

# Your Career Roadmap



Norine T. Dagliano  
Job Search Specialist, Coach/Trainer



# Your Career Roadmap

by Norine T. Dagliano  
Job Search Specialist, Coach/Trainer



**O:** 301-766-2032

**C:** 240-217-5075

**W:** [ekminspirations.com](http://ekminspirations.com)

**INTRODUCTION .....4**

**STEP ONE: TAKE STOCK .....5**

**STEP TWO: ARTICULATE YOUR GOAL .....6**

**STEP THREE: MAKE A PLAN.....7**

**STEP FOUR: TAKE ACTION .....8**

**STEP FIVE: MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS .....9**

**WORKSHEET..... 10**

**CREATING AND MAINTAINING A YEAH ME! FILE..... 11**

# Introduction

It's estimated that 90 percent of our daily lives are spent doing routine tasks. But habit can be a bad thing, because "if you keep on doing what you've always done, you're going to keep on getting what you've always got."

One of the most important things you can do is to take time to plan your career. Whether you want to change jobs — or careers — this year, or simply get more out of your current job, a career plan is essential to helping you reach your goals.

This exercise may take you 20 minutes, or you might devote a few hours to planning where you want to be on New Year's Day. If you want your life to be different this year, especially your career, take the time to work on charting a clear direction for your career.



# Step One: Take Stock

The first step is to assess where you are. To figure out where you're going, you must first look at where you've been.

Here are some questions to help you assess what your current job looked like at the end of last year:

- What are you most proud of — personally, and professionally?
- What went right?
- Did you receive any awards or recognition?
- Did you take on any additional responsibilities? If so, what were they?
- How did you take initiative in your job?
- Have you learned any new skills?
- Did you earn any certifications or licenses?

Record this information in a success journal. This can be a Microsoft Word file on your computer, a note in Evernote, a series of emails you send to yourself (be sure to use email tags so you're able to find the emails again!), or even a physical notebook. And in the coming year, take time to record your accomplishments as you go through the year instead of waiting until the end of the year.

Next, look at opportunities for improvement in your career. How does your salary stack up against your peers? Is your current position in alignment with your priorities and your core values? Where is change needed?



# Step Two: Articulate Your Goal



Decide what you want. Spell it out: What does it look like; what does it feel like? You have to really want it to invest the time and energy to follow your dream. Describe your ideal job:

- What is your ideal company like? (size, industry, culture, location, structure)
- How much would your dream job pay? (Realistically)
- What are the most important benefits — other than salary — that would prompt you to go to work for a new company?
- Describe your ideal job — the position you would most like to have. What is the job title? What tasks would you perform? Who you would report to and who would report to you? Would the job involve travel? Do you want to work independently, as part of a team, or both? Do you prefer short-term projects or long-term projects?
- What do you want your next job to do for you that your last job didn't do? In other words, what will be *different* about your next job? Is there anything that you do in your current job that you *don't* want to do in your next job?

Think about the person that you want to be, and imagine the possibilities. Then, identify 2-3 goals you want to tackle. Use the S.M.A.R.T. goal system to articulate your goals — goals should be “Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Oriented.”

For example, let's imagine you have worked as an accountant for the past three years, but you really want to work in marketing. Your goal might be: "By January 1st, I will be working as a Marketing Assistant in a Fortune 1000 company."

You should also write down *why* you are interested in making the change. In other words, what is your motivation for taking this path? And how will you know when you have achieved your goal(s)?

# Step Three: Make a Plan



Take time to prepare a game plan for how you will reach your goal. But don't use planning as an excuse to procrastinate. You want to get to Step Four as quickly as possible, because actions create momentum.

Take each of your goals and break them down into steps you will need to take to achieve the goal. The more individual steps you can map out, the easier it will be for you to reach your goals. The steps should be practical tasks that will lead you to achieve the goal.

