



The Career Path Tool:

Step by Step Guide for HR Professionals

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**HUMAN RESOURCES
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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THE CAREER PATH TOOL: STEP BY STEP

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BACKGROUND

Choosing a career that will be fulfilling over the long term is a complex process that requires you to know and understand yourself and your needs, and the options that are available to you so that you can find the right fit.

There are many models of career planning, but typically the core activities involved in choosing a career are those outlined below. While the Career Path Tool may most commonly be associated with the *Understand Your Options* activity, it can be a useful tool at any point in the process:

- Understand Yourself – Understanding your interests, skills / abilities, personal preferences and values supports you to understand what you need in a career to feel motivated and satisfied. *Use the Career Path Tool to support you to consider how your skills / abilities, etc. align to your current role.*
- Understand Your Options – Explore careers and industries of interest; do research, ask questions and be curious. *Use the Career Path Tool to support you to understand where you are currently in your career journey and where opportunities exist for exploration and movement.*
- Set Goals – Consider your needs and your options, and ultimately make a decision about the career you would like to pursue. This involves both setting your ultimate, long term career goal, and the short term goals that you will take more immediate action toward in pursuit of your career goal. *Use the Career Path Tool to help inform decisions about long term career goals and potential development paths to those goals.*
- Be a Marketing Machine – Find opportunities in line with your goals and market yourself. Present yourself with your career priorities in mind, and ask questions of potential employers and about potential roles to help ensure that your career needs will be met. *Use the Career Path Tool to help you present yourself in line with your career objectives, and to build effective questions about future roles and requirements.*
- Work Toward Your Career Goal – Take action to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences that will support you to move forward toward your career goal. *Use the Career Path Tool to help identify your developmental needs for future roles.*



- Do It All Again – Career planning isn't a one time exercise. You will change; the nature of work will change; the world will change. Revisit your career plan on an annual basis and keep it relevant for you. *Use the Career Path Tool on an ongoing basis to help you review your career goals, and to stay informed about new opportunities in the HR field.*

The document that follows is intended to support you to approach and effectively use the Career Path Tool through five key steps.

INTRODUCTION

The Career Path Tool provides a clear picture of the HR profession and the opportunities within it:

- Core HR areas
- Key HR roles
- Role progression
- Opportunities for movement in the profession

CAREER PATH TOOL PURPOSE

Use the Career Path Tool to identify:

- How your role fits in the HR profession and your HR function
- Your career goals
- KSAs required to achieve your goals
- Opportunities for career movement / progression
- Areas for professional development

USING THE CAREER PATH: STEP BY STEP

To use the Career Path Tool follow these five key steps:

1. Identify your current role on the Career Path Tool
2. Investigate your career options
3. Identify your career goal and career path
4. Identify your opportunities for development
5. Create a plan to conquer your career path



1. Identify your current role on the Career Path Tool

- Find the closest match to your current role based on title
- Read the description to determine fit

Some helpful suggestions...

... If the role isn't a close match, read descriptions for neighbouring roles and select the "best fit" role based on the descriptions provided and the nature of the majority of your work. There's no perfect match, but the Career Path Tool is a guideline.

2. Investigate your career options

- Use titles to select roles that may be your career goal
- Review the role profiles
- Use the Career Path Tool, along with additional resources, to find out more about your possible career goals

Additional Resources

- Assessment tools
- Informational interviews
- Job shadowing
- Stories from the field
- Research and stats – which roles are in demand?

Some helpful suggestions...

... Understanding the factors and conditions that must be met in order for you to experience personal career fulfillment is a critical precursor to investigating options. Use the Career Drivers & Foundations Template to support you to define your career priorities.

... Visit the HRMA website for additional resources to support career investigations.



3. Identify your career goals and career path

- Identify your career goals - what you want to achieve, where you want to achieve it, how you want to be seen - this does not necessarily mean identifying a specific role or a specific organization, it means outlining the conditions that will lead to your career fulfillment
- Once you select your career goal, use the tool to create the path to it – you don't need to stick with roles adjacent to your current role to do this
- Build the experiences skills and competencies required to reach your career goals by moving through roles - you may need to:
 - Move upward, downward, or laterally
 - Pick up skills or experiences you missed on the way
 - Require experiences in other functions
 - Note: while there is a straight path to some roles, others require a wider breadth of experience

For Example...Career Goal

"A senior position directing the training and development strategy for an innovative, medium sized west coast organization. Recognized within the local community as an expert in implementing integrated T&D programs that facilitate career development, employee engagement and foster a learning atmosphere."

Some helpful suggestions...

... Having a framework to identify your career goals supports clarifying and revisiting your vision, identifying next steps, and building commitment. Use Part 1 of the Career & Development Plan Template to support you to identify your ultimate career goals and key stages in your career path .



4. Identify your opportunities for development

- Conduct a gap analysis to understand where your knowledge, skills and experience are vs. where they need to be
- What knowledge, skills, experiences do you possess? Do you need to develop?
- Assess performance vs. expectations for your current role, future roles, career goals.

Some helpful suggestions...

... Considering requirements for future roles helps to identify priority areas for development. You

may want to use a gap analysis tool to identify your areas for development and plan to address them.

Support Tools & Resources

- Assessment tools
- Observations
- Performance feedback
- Performance reviews
- HR metrics
- Input from friends and colleagues

5. Create a plan to conquer your career path

- Identify resources, tools and strategies to close current gaps, further develop areas of strength, and cultivate skills and knowledge for future roles
- Put a plan in place
- Work with others, (a boss, a mentor, etc.) to help you stay on track as you form, commit to and review your plan

Some helpful suggestions...

... Use Part 2 of the Career & Development Plan Template to support you to outline your annual plan to move forward with your career path.

Resources

- Professional associations
- Colleagues
- Online communities
- Post secondary institutions
- Your professional network
- Friends and family

Tools & Strategies

- Job rotation
- Mentoring
- Action learning
- Coaching
- Role playing
- Assessments
- Workshops and webinars
- Formal learning programs
- Research and literature



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MAKE HRMA PART OF YOUR CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

- Get certified – earn your Certified Human Resources Professional Designation
- Participate in the mentoring program
- Build your knowledge – Research reports, HRVoice, PeopleTalk, PD On-Demand
- Attend learning events – workshops, webinars, symposiums, conference, roundtables
- Build your network –networking events, signature events, LinkedIn Group