

Take a Look at Yourself

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“ Be courageous! Dare to explore what you love and what is most important to you. Don't waste time assessing yourself as you are now. Dream and plan for who you want to be in the future. ”

*Betty Jo Matzinger Lash
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In this chapter, you will:

- ◆ Document your education, work experience, and other activities related to a potential career that you will use in your job search and career development.
- ◆ Identify the career-related skills you developed through your education and work experience.
- ◆ Identify your personal, school-related, and work-related accomplishments.
- ◆ Begin to build your Lifetime Career Database.



Use the Internet to complete personal assessments for planning and confirming your career choices.

In Chapter 2, you will take a complete inventory of your education, training, experience, accomplishments, values, work preferences, and performance traits. This personal inventory is an essential tool for developing or confirming your career target and for conveying your qualifications to potential employers.

KNOWING YOURSELF IS A MUST FOR YOUR CAREER SUCCESS

In promoting yourself throughout your career, you are the person who must sell the product—you. Successful salespeople know their products. And you must know your qualifications and communicate them effectively to employers in your resume, cover letter, and interviews. You must also understand what is important to you in life and in work situations. The Career Actions in this chapter will help you thoroughly inventory your training, education, and experience and identify the values and work preferences that will play an important role in choosing a career or accepting a job offer. In the next chapter, you will assess this information about yourself from an employer's perspective and consider it carefully in making a good job match.

Your Personal Career Inventory

Your Personal Career Inventory consists of basic information about you that an employer may find helpful when considering you for a job. This includes basic personal data and information about (a) your education and professional training; (b) work experience, skills, and accomplishments; and (c) people you can use as references.

Record Personal Information

The first step in recording your Personal Career Inventory is to record basic personal data you will be asked to provide on most job applications, such as information about how you can be reached, hobbies, and professional

memberships. Keep this information handy, updated, and accurate so you always have a ready reference.

Review Education and Training

The next step in completing your Personal Career Inventory is to document your education and training, including dates, places, career-relevant courses and activities, skills, and accomplishments obtained through your education and training. This information will help you identify or confirm an appropriate career choice, develop resumes and cover letters, and prepare for job interviews.

"Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it up into small jobs."

—Henry Ford

DEVELOP A CAREER DATABASE

In this textbook, you are collecting important data you can use to help achieve lifetime job and career goals. This includes data you will record in many Career Actions as well as drafts of job search documents that will form your Lifetime Career Database (also see Appendix C of this text). Much of this information is appropriately entered and stored using a computer to provide easy editing capabilities for updating your data throughout your lifetime career.

IMPORTANT: Look for this notation at the bottom of selected Career Actions:



Career Database Appropriate

This indicates the information you record for this Career Action is appropriately prepared and stored using word processing or database software and that you should store electronic and hard copies in your Lifetime Career Database.

Take your time when completing this section of your Inventory; be sure the information is complete and accurate. Put yourself under a microscope, and look at every detail carefully. You may want to ask people who know you well to help you document your accomplishments. Consider scholarships, honors, and awards you have received and competitions in which you have participated. When reporting accomplishments, be as specific as possible. For example:

◆ **Won first place in schoolwide business math competition**

When identifying the skills and accomplishments you developed through your education and training, consider two kinds of skills (or competencies) that employers are seeking: job-specific skills and transferable competencies. You will identify both kinds of skills and competencies in **Career Action 2-1**.

Job-Specific Skills. Job-specific skills are the technical abilities that relate *specifically* to a particular job. For example, in accounting, preparing a balance sheet by using accounting software customized for a client is a job-specific skill. Relining brakes on a vehicle is a job-specific skill for an auto mechanic; and processing a dental X ray and operating medical diagnostic equipment are also job-specific skills.

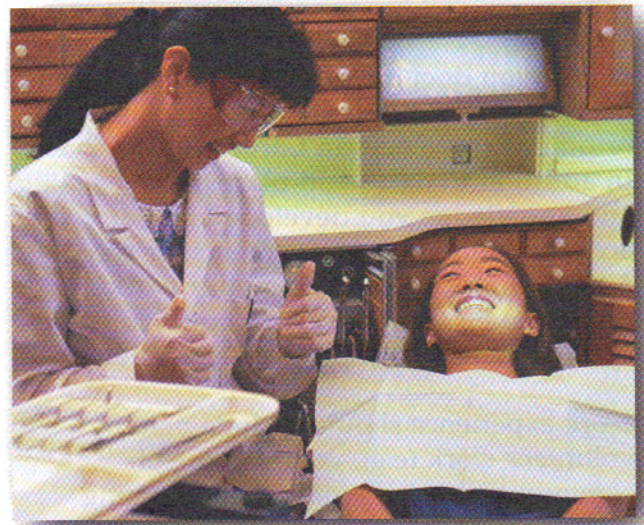


Figure • 2-1: Dental technicians must have job-specific skills as well as transferable skills, such as the ability to work with people in difficult situations.

