“Success is a journey, not a destination.”
KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

TOP TEN PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal characteristics that all employees in all job categories look for in all job candidates.

1. STRONG WORK ETHIC
2. HONESTY/INTEGRITY
3. COMMUNICATION SKILLS
4. TEAMWORK SKILLS
5. ENTHUSIASM
6. FLEXIBILITY
7. MOTIVATION/INITIATIVE
8. DEPENDABILITY/PUNCTUALITY
9. SELF-CONFIDENCE
10. GETTING ALONG WELL WITH OTHERS

No matter what career you choose, your future employer will want you to have the above characteristics as well as the capability of being:

A Life-Long Learner
A Logical Thinker
A Problem-Solver

MOST EMPLOYERS AGREE:

Some postsecondary education such as apprenticeship, technical school, community college or a college/university degree is necessary to prepare for today’s workplace.
WORK READINESS: YOUR WORK HABITS AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Directions: Evaluate your “in school” work habits and interpersonal skills. Read each statement below. Rank your skill level on a scale of 1 – 10.

(10 = Highest – 1 = Lowest)
Circle the number to show your ranking.

Be honest with yourself!

I give my homework thoughtful attention and effort.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I arrive at school and class on time.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I respect people of all races, ethnic groups, and religions.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I manage my study and homework time well.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I come to school prepared with the right supplies and books for all my classes.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I am able to work on my assignments without direct supervision.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I have a positive attitude about school.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I plan enough time to prepare for tests and meet assignment deadlines.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I work well with others to accomplish a group assignment.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I try to follow school rules and policies.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Scoring: Add up the numbers you have circled. Place that number in the Total Score line. Your Total Score number is your overall rating, which indicates your overall work habits and interpersonal skills.

Your Total Score ______________________

• 100 – 93 = Excellent
• 92 – 85 = Good
• 84 – 69 = Average
• 68 and Below = Poor

Go to the next page to identify improvement goals.
**IMPROVING YOUR WORK HABITS AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

If your rating was excellent or good, you are on your way to being a successful! If your score is average or poor, look at the areas in which you scored the lowest. These are the work habits or interpersonal skills that you need to improve.

**Directions:** Write your three habits or skills with the lowest scores in the left-hand column below. Then, in the right-hand column, write at least three ways you can improve that habit or skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Habits or Interpersonal Skills That Need Improvement</th>
<th>Methods to Improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

CAREER COLLEGES
Career colleges, also known as technical, vocational, or trade schools, offer a variety of training programs for specific occupations.

Academics
Programs vary by school. Associate degrees, apprenticeships, occupation certification, and technical diplomas are frequently available.

Money
Cost varies by school and program. Scholarships and aid are frequently available. Most students save money on room and board by commuting.

Campus Life
Most career colleges do not offer student housing, requiring students to commute. Students are focused on training for the careers.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Four in ten college-bound high school graduates attend community college right after high school. Community colleges, which are also referred to as junior colleges and two-year colleges, can be a great option to prepare for a career or a four-year school.

Academics
The highest degree offered is an associate degree. Transfer, certificate, career, technical, and continuing education programs are also available.

Money
Community colleges enable you to keep the costs down for your first two years of college. Tuition is usually less than $2,000 a year and averages approximately half the cost of attending a public four-year institution; it’s also usually less than 15 percent of the cost of a private four-year school.

Campus Life
The majority of students commute to the college campus which leaves fewer students on campus for dances and football games. Nonetheless, clubs and organizations often thrive.

INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
If you’re looking for a small to mid-sized environment, private colleges and universities are the way to go. Although tuition is high, extensive financial aid and scholarships are often available. Diversity will be abundant from the student body to course options to campus activities.
Academics
Private colleges and universities often specialize in certain programs and majors, adding depth and prestige to your field of study. Class sizes are usually smaller and there is frequently a low faculty-to-student ratio.

Money
Independent colleges and universities do not receive subsidies from a state’s taxpayers and therefore, rely on tuition, fees, and endowments for funding. Because they are privately funded, independent schools often charge much more for tuition than public universities, with typical costs between $25,000 and $30,000. Approximately 80 percent of students however, receive financial aid based on need and merit.

Campus Life
Although private schools are often smaller than state colleges and universities, they generally have active campuses. Students live in on-campus dorms and apartments or in off-campus apartments and houses.

STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
Students from around the world attend Illinois public colleges and universities. With their extensive variety in students and academics, state schools are a great place to be for students with many of classes to choose from and peers to meet.

Academics
State schools offer a wide range of majors and degree programs. The variety of academic programs is excellent for a student with unique interests. Large schools can also be good for students who aren’t sure what they want to study and need to explore different fields before they decide. Students who are self-motivated typically thrive at large schools because larger class sizes often leave students with lots of independence.

