MSU Career Development Center

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND GOAL-SETTING

Self-assessment and Goal-setting

Self-assessment and goal-setting are very important to the job search. They keep you focused, but most importantly, help you to be ready to grab an opportunity when it arises.

Once you recognize your personal qualities, you can then begin to develop your short-term and long-term goals.

By using the following self-assessment exercises, you can better identify your skills, strengths, and interests.

SKILLS

"While employers rate communication skills as one of their most desired characteristics, they also report that they are the skills that are most lacking in today's job candidates," says Marilyn Mackes, NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) executive director. "There is such a heavy emphasis on effective communication in the workplace that college students who master these skills can set themselves apart from the pack when searching for employment."

Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers surveys its employer members about their hiring plans and other employment-related issues. According to the current annual survey conducted by NACE, Job Choices 2007, when employers were asked what qualities they want most from the college students they consider as candidates for employment, the focus was on specific skills. Communication skills, honesty and integrity, and teamwork skills are at the top of the list, according to respondents. See below for the full list.

<u>Top Qualities/Skills Employers Seek</u>

1. Communication skills (verbal & written)
2. Honesty/integrity
3. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
4. Strong work ethic
5. Analytical skills
6. Flexibility/adaptability
7. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
8. Motivation/initiative
9. Computer skills
10. Detail oriented
11. Organizational skills
12. Leadership skills
13. Self-confidence

What if you do not have many of these skills, or you feel your skills could be stronger? You can gain these skills by getting involved in classes and activities on campus. Employers who responded to the NACE survey suggest that you:

- Improve your verbal and written communication skills by enrolling in writing and public speaking courses.
- Develop your interpersonal and teamwork skills by becoming active in campus events and student organizations.
- Get some work experience while you're in school.
- Learn what the workplace is really like.

Other ways you can learn new skills and/or improve your existing skill set are:
- Complete an internship in your field of study. Why not learn and use the skills now that you will need later?
- Work a part-time or summer job. Many of the skills listed above can be acquired in any number of work environments.
- Volunteer in the community. Just because the work is unpaid does not mean you aren't learning!

Source: Job Choices 2007, National Association of Colleges and Employers. MSU is a current NACE member.

What skills do you have? Check the skills you feel you currently have in 'column 1' and the skills you enjoy in 'column 2'. Do you see any overlap between the two columns? If yes, think of some examples and consider incorporating these skills into your resume.

	#1		#2	
Management Skills:	___	Organizing	___	Examples: _____
	___	Directing	___	_____
	___	Scheduling	___	_____
	___	Motivating	___	_____
	___	Decision-making	___	_____
Communication Skills:	___	Writing	___	Examples: _____
	___	Listening	___	_____
	___	Presenting	___	_____
	___	Conducting	___	_____
	___	Informing	___	_____
	___	Training	___	_____
Research Skills:	___	Problem-solving	___	Examples: _____
	___	Development	___	_____
	___	Collecting Data	___	_____
	___	Hypothesis	___	_____
Creative Skills:	___	Developing	___	Examples: _____
	___	Designing	___	_____
	___	Improvising	___	_____
Service Skills:	___	Helping	___	Examples: _____
	___	Guiding	___	_____
	___	Inspiring	___	_____
	___	Leading	___	_____
Selling Skills:	___	Persuading	___	Examples: _____
	___	Informing	___	_____
	___	Promoting	___	_____
Financial Skills:	___	Calculating	___	Examples: _____
	___	Projecting	___	_____
	___	Budgeting	___	_____
	___	Numerical	___	_____
Technical Skills:	___	Designing	___	Examples: _____
	___	Drafting	___	_____
	___	Building	___	_____
Clerical Skills:	___	Recording	___	Examples: _____
	___	Bookkeeping	___	_____
	___	Administrating	___	_____
Manual Skills:	___	Operations	___	Examples: _____
	___	Mechanical	___	_____
	___	Constructing	___	_____
	___	Repair	___	_____

Interests/Activities

Respond to the following exercise with your first thoughts. Be sure to include everything you can think of that fit the topics below, no matter how unimportant it may seem.

1. List all classes and training that you liked and felt successful in. _____

    _____

    _____

2. List any activities or accomplishments, including volunteer, professional or extracurricular, that you particularly enjoyed and felt successful in. _____

    _____

    _____

3. Write down any accomplishments that others have acknowledged/praised you for.

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. Read all the statements below. Which ones really fit your interests? Mark the top five that you would like to use in your job.

    _____ 1. Serving or caring for other people
    _____ 2. Managing other people.
    _____ 3. Handling or managing money.
    _____ 4. Selling things or services.
    _____ 5. Using physical strength.
    _____ 6. Meeting other people.
    _____ 7. Using writing skills.
    _____ 8. Using mathematical skills.
    _____ 9. Working with children.
    _____ 10. Travel or frequent moving.
    _____ 11. Working out-of-doors.
    _____ 12. Working indoors.
    _____ 13. Making plans and organizing others.
    _____ 14. Working with the sick and disabled.
    _____ 15. Working with the elderly.
    _____ 16. Work that requires patience and accuracy.
    _____ 17. Talking, speaking to, and convincing others.

    _____ 18. Working alone.
    _____ 19. Working with machines.
    _____ 20. Working on a time schedule.
    _____ 21. Working with animals.
    _____ 22. Taking or receiving orders from others.
    _____ 23. Repairing or fixing things.
    _____ 24. Following directions.
    _____ 25. Developing new ideas or concepts.
    _____ 26. Entertaining or being in front of others.
    _____ 27. Making quick decisions and being own boss.
    _____ 28. Having adventures or challenges.
    _____ 29. Working with artistic forms and designs.
    _____ 30. Work in a high-risk job with high demands and rewards.
    _____ 31. Having more structure and little pressure.
    _____ 32. Working with lots of variety and change.

Review the interests that you circled. What do they have in common? _____

_____

Using the previous exercises, write down your top three skills and your top three interests.

Skills: 1. _____

              2. _____

              3. _____

Interests   1. _____

              2. _____

              3. _____

What would your 'ideal job' look like based on these characteristics? Be creative:

_____

_____

_____

Your 'ideal job' may be a long-term goal. What job options would fit your education and experience at this point (short-term goal) and also relate to your long-term goal?

_____

_____

_____

Need help? Visit the CDC or check out our web site www.mnsu.edu/cdc for more information on the following resources:

- Career counseling/interest assessment
- **mavjobs.com**
- Career resource library
- Career exploration
- Career planning & job search advising
- Special events & job fairs
- Job and internship links