise, therefore, to review these values and be aware of their importance before committing to enter any new "corporate culture."

Assign a weighting from 1 (high importance) through 3 (low importance) to each of the values listed below. During job interviews later, it will be important to learn how the company's values match your values.

- Achievement--attaining a desired goal; working conscientiously to achieve a desired result _____
- Analysis/problem solving--identifying cause/effect relationships and searching for solutions _____
- Associates--colleagues and co-workers _____
- Communication skills--effective presentation of information verbally and in writing, to both groups and individuals _____
- Creativity--opportunity to originate and contribute new concepts, methods, ideas, etc. _____
- Independence--amount of freedom, tolerance for managing yourself _____
- Intellectual stimulation--continual challenge to use intellect and power of reason _____
- Interpersonal skills--effectively dealing with people at all levels, both inside and outside the organization _____
- Leadership style--type, structure, direction _____
- Managing--directing work efforts and activities of others _____
- Prestige--high standing in the estimation of others _____
- Security--assurance of expectations, freedom from doubt _____
- Stress tolerance--ability to work in a fast-paced environment with long hours, frequent deadlines, multiple priorities _____
- Surroundings--types of conditions, objects in work environment _____
- Team orientation--desire to work as a member of a team _____

1 = High Importance 2 = Medium Importance 3 = Low Importance

Self-Assessment - Financial

Practically speaking, one of the first assessments you must make is financial. The primary reason for looking at your monetary requirements first is that this is the most obvious place for search limitations to surface. Determining how long you can afford to continue your search is mandatory at this point.

Secondly, but not any less important, this exercise will create an awareness of the multitude of financial decisions you will have to face in the immediate future. Since most of these decisions have long-term implications, it is to your advantage to recognize them early. This awareness will hopefully prevent you from having to make quick decisions that are heavily influenced by rapidly approaching time deadlines.

Finally, this exercise will force you to think realistically about determining the target income required in your next position. Although many people do, receiving a huge increase in salary is not always the case. A thorough understanding of your financial situation is required before you accept any job offers.

Sample budgeting and planning material is on the following pages (Consumer Credit Counseling Services).