Money
With low tuition, state college and universities are a great value. Annual tuition and fees usually average under $15,000. In-state residents receive an even greater value with reduced tuition.

Campus Life
Like private schools, public schools have lively campuses. In fact, due to their typically larger sizes, they frequently offer even more activities. Most students live on campus at least for their first year as dorm life is full of excitement.
CAREER RELATED WEB SITES

(These sites are not under the control of the creators of this publication – please use your best discernment when viewing them.)

Alphabetic List of US Universities
List of US universities ordered alphabetically.
www.utexas.edu/world/univ/alpha

America’s Job Bank
This site provides career opportunities, career descriptions, job search tips, and information on career trends.
www.ajb.dni.us

Ball Foundation
The Ball Foundation developed the Ball Career System to help students gain insights into their aptitudes and to identify career areas that capitalize on their strengths. This site not only includes information on the Ball Career System, but also includes a parent brochure containing useful tips for talking to and having fun with your children to promote their career development.
www.ballfoundation.org

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Data from the Department of Labor about the economy, including projections and regional information. Helpful for high schoolers planning majors and careers.
www.bls.gov

Career Development Strategies
Career development strategies and career development tips are at the heart of this Wisconsin site. Follow five simple steps and end up with a flexible and personal career plan.
www.dwd.state.wi.us/careers

Career Interest Game
This is a game designed to help you match your interests and skills with similar careers. It can help you begin thinking about how your personality will fit in with specific work environments and careers. Links to career descriptions.
www.careers.missouri.edu/index.php

Career Planning Process
This site offers on-line career assessment that enables students to gain competencies, make decisions, set goals and take action. Work through the Career Planning Model that takes you through self-assessment, academic/career options, relevant/practical experience, and job search/graduate school preparation.
www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/career/students/planning-process.html

Career Search
The College Entrance Examination Board offers a career questionnaire that will be used to find careers that match your interests and abilities.
www.collegeboard.com

Careers in the Construction Industry
CISCO maintains a complete listing of all Building Trade Apprenticeship Programs in Northeastern Illinois. The listing includes all information needed to apply for and be accepted in an apprenticeship program.
www.cisco.org
Designing Your Future – Women at Work
This is a site for you to experience a day in the life of women who work in the areas of math, science and technology. Read biographies about and interviews with successful women in important roles around the country.
www.autodesk.com/dyf/dyfmain2.html

Guide to Career Choices
These guides provide job descriptions, job outlooks, wage information, and lists the education and training requirements for various occupational groupings within career interest areas.
www.lmi.ides.state.il.us/careerguides/career.htm

Illinois Education-to-Careers
Education-to-Careers is Illinois’ commitment to improve the quality and relevance of education for every student, and thereby raise the quality and reliability of tomorrow’s workforce. This site includes a presentation showing the relationship of Education-to-Careers to School Improvement Planning and the Quality Assurance Process.
www.isbe.state.il.us/etc

JobHuntersBible
Take an interactive test to learn more about yourself, create a resume, and find out about places, fields, companies, and salaries. Look at job openings and get answers to frequently asked questions about job-hunting.
www.jobhuntersbible.com

Mapping Your Future
Take a guided tour of planning a career. On this tour, you can find out about how to choose a career and how to reach your goal. You can also pick up useful tips on job hunting, resume writing, and job interviewing techniques.
www.mapping-your-future.org

Military Careers
Provides career information for all branches of the military.
www.militarycareers.com/occ/sitemap.htm

Occupational Outlook Handbook
An excellent starting place to search for employment information on specific occupations based on data supplied by the federal government on choosing a career and finding a job.
www.bls.gov/oco

Personality Type
What’s your personality type? Take the quiz on this site and find out. Over the past 40 years, many millions of people have been introduced to the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) through their jobs, churches, synagogues, counselors or books. Learn more about yourself and the people in your life.
www.personalitytype.com

Resume Tutor
Resume Tutor is an interactive workbook designed to make resume writing easier and hopefully a bit more fun.
www1.umn.edu/ohr/ecep/resume
OCCUPATIONAL, INDUSTRY & COMPANY INFORMATION

America’s Career InfoNet
www.acinet.org

Careers for women in science, engineering, and math
www.awsem.org

Company profiles
www.boovers.com

Dictionary of Occupational Titles (O*NET)
Book, soon to be online at
www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/

Examples of Job Banks
• America’s Job Bank
  www.ajb.dni.us
• Monster Board
  www.monster.com
• Career Mosaic
  www.careermosaic.com
• Career Path
  www.careerpath.com

Gateway sites for career information, other linked websites, and jobs specially targeted for a variety of groups (African-American, Asian-American, Persons with Disabilities, Gay and Lesbian, Hispanic-American, Native-American
www.quintcareers.com/diversity_resources.html
Also see www.blackcollegian.com
www.magellan.excite.com/careers/workplace/for_minorities

Riley Guide: Internet job resources
www.dbm.com/jobguide/

The Complete Guide for Occupational Exploration
Book by J. Michael Farr
Describes 12,000+ jobs and career alternatives.
www.jist.com

Wall Street Journal-Careers
www.careers.wsj.com
INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Do-It: Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology; especially for students who are intellectually capable of college work, but who may experience difficulty due to their disabilities
www.washington.edu/doit

Information and Case Studies on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
www.idealpractices.org

Job Accommodation Network and employability of persons with disabilities
www.janweb.icdi.wvu.edu

Learning Disabilities
www.idonline.org
(Search on “career planning” or “transition planning.”)

National Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
www.nichcy.org
(To Publications/Transition Summaries for preparing teens with disabilities for the school to work transition.)

JOBS, INTERNSHIPS, SHADOWING & OTHER WORK EXPERIENCES

Apprenticeship Information
Check with the local union for the appropriate trade. Search on keywords “union apprentice” on the Internet.

Business Professionals of America
(Students interested in business, office, and technology)
www.bpa.org

Employers who have internships and co-op education opportunities; career information, too.
www.careerplanit.com

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
(Family and consumer sciences students)
www.fcclainc.org
Ferguson’s Guide to Apprenticeship Programs
Reference Book

Future Farmers of America
(Agricultural and industrial mechanics, horticulture, and good science students)
www.ffa.org

Job Shadowing
www.jobshadow.org

Junior Achievement (Business and economic education and career preparation)
www.ja.org

One Stop Employment and Training Centers (Department of Employment Security)
Visit the Career Resource Center where you have free access to personal computers, the Internet, career books and videos.

Service Learning: Combining community service and learning
www.learnandserve.org

The Bridges Initiatives: Career exploration tools and resources for children from 8 – 18+ years old
www.usa.cx.bridges.com

Vocational Industrial Clubs of America
(technical, skilled and service occupations, including health occupations)
www.skillsusa.org

Volunteering
www.servenet.org
www.kidshealth.org
Search under “Volunteering”
THE DECISION–MAKING PROCESS

The decision-making process is an effective decision-making system. It is systematic and is usually more effective than most other approaches.

**STEP 1**
Identify the decision to be made. Your awareness may be triggered by a variety of things: the need to declare a college major, pressure from friends and family to make an occupational choice, or a general sense of dissatisfaction or unease. You then go through an internal process of trying to define clearly the nature of the decision you must make. This first step is a very important one.

**STEP 2**
Most decisions require collecting relevant information. The real trick in this step is to know what information is needed, the best sources of this information, and how to go about getting it. Some information must be sought from within yourself through a process of self-assessment; other information must be sought externally – from books, people, and a variety of other sources. This step therefore, involves both internal and external “work”.

**STEP 3**
Identify alternatives. Through the process of collecting information you will probably identify two or more possible paths of action or alternatives. You may also use your imagination and information to construct new alternatives. In this step of the decision-making process, you will list all possible and desirable alternatives.

**STEP 4**
Weigh evidence. In this step, you draw on your information and emotions to imagine what it would be like if you carried out each of the alternatives to the end. You must evaluate whether the problem or need identified in Step 1 would be helped or solved through the use of each alternative. In going through this difficult internal process, you begin to favor certain alternatives that appear to have higher potential for solving your problem or reaching your goal. Eventually you are able to place the available alternatives in priority order, based upon your own value system.

**STEP 5**
Choose among alternatives. Once you have weighed all the evidence, you are ready to select the alternative that seems to be best suited to you. You may even choose a combination of alternatives. Your choice in Step 5 may very likely be the same or similar to the alternative you placed at the top of your list at the end of Step 4.
**STEP 6**
Take action. You now take some positive action that begins to implement the alternative you chose in Step 5.

**STEP 7**
Review decision and consequences. In the last step you experience the results of your decision and evaluate whether or not it has “solved” or helped to solve the problem you identified in Step 1. If it has, you may stay with this decision for some period of time. If the decision has not resolved the identified problem, you may repeat certain steps of the process in order to make a new decision. You may, for example, gather more detailed or somewhat different information or discover additional alternatives on which to base your decision.

**THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS CHART**
DECISION-MAKING BARRIERS

There are five barriers to effective career decision making. Try to identify the ones that may prevent you from making a satisfying decision.

1. Lack of Self-Awareness – The first step of making an effective career decision is to know your preferred interests, values, skills and work environment in order to choose an occupation that allows you to use those preferences. The match of your job satisfiers with your future career is an essential part of your decision.

2. Decision Risk – Any important decision involves some element of risk. Do you have difficulty making any decision? This can result from a fear of change, failure or making the wrong choice. Asking yourself, “What is the worst thing that can happen?” and doing thorough research can help you gain more confidence in your decision-making abilities.