Transferable Competencies. Transferable competencies are abilities you have that can be applied in more than one work environment. For example, both accountants and auto mechanics are required to have such transferable competencies as the ability to read, write, use mathematics; and use computers. Transferable competencies may also include such things as ability to work well with others, lead, organize work and materials, solve problems, make decisions, and manage resources.

Complete Career Action 2-1

CAREER ACTION 2-1
Education and Training Inventory

DIRECTIONS: Turn to page 25, and complete each section of the form that applies to you. Be thorough in providing details.



Career Database Appropriate

List Experience and Skills

Just as you documented your education and training, you will identify all of your work or other experiences in **Career Action 2-2**. In addition to dates and places, list the skills and knowledge you developed and any accomplishments, achievements, or recognition you received during your work activities. Be sure to include both job-specific skills and transferable competencies.

Work experience should include paid or volunteer work (e.g., volunteering on community service projects, fund-raising programs, environmental cleanup programs), internships, or cooperative education experience. Be specific about the contributions you made. For example:

- ◆ Raised 20 percent more in contributions over previous year.
- ◆ Reduced time required to process a reprint by 10 percent.
- ◆ Suggested new file management procedures that reduced filing error rate by 25 percent.

Complete Career Action 2-2

CAREER ACTION 2-2

Experience and Skills Inventory

DIRECTIONS: Turn to page 29, and complete each section of the form that applies to you. Be as specific and thorough as possible.



Career Database Appropriate

Identify Job References

The final step in completing your Personal Career Inventory is to identify your job references. A job reference is someone who can vouch for your capabilities, skills, and suitability for a job. References are most often people who have been your teachers and coaches in school or your coworkers or supervisors in volunteer and paid work environments. Therefore, you should review your inventory of education and work experience for potential job references.

Identify people who can *and are willing* to confirm (from firsthand observation) your good performance on the job, in school, or in other activities.

Employers usually want at least three job references listed on application forms; ideally, these are supervisors or employers or others who know your work well.

Relatives or classmates are not appropriate references. The more references you have available, the better for your current and future job campaign.

If you are qualified to work in two different fields, such as retail sales and accounting, you will get the best results by having one

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

—Walt Disney

set of references targeted for each of the two fields, or a total of six references (three in sales-related fields and three from accounting fields). Some organizations ask for different types of references. For example, an employer may ask for personal, as well as professional references.

Use **Career Action 2-3** to identify people you can list as your references. Make note of how they know you and in what areas they can speak about your performance.

Complete Career Action 2-3

CAREER ACTION 2-3

Develop a Database of Potential Job References

DIRECTIONS: Identify at least three (but as many as you can) potential job references from your education/training and experience/skills inventories. Also consider contacts at professional associations. Using either the form provided in **Career Action 2-3** (on page 31) or a database, record their names, addresses and other contact information. Plan to contact each reference and ask him or her to write you a letter of reference.



Career Database Appropriate

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Another important part of knowing yourself is having an accurate assessment of your personal values, work preferences, and job-related performance traits. Understanding the personal factors that influence your performance and job satisfaction will help you make good choices when setting job and career targets and when considering specific job offers.

Values

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "value" as "that which is desirable or worthy of esteem for its own sake; the social principles, goals, or standards held or accepted by an individual." By working in a job that matches your values, you greatly increase the chances of enjoying and succeeding in your job. **Career Action 2-4** will help you identify and prioritize your values.

Work Environment

Most people spend a lot of time in their work environment; to maximize your success, identify the work environments you prefer and perform best in. For example, if you are an extrovert, you probably won't enjoy working in an isolated environment.

Career Action 2-4 will help you clarify what is important to you in a work environment.

SUCCESS TIP

Identify your skills, abilities, work experience, values, and work preferences to achieve a good job match.

Complete Career Action 2-4

CAREER ACTION 2-4

Values and Work Environment Preferences Inventory

DIRECTIONS: Career Action 2-4 will help you identify and prioritize the values that are important to you and the kinds of work environments you find acceptable. Remember, there are no wrong answers in defining what's important to you. Turn to page 33, and complete **Career Action 2-4** now.

Personal Qualities and Work Performance Traits

To get the job you want, you must be able to sell your personal qualities, positive job performance traits, and enthusiasm. In **Career Action 2-5**, you will identify these

qualities and traits to help find a suitable job target match.

