

Finding Your “Career Ingredients”

Small Group Exploration for Career Vision



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Introduction

“If you don’t know where you’re going, chances are you won’t get there.”

No one sets out on a trip without a destination in mind—whether it’s Paris or the grocery store down the street. But, inexplicably, many people move forward in their careers without a clear vision of where they want to be in five years, ten years, or longer.

This exercise is about **career vision**. Career vision means being able to imagine (with as much detail and focus as possible) the work roles, organizational culture, and broader work/life balance where you will be deeply engaged in your work and in life more broadly. Career vision doesn’t come automatically. We have to work for it. Some aspects of your vision may change over time as your life circumstances change. But, there *are* stable patterns to recognize. In fact, the most important elements of a person’s career vision will not change, even over many years.

Most importantly, career vision means being in touch with what the phrase “meaningful work” means for us. Meaningful work fundamentally comes from expressing our deep, enduring life interests in our daily work experience. But, developing a career vision also entails a realistic appraisal of our skills and motivations. Motivations come from answering the question, “What rewards are most important to me?” Our motivations are likely to change over the years, but they still play an important role in developing our career vision.

Meaning, skills, motivations—in this group exercise, you will work with the other participants to harness the power of the small group to explore, as deeply as possible, these elements of each participant’s career vision. You will use your results from the three CareerLeader® assessments (the Business Career Interest Inventory, Leadership Skills Profile, and Leadership Motivations Profile) to look at these three dimensions of career vision. You will need to have your CareerLeader results available for sharing with your team members.

The Exercise

You will work in groups of three and rotate through three roles: subject, leader and team member. Each participant will have a twenty-minute period or “round” of being the subject. This means that the other two team members will be analyzing and discussing your assessment results as you look on. You will not speak during the first fifteen minutes of the discussion, but rather *listen carefully* and *take notes*—whether you agree or not with what they are saying! During the last five minutes of your round, your team members will ask for your reflections on what you have heard. The leader’s job is to guide the discussion through the round, and keep an eye on the clock.

Roles will switch for each round until everyone has had a turn in each role. We suggest that you spend most of the time in each round with the first section of the exercise (**Meaning**), and use the other two sections (**Skills** and **Motivations**) to modify and extend your observations. Be sure to keep your notes for future reflection. Try not to immediately accept or reject the observations and analysis of your group members, but rather consider them with an open mind. Return to your notes after a few days to see if your reactions have changed.



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Meaning

Read the Interests section of the person's report. The eight Business Core Interests can point someone in the direction of the work that will be most meaningful for them. Most people have one, two or three Business Core Interests that are most important for them. They are indicated as "Personal Highs" in the report. In this exercise, the leader and team member will read the "Interests" section of the report and analyze the pattern addressing the following questions:

- ❓ What major work themes are suggested by this particular combination of interests?
- ❓ Where can you go, what can you do, that will let these interests be expressed?
- ❓ Based on your own experience and knowledge, what work roles would offer the best opportunity for consistent expression of the interests and themes suggested by this personal high pattern? (Be expansive, creative, and as inclusive as possible. You can refer to the Business Core Interest themes that are attached to this guide for ideas.)

TIP: Look at the overall pattern of interests. Each interest modifies the others. For example: If a subject is high on Enterprise Control *and* Creative Production, then "leading creative projects" would be a consequent theme in addition to "strategy and power" and "creativity" that each interest implies on its own.

TIP: Look at any Business Core Interests that are notably lower than the others (a "notably lower" interest is one that is at least five points lower than the person's *average* interest score for it to be considered low). How do these low scores change your thinking about where the person is likely to find meaningful work?

Now, read the CultureMatch™ section of the report. How does this impact your understanding of the themes from the Business Core Interests? What suggestions would you have for the subject when you put the interest themes and culture recommendations together? Do any specific industries, or even specific companies, come to mind that would be a good match for them?

Skills

Now look at the four Leadership Skills Factors (Interpersonal Effectiveness, Power and Influence, Analysis and Strategic Decision Making, and Bringing Management Structure) in the Skills section of the report. These scores are a measure of people's *confidence* in these four major skill areas.

- ❓ What do these measures of the subject's confidence tell you about how he or she sees his or her leadership effectiveness?
- ❓ Where does the subject see her greatest—and least—confidence? How does this affect the ideas that you generated in your discussion of the subject's Business Core Interests?

TIP: Research shows that lower confidence in skill areas can be dramatically improved. In its online resources (go to "Skills" then to "Build My Skills"), CareerLeader gives specific suggestions on building strength in each of the 41 skills measured by the Leadership Skills Profile.

Motivations

Now read the Motivators section of the report.

- ❓ What are the subject's top four motivators *at this particular time*? How does thinking about these motivators change or add to your thinking about work roles, organizational cultures, and specific next jobs that might be meaningful for them?

TIP: Motivational hierarchies are subject to change as life circumstances change. Be sure to ask in the last five minutes of the subject's time whether they think these motivations will remain stable over the next several years, and if their current rank ordering still makes sense to them.

Summary: “Ingredients”

Now, list the five to ten “ingredients” that you believe are *essential* for this person to be satisfied and successful in their career (and their future job searches). Some examples of these ingredients include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Must have day-to-day management role (or be on a path that clearly leads to it)
- ▶ Must have daily interaction with the customer
- ▶ Must have problems to solve that require quantitative analytical skills
- ▶ Must see clear path to an eventual leadership role
- ▶ Must have informal, high information-exchange culture
- ▶ Needs to be part of early-phase brainstorming
- ▶ Clear pathway to high compensation must be clear
- ▶ Needs involvement with big picture strategy issues
- ▶ Opportunity to mentor and develop others is essential
- ▶ Must be a company whose product or service has high social value
- ▶ Must be an industry-leading, high prestige organization
- ▶ Must have lots of travel
- ▶ Must have limitations on travel and other lifestyle constraints

Career Themes for the Eight Business Core Interests

Application of Technology

Expert
Innovation
Problem solving
Planning
Systems
Processes
Engineering
Science
Gadgets
Cutting-edge Technology

Theory Development and Research

Learning
Problem solving
Intellectual challenge
Teaching
Thought leader
Research
Knowledge
Ideas
Debate
Imagination
Vision
Theory

Coaching and Mentoring

Relationships
Coaching
Mentoring
Altruism
Social enterprise
Values
Making a difference
Teaching
Counseling
Psychology
People
Personal development

Enterprise Control

Strategy
Vision
Leadership
Control
Ownership
Power
Decision maker
Player
Principal

Quantitative Analysis

Finance
Control
Math
Analysis
Forecasting
Financial Gain
Expert
Precision

Creative Production

Brainstorming
Blank page
New projects
New products
Excitement
Fast paced
Free-thinking
Early stage
Ideas
Energy
Ambiguity

Managing People and Teams

Teams
Leader
Manager
Mentor
Goals
Motivation
People
Activity

Influencing Others

Ideas
Knowledge
Persuasion
Business Development
Sales
Communication
Leadership
Power of Language
Influence
Presentation
Deals

About Us

Since 1994, CareerLeader has been helping business students and professionals find career success and satisfaction. Based on over 50 collective years of scientific research and career development experience, CareerLeader serves undergraduate and graduate academic institutions, as well as corporations, globally.

CareerLeader's stronghold in the marketplace is a testament to its adaptability from person to person, counselor to counselor, school to school, and company to company. It can be used by an individual independently, as well as within a structured counseling appointment. It can be used to help guide someone's career path either at the start—or midstream in a career. It can also be used to help retain top talent by sculpting a position to ultimately benefit both the employee and the company.

For more information, visit: www.careerleader.com.



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