3. Authority Preference – Do you avoid making a decision by expecting someone else in a role of responsibility to make the decision for you, such as a parent, counselor, teacher or friend? Shifting the responsibility to someone else avoids the difficulty of making independent choices that may be difficult, but will not usually be based on your unique values and interests. Talking to others that you respect is very important and helpful, but in the end, you must make the choice about the occupation that will be right for you.

4. Leaving it to Chance – If you feel that you have no control over what happens to you in your life and that situations that happen are primarily out of your control, you may expect to just let fate take its course and “fall into a career” through your first job or college experience. This lack of self-direction can lead to careers that are based on circumstances that don’t match your interests or preferred skills. This barrier relates strongly to your level of self-confidence in your own abilities to achieve your goals. Realizing that you have the resources to achieve your goals will overcome this barrier.

5. Alternative Gain – You may avoid making a career decision due to the trade-offs that are involved in committing to a career choice. This can involve leaving home for the first time, wanting to stay in college indefinitely, or the expense that may be involved in preparing for certain occupations. Identifying what you may be concerned about giving up to make a career choice is a good first step in dealing with this barrier.

Discussing any of the above barriers that relate to you with your guidance counselor can be a good first step in overcoming them. This will help you to be sure that you are making an informed occupational choice based on good information instead of emotional concerns.
# GOAL SETTING

Take some time to identify your next career planning steps. Sharing your goals with someone and committing to a deadline can also be helpful.

1. **Long Range Goals** - Overall life style, job planning, family
2. **Medium Range Goals** - Next 5 years, education, training
3. **Short Range Goals** - One month to one year
4. **Mini Goals** - One week to one month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where I want to be (my GOAL)</th>
<th>Things that get in my way</th>
<th>Things that help me</th>
<th>Steps to get there</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A TENTATIVE CAREER PLAN: FACTORS TO CONSIDER

A. Your Goals and Lifestyle

Personal Goals:
________________________________ ________________________________
________________________________ ________________________________

Desired Lifestyle:
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What are the characteristics associated with your career choice that will help you in achieving the lifestyle you described above?

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________

Is your career choice consistent with you personal goals? Why?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

B. Your Interest and Capabilities.

Does your career choice require that you use skills or abilities related to your interests? Explain.
________________________________

Does your career choice require that you possess specific capabilities? Please list those skills, behaviors, attitudes or knowledge areas required by your career.
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

C. Job Characteristics to consider about your tentative career choice:

(Position Desired)

What special training or qualifications are required to enter your chosen field?
________________________________
What are the general duties or the nature of the work associated with your choice?
__________________________________________________________________

Where would you go to get the training required to enter your chosen occupation?
__________________________________________________________________

What about the training required to enter the career of your choice?
1. How long will it take? ______________________________________________
2. Are there places where you can get financial assistance? ______________
3. Where can you go for help? _________________________________________
4. Will you need to make an investment (office space, equipment, tools) to enter
your chosen career choice? __________________________________________
5. What will this equipment cost you if you purchased it today? _____________

Are there possibilities for advancement in your career area?_______________
What position would you advance to if you could? ______________________
What training or skills do you need to advance in your career area? _________
How many months or years of experience will you need in your career area in order
to advance to the position you desire? _________________________________

What is the working environment or conditions associated with your career
choice? (Circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indoors</th>
<th>Hazards</th>
<th>Shift Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are there fringe benefits associated with your career? _________________
Do employers who hire employees for your career area offer: (Circle)

Health Insurance     Yes / No   Sick Leave     Yes / No
Life Insurance       Yes / No   Vacation Time  Yes / No

What about wages associated with your career choice? (Circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hourly Wages</th>
<th>Yes / No</th>
<th>Salary Monthly</th>
<th>Yes / No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissions</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yearly Salary</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece or Quantity Production Wages</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Will you be docked if you miss work?   Yes / No

D. Will you be able to get a job in your career area of interest?

What is the expected demand for workers
employed in your career field? ________________________________
Where (geographic locations) do they employ large numbers of workers in your career area of interest? ________________________________________________

Does one part of our country need more workers with the skills related to your future career than others? If so, where? ________________________________________________

E. Other jobs which you could qualify for with the same skills:
List at least two other positions you would qualify for if you possessed all of the skills needed and related to your career choice:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________

List two jobs you could do while you wait for openings related to your career area:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________

F. List where and how you will seek information regarding openings in your field:
1. ______________________________ 3. ______________________________
2. ______________________________ 4. ______________________________

G. What can you do now to prepare?
Experience you can obtain:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________

Courses you can take in school:
1. ______________________________ 3. ______________________________
2. ______________________________ 4. ______________________________

H. List the resources you can use to locate information about your future career choice that you do not currently know:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________