

Towards Making a Career Choice

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Unpacking the Term Career

Watts, in his article *Reshaping Career Development for the 21st century*, defines career as an individual's work and life roles over their lifespan. This version of a career makes it clear that people can progress through their career horizontally as well as vertically.

Career choice entails making decision about what one wants to do with his/her life that is, in terms of occupation.

1.2 Sea of New Areas of Career Choices

There is no dearth of career choices. Gone are the days when we used to think of just few courses that every second or third student of our batch was dying for. Thanks to factors like internet, economic expansion, liberalization, technical and communication revolution. Some of these new career choices did not even exist few years back. Students are vying for new courses because of obvious benefits; less competition and a head start over potential competitors. New generation is also willing to follow its passion and not just tread down the beaten track. They say, if you truly love our job, money and success will automatically follow. So, it's always suggested to go for what your heart and mind desires instead of falling prey to the herd mentality.

Some of the new and unusual career choices		
Actuarial Science	Museology	Poultry farming
Agricultural Engineering	Nanotechnology	Psephology
Food Technology	Forensic Science	Radio Jockey
Art Restoration	Social work	Video Jockey
Physical Education	Speech Therapy	Detective Services
Plant pathology	Forestry	Disaster Management
Ceramic technology	Horticulture and floriculture	Rubber Technology
Counseling	Fisheries	Sign Language
Dairy Technology	Flour Milling	Silk
Earth Sciences	Hospital Management	Sports
Edible Oils Technology	Hydrography	Tea Management
Pharmacovigilance	Jewellery Design	Packaging
Plastic Industry	Jute Technology	Paint Application
Fire Engineering	Leather Technology	Technology
Footwear Technology	Tourist Guide	Technical writing
Foreign Trade	Traditional Medicines	Translating
Occupational Therapy	Market Research	Transcribing
Para medical	Meteorology	The list is endless -----

1.3 Key Steps to making career choice

Introduction

There are hundreds of career options out there. How do you make a career choice when you don't really know what you want to do? Does it seem like a BIG task. Yes, it can be for a many at many times!!

Let me highlight the key steps that students should considered when making a career choice.

1.3.1 Making career Assessment

Before making a career choice, one should learn about him/herself. Some people choose to have career counselors or other career development professionals administer some self assessment tests. There are also self assessment tests available in the internet. One can search using GOOGLE search Engine.

When you go for career assessment with the help of a career counselor, remember that assessments are primarily used to guide you towards the right career. You can take number of free career assessments available on internet. However, it is recommended to go through the process with the help of a qualified career counselor who will administer and interpret your scores of the assessments.

Overly relying on assessment test is not really a wise decision. Keep your expectations in check. Assessment tests often suggest you some new career avenues that you had never thought of. Try to have a career snapshot of different assessment tests. This will help you in finding some definite patterns.

1.3.2 Making a List of Occupations to Explore

- a) Look over the lists of occupations generated through your use of the self assessment tools.
- b) Come up with a much shorter list, consisting of between 5 – 10 occupations.
- c) Circle occupations that you qualify mostly depending on your strengths (for instance based on your Form Four Performance in various subjects).
- d) Write these occupations down on a separate list titled "Occupations to Explore.

1.3.3 Explore the Occupations on Your List

For each occupation on your list, look at the job description, educational and other requirements, advancement opportunities, and earnings.

1.3.4 Making more inquiries/interviews

- a) At this point you should only have a few occupations left on your list.
- b) Gather more information about these occupation from career counselors o
- c) People who have firsthand knowledge of the occupations in which you are interested. Identify who they are and conduct informational interviews with them.

1.3.5 Continue Narrowing Down your List

Put down your list of possible occupations based on what you learned from your research. For example, you may not be willing to put the time and energy into preparing for an occupation for

which an advanced degree is required, or you may consider the earnings for a particular occupation inadequate.

1.3.6 Setting up career action plan which includes training requirements

Make career plan how to go about acquiring the occupation you identified.

If the occupation requires a certificate, or a diploma or degree, then go for it!

To reach to choice/ decision making stage takes time and effort. It requires not only personal effort but reinforcement from others. Thus making choice for life is an endeavour that takes the effort of various 'stakeholders' in one's life – parents, teachers and friends and professionals

1.4 Role of a Career Counselor in Career Choice

A counsellor is a person who has the psychological understanding of the environment you are functioning and the current job market.

A Career Counselor gives you an impartial view point of the things that need to be worked out. This is important as the counsellor may evaluate your current positive findings and also suggests areas for improvement.

Going to a counsellor is almost like a remedy to the current situation, though the individual has to work out a feasible solution.

A counsellor evaluates your corporate skills and also suggests personality improvement which enhances your all around development.

The counsellor hyphenates the doubts and solutions and the final result is a confident 'You'.

It is important to maintain a diary or schedule your meeting with the career counsellor in such a way that there are no other matters in your mind while a session is going on. Ensure a pragmatic approach to display your concerns with a career counsellor.

1.5 Role of Parents

Career advice and direction is something that should start early in a child's life so as by the time they get to high school, they already know what subjects they need to select and work hard on.

When kids are away from school, it is much wiser for parents to grab the opportunity to find out their progress in school as well as probing their minds to know what they would love to do when they graduate.

As far as influencing children's career choice, all a parent can do is listen and understand their children as well as giving their own points of view but not coerce them to fulfill their own dreams, for children are different beings from their mothers and fathers.

Conclusion

Career development is a gradual process. It takes time, effort, perseverance and planning. But the concept of career development begins with self development. If you can't develop yourself, there

is no question of your career developing at a desired pace. Thus, as counselors, parents, teachers, friends continue to expose you to different career paths, the final choice is YOURS. Charity begins at home and in this case, with self.

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