



Zenie
FOUNDATION
Discover. Choose. Live.

ZF CAREER STRATEGY GUIDE

What's Next - Your Career

SEPTEMBER 2023

Zenie Foundation Career Strategy Guide

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Introduction

A while back, some of our soon-to-graduate students shared that they felt unprepared to begin their new careers. We, the ZF Team, recalled having similar concerns and struggling early in our careers. The following Career Strategy Guide (CSG) begins our effort to further help our students become effective adults AND effective professionals. Our ideas reflect the experiences of ZF leadership, recent ZF alumni and friends of ZF. None of us are career guidance experts, but collectively we bring deep and broad experience.

You may be an undergraduate college student looking forward to graduating soon or a year or two in the future. You will need to transition from student to career-building adult. Even if you're not a college graduate and regardless of your current job, you can use this guide to build your *professional* career (note: Parenting is an important career, but the CSG will focus on non-parenting careers). Set high personal values, work hard and develop new skills, and you will become a respected professional.

It may take you an hour or two to read and digest the CSG the first time through. If it is successful, you will return often in the years ahead. We include personal career experiences from the ZF Team called "Career Moments". These are actual stories that dramatically shaped our careers. This isn't intended to be a detailed handbook, but a values-based framework to build on. When possible, we will cite references for in-depth review. Think about printing a copy of this to keep on your desk, in your favorite notebook or a document file for easy access. Every once in a while, take a look and pick one topic to refresh your thinking. When you're ready, you should find these concepts helpful.

As we work with our students and alumni, we will learn more and improve this framework. [This is the third update; thanks to all who contributed!] We hope this becomes a highly valuable tool for your professional career. Invest your time in you; it's your career.

Cheers, Frank Zenie

Getting to know you - Explore and Discover

At Zenie Foundation (ZF) everything begins with values, so not surprisingly, we suggest that you build your career around your personal values. You will have to bring skills and a strong work ethic, but you will earn your family's, managers', colleagues', and customers' trust based on how you live your values. We believe personal values provide a foundation for becoming effective adults – and building successful careers. Those who possess:

Core Values

- Develop and are driven by a core set of personal values
- Do not waiver from them even when challenged
- Earn trust by demonstrating integrity through value-based actions.
- Seek win-win relationships.
- Want to make the future better than the past

Self-Awareness

- Know and accept their strengths and weaknesses.
- Commit to achieve their full potential.
- Recognize educational opportunities as a privilege that create an obligation to give back.

A Commitment to Learning

- Lead continuous lives of learning and self-development.
- Have a vision for their future - not predefined jobs but ideas to pursue.
- Are passionately self-motivated to work hard in pursuit of their vision; reflect, learn, and adjust as needed.

Financial Responsibility

- Are financially self-sufficient.
- Adopt responsible lifestyles consistent with financial means.

Begin by thinking about a few people you know well - some you trust and respect and some not so much. Now measure them against your value system. What do you notice? Do you see any patterns? Lessons?

Virtually all effective and successful people are keenly self-aware. Honest, pragmatic and, sometimes painful, self-awareness becomes the foundation for a successful career.

Take a moment and begin developing your Self-Assessment Profile. Be honest; hypocrites claim worthy values without living them. Below are three models that can help you develop self-awareness. A little research will uncover more. These are only tools to help you gain personal insights; use those that work for you and revisit over time to discover your personal evolution. Please see Appendix E worksheets to record your self-assessment – save them for future reference.

1. Strengths Weaknesses Challenges Goals (SWCG) Self-Assessment Profile

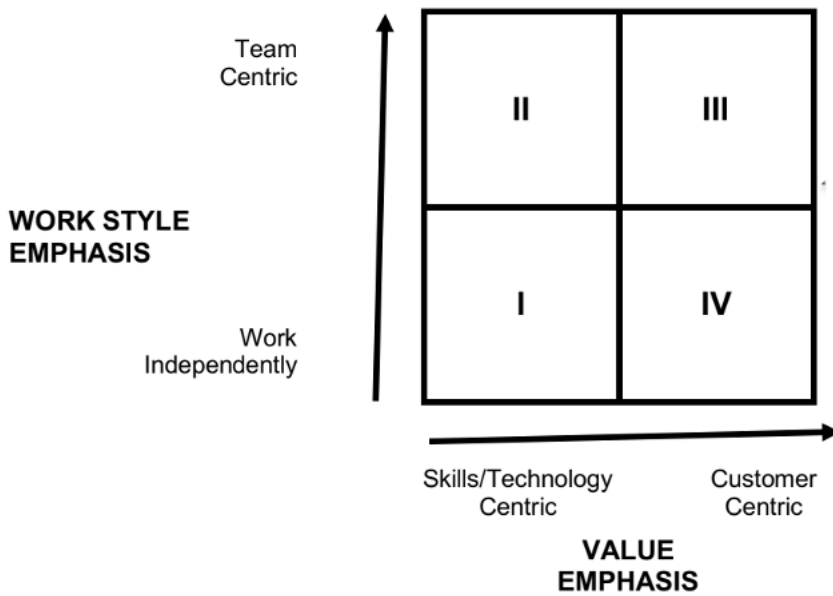
Note, if you seek help from family and friends, set the tone so that their advice isn't criticism – people avoid criticizing people they like. Going forward, you can certainly add some needed skills and modify some weak behavior but build on your strengths and try to avoid your weaknesses. Beware that strengths carried to excess may well become weaknesses (for example, the strength of tenacity taken to extreme becomes stubbornness).



Strengths and Weaknesses tend to be personal while Challenges tend to be situational. For example