

Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment is the process of determining where you've been, where you are, and where you are going by examining your current needs, your personal strengths and your personal weaknesses. Once you have identified these factors you can begin to build a career roadmap.

Personal Strengths and Weaknesses

Let's start with your personal strengths and weaknesses. Many hiring decisions are ultimately based on a perception of an individual's personal strengths. More accurately, they are based on how closely an individual matches the "personality" of the company and the image of the ideal candidate. Listed below are several mostly favorable personal characteristics and traits. The key is to select those that translate to success on the job. For example, to describe oneself as loyal, dependable and a perfectionist is all well and good, but these are qualities that would be more appropriate for a secretarial position than, let us say, a sales position. The candidate for the sales position probably would do better with: aggressive, ambitious, and competitive. Which of the following most accurately reflects your personal characteristics?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight forward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determined | <input type="checkbox"/> Compatible | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventive | <input type="checkbox"/> Courteous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intuitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructive | <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Objective | <input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionist | <input type="checkbox"/> Observant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant | <input type="checkbox"/> Genuine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logical | <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shrewd | <input type="checkbox"/> Diligent | <input type="checkbox"/> Methodical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Perceptive | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astute | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable | <input type="checkbox"/> Exacting |

<input type="checkbox"/> Proficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Tactful	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent
<input type="checkbox"/> Talented	<input type="checkbox"/> Discerning	<input type="checkbox"/> Productive
<input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful	<input type="checkbox"/> Demanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair
<input type="checkbox"/> Honest	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable	<input type="checkbox"/> Conscientious
<input type="checkbox"/> Daring	<input type="checkbox"/> Adept	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad minded
<input type="checkbox"/> Dependable	<input type="checkbox"/> Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic

Special Skills and Experience

What special knowledge or job experiences do you possess? Start to think about your skills and knowledge and how you plan to communicate these experiences in an interview setting. Look through this list and identify the areas that match your background and experience.

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality Control/Assurance
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/> Research and Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety/Housekeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Systems Analysis
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Processing	<input type="checkbox"/> Taxes
<input type="checkbox"/> Distribution	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Law
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance
<input type="checkbox"/> Government Contracts	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Sales
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphics Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Merchandising
<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Planning

<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging
<input type="checkbox"/> Management Information Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Sales	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Merchandising	<input type="checkbox"/> Product Process and Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Production Planning and Scheduling
<input type="checkbox"/> Packaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotion
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Product Process and Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing
<input type="checkbox"/> Production Planning and Scheduling	<input type="checkbox"/> Warehousing
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Promotion	

Past Accomplishments

Here is a list of questions that will help you place your past accomplishments in perspective. Also, start to think about how you will respond to these questions if they are asked during an interview.

1. Why did you select the career opportunities or jobs you have held in the past?
2. Have you been doing what your felt you wanted to do or what you had to do?
3. Do you feel you were well suited for your most recent position?
4. What did you like about your most recent position?
5. What did you dislike about your most recent position?
6. What would your previous employer say is your best skills or personal qualities?
7. What would your previous employer say is your personal weaknesses?

Financial Assessment

Have you thought about your financial situation and how it may impact your job search? In order to plan your job search you need to determine how long you can afford to be out of work and

what belt-tightening measures you are willing to accept. Setting high career goals, job preferences and salary requirements may demand a longer job search timeframe.

In order to plan your budget realistically here are some factors you need to consider:

Perseverance - the amount of time and energy you are willing to devote to your job search can expedite the process. Being prepared, aggressive and assertive can greatly reduce the search time

Job Market Conditions - Entry level positions are often easier to find than higher level positions. A demand or surplus of skilled labor positions can also affect your chances of finding employment

Job and Salary Expectations - Entry level positions are easier to find than specialized or upper management positions. Pricing yourself high in a marketplace where there is heavy demand for only a few job openings in your field could also extend the search process.

Geographic Limits - Limiting your job search to your hometown may not be in your best interest depending on the supply and demand for your skills. Covering a wider area is often worth the effort. Keep in mind that many expenses involved in the job interviewing process are tax deductible. Save your receipts.

Given all these factors expect to spend several months searching for a job. If your financial position is not urgent you may have more time to explore the job market for the ideal position. In today's economy there is job for anybody who wants one. The key is to remain positive and avoid

placing yourself in a position of excessive financial pressure where you may be forced to compromise the pursuit of your career objective.

Career Priorities

Have you thought about what are the most important job factors? If you could do any kind of work what would your ideal job preferences be? Identify which of the following priorities are most importance to you:

Geographic location	Years of Service
Length of commute time	Education
Compensation Plan	Job Performance
Healthcare Benefits	Company Culture
Investment Savings Plan	Highly structured

Stock Ownership	Management Style
Company Car	Professionalism
Company Size	Working climate
Number of Employees	Type of Boss
Annual Sales	Supportive
Profitability Trend	Leader
Diverse or Specialized	Organized
Public or Privately Held	Objective
Production oriented	Task-oriented
Service oriented	People-oriented
Promotion Factors	Gives lots of freedom
Merit	Willing to accept learning mistakes
	Communicator

Identifying Your Strengths, Skills and Job Preferences

After reading through these self-assessment areas, you may have begun to raise some questions in your own mind about your career goals and objectives. Once you can begin to identify your personal strengths and job preferences you can begin building an approach for communicating and marketing your personal assets to prospective employers.