Knowing your personal qualities and work performance traits will also help you decide what type of work you are best suited for.

Complete Career Action 2-5

CAREER ACTION 2-5

Personal Qualities and Work Performance Traits

DIRECTIONS: Now turn to page 35, and follow the directions to complete **Career Action 2-5**.

SELF-ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

Many self-assessment resources speed the process of making and confirming a successful career choice. Which of the resources listed below could you use to improve your career planning?

Note: Some services may have a fee attached to them.

- ◆ **Your school career services staff and counselors.** These specialists can provide a wide variety of aptitude and interest tests.

- ◆ **The Internet.** You can find excellent information on careers and jobs on the World Wide Web. Many sites offer online tools to assess your career interests and values and to help match the results with appropriate careers and jobs.
- ◆ **Commercial software packages.** Some commercial software packages are available over the Internet and through school career services offices.

Complete Career Action 2-6

CAREER ACTION 2-6**Self-Assessment Test**

NOTE: Because the content of Web sites is subject to change without notice, be aware that the links listed below may not match the current content of the Web sites referenced in this assignment.

1. The supplemental software program, *WebGuide: Your Online Career Search*, is described in the preface of this textbook. If you are using this software, access the Main Menu of the program, and click on [Self-Assessment](#). Then click on [Keirsey Personality Test](#) and complete the test. Then use the [Keirsey Personality Matrix](#) to determine your personality type.
2. Or go to the Internet address: <http://www.keirsey.com/>, click on [The Keirsey Temperament Sorter II](#), and complete the test. Then return to the home page, click on [The Four Temperaments](#), and review the data.
3. Complete the test, and score the results; then list four jobs you think might suit your personality type.
4. Complete the following on-line personal assessment to help confirm your career directions: [Birkman Quiz \(http://www.review.com/birkman\)](http://www.review.com/birkman)

Your Lifetime Career Database

The Personal Career Inventory you have just completed clearly documents your education, working experience, and qualifications—information you will refer to repeatedly in the future whenever you are looking for a job or considering new career options. In **Career Action 2-7**, you will use this personal inventory material to begin compiling your Lifetime Career Database, a collection of job and career reference information. Any time you make a job or career change, you will find the information in this database valuable (e.g., updating your resume, completing employment applications, interview preparation). Look for the “Career Database Appropriate” notation at the

bottom of selected Career Actions in this book. This notation is a reminder for you to use a word processing or a database program to enter and store the information. File electronic and hard copies in your Lifetime Career Database. You’ll be glad you did!

Complete Career Action 2-7**SUCCESS TIP**

Begin compiling your Lifetime Career Database; place a copy of your Personal Career Inventory in it now.

CAREER ACTION 2-7

Begin Lifetime Career Database

DIRECTIONS: In Appendix C, Career Management Tool 1, Lifetime Career Database, follow all the instructions to set up your own Lifetime Career Database File, and begin organizing your job search and career development data. Then, in this file, store all your completed Career Actions, including the **Success Action Plan** from **Career Action 1-5**. As you progress through this book, continue to store all completed Career Actions in this file.

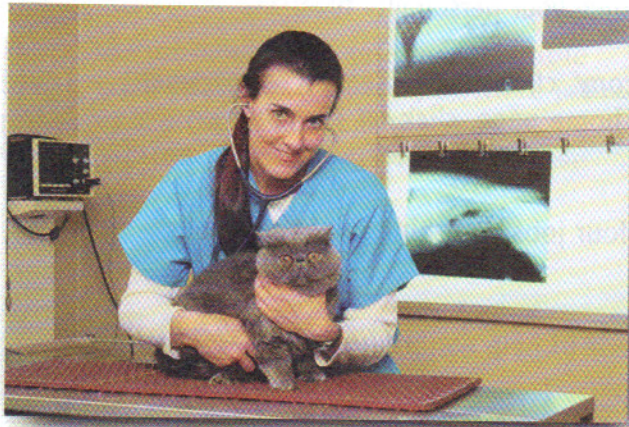


Figure • 2-2: The right career is one that complements your skills, interests, values, and environmental preferences.



CHECKLIST FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Check each of the following actions that you are currently taking to increase your career success:

- Identify your skills, abilities, work experience, values, and work preferences to achieve a good job match.
- Begin compiling your Lifetime Career Database; place a copy of your personal inventory information in it now. (Save disk and hard copies of completed Career Actions if you use a computer.)

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important in career planning and a job search to assess and document thoroughly your education, training, work experience, and accomplishments?
2. Explain why it is useful to identify your work performance traits and career-related personal qualities.
3. What should be compiled in your Lifetime Career Database; how will it be useful to you throughout your career?