For example, if your goal is to make a career change from accounting to marketing, here are some sample steps you may need to take:

- Research job postings for marketing jobs. What are the skills, education, and experience required?
- Join the American Marketing Association and attend one virtual event or in-person boot camp in the next 90-120 days.
- Enroll in online marketing course that focuses on marketing principles.
- Identify a volunteer opportunity where you can put marketing skills into practice — either in your current company or with a community organization.
- Assess transferable skills from accounting that would be useful in a marketing role (project management, analysis, financial management, client relations).
- Work with a professional résumé writer to create a targeted marketing résumé.
- Join three marketing-related groups on LinkedIn, and follow 5-6 *Fortune 1000* companies in your geographic area that have company profiles on LinkedIn.
- Connect with 2-3 contacts at *Fortune 1000* companies.
- Identify possible employers and submit résumés.

Give yourself milestones so you can measure your progress. How will you know when you're on the right track? Include specific dates and numbers in your milestones.

# Step Four: Take Action



With the tasks you've outlined in Step Three, you have a checklist of items to guide your actions. If you are working through the steps and discover you need to add additional items, update your task list. You may also discover additional projects you need to complete before the next step — and the overall goal — is easier to accomplish. And you may need to make adjustments to your timeline.

For example, if you discover that a six-month program to learn about social media would help you land your new marketing job, you might adjust your goal deadline to March 1st, if the program won't be completed until late December. This would give you time to put some of the new skills into practice before you put them on your résumé.

As you work your way through your task list, focus on the actions you are taking, realizing that if you are taking the right actions, these should eventually lead to the results you seek. If you're not getting the results you want, change the *plan*, not the goal. Re-examine your tasks and see if there is something you are missing.

It can also be helpful to get outside feedback. Enlisting the help of an accountability partner — a friend, family member, coach, résumé writer, or therapist — can provide valuable perspective on your progress. This individual can also keep you on track, making sure you are working through your task list. And if there are specific areas where you need help in order to cross the task off your list, make sure you ask for assistance.

For example, writing a résumé to support a career change can be difficult. Enlisting the help of a professional résumé writer can help you cross that task off your list.



# Step Five: Measure Your Progress



When you're on a journey, it can help to periodically assess where you are to make sure you're on the right road. If you miss a step along the way — or take a “wrong turn” — you can find yourself a long way from your intended destination. So plan periodic assessments of your progress along the way. This can be a monthly “check-up” where you review your plan and make any necessary changes, or a quarterly review.

Taking the time to think through — and plan out — your career is an important step in helping you create the career you want. If you don't, you may find your career stuck or stalled. Or you may wake up five years from now and wonder, “How did I get here?”

If you want to achieve more in your professional life, invest the time and effort to completing the Career Roadmap on the following page.\*

**“If you don't know where  
you are going, any road  
will get you there.”**

— Author Lewis Carroll

*\* To make best use of the worksheet, you may want to save it on your computer as a separate document and expand the cells to accommodate all the information you want to add.*

# Worksheet

Career Roadmap	
<b>STEP ONE: TAKE STOCK</b>	
Current Job Title:	
Start Date of Current Job (month/year):	
Current Salary:	
What I Like Most About My Current Job:	
What I Would Want to Change About My Current Job:	
<b>STEP TWO: ARTICULATE YOUR GOAL</b>	
What Is Your Goal?	
<b>STEP THREE: MAKE A PLAN</b>	
What Are the Specific Steps (Tasks) You Need to Take In Order to Achieve Your Goal?	
<b>STEP FOUR: TAKE ACTION</b>	
What Help (Outside Assistance) Do You Need to Reach Your Goal?	
Who Are Your Accountability Partners?	
<b>STEP FIVE: MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS</b>	
How Close — or How Far Away — Are You To Reaching Your Goal At This Moment?	
Do You Need to Make Any Adjustments in the Goal, Tasks, or Deadline?	

# BONUS: Creating and Maintaining a YEAH ME! File



Our memories are short. Can you remember all the details of the project you worked on last week? How about last month? What about a year ago?

One of the best ways to prepare for a time when you will need to share your accomplishments is to collect details of your achievements as you go along — and there’s no better time than now to start! **In fact, why not start the New Year by making—and keeping—a resolution to track your accomplishments**

Accomplishments demonstrate your skills and experience. It's one thing to claim you can do something — it's another to prove you've done it.

In sports, we keep score. It helps us evaluate our progress compared to others. But in your career, it's sometimes harder to measure your progress. If your current boss doesn't provide performance evaluations, tracking your own accomplishments is even more important. You can track your metrics and communicate this information to your boss — you can provide it in an “end-of-year review,” and even if you only submit the information in writing, it can help you showcase what you've done and the value you add to the organization.

This guide will give you the framework to collect your accomplishments.

## Why It's a Good Idea to Track Your Accomplishments

There are many situations when you can benefit from a review of your accomplishments — here are a few:

- For performance evaluations or an annual review
- To set your personal and professional goals for the next year
- To track the progress of projects you're working on
- To support your candidacy and qualifications in a job interview

- When you want to make the case for a raise or a promotion
- To remind you of your achievements when you're having a bad day
- When applying for recognition (awards or scholarships)
- To create or keep your résumé updated

Quantifying your accomplishments will also help you stand out from others who do the work you do — whether you're using the information for a raise or promotion request, or when seeking a new job opportunity. But accomplishments go beyond the basic job duties and responsibilities.

There is also value in simply collecting and reflecting on your personal and professional accomplishments. If you don't "toot your own horn," who will?

## How to Track and Document Your Accomplishments

There are several ways you can collect your accomplishments:

- **Online.** You can create a Microsoft Word file to document your achievements. (Be sure to back up your file regularly.) In your email program, you can create a folder for accomplishments and send yourself emails to store in that folder. You can also use an app like Evernote.
- **Offline.** Something as simple as a bright colored file folder or notebook can be used to track your achievements.

## What to Collect

- **"Kudos" emails from coworkers, customers and/or managers.** When you receive an email thanking you for something you've done, print it out or forward a copy to your personal email account. To help you organize it, tag or label it with a specific subject line (like "YEAH ME!").
- **Written notes of appreciation/thank you letters from customers, coworkers, or your company.** You can make a copy and keep it in hard copy form, or take a screen shot and keep a digital copy.
- **LinkedIn Recommendations.** Print out and/or take a screenshot of any LinkedIn Recommendations in your profile. Don't have any? The best way to get a LinkedIn Recommendation is to give one. You can also email me and request a copy of my tip sheet "How to Give and Get LinkedIn Recommendations."

- **Education/Training.** Copies of training certificates, education diplomas, and licenses. If you earned continuing education units (CEUs) for completing training, keep a record of how many and what year they were earned; these may come in handy if pursuing any professional credentials.
- **Work-related documents:** Performance evaluations (or excerpts of evaluations) from supervisors and managers. Work samples, such as papers/reports you authored, PowerPoint slide decks you created, or sales metrics that document your performance.
- **Awards and honors.** A copy of the certificate or photo of the trophy. Photos of individual or team participation in an event or award. These do not have to be formal or public recognitions; something as simple as a handwritten certificate for a “job well done” is worth keeping.
- **Community or association/organization involvement.** Name of the organization, when you joined and any leadership roles you had. Photos and/or newspaper clippings of charity work or events in which you participated (especially if you were featured.)

## How Often You Should Update Your Accomplishments

As often as necessary. For some, that may mean weekly updates (for example, if you’re working on a series of projects); for others, that could mean a quarterly assessment. To really stay on top of your accomplishments, add things to your online and/or offline file as they occur.

The most important thing is to take the time to do this. Put an alarm or task reminder on your calendar so you remember to set aside the time to track your accomplishments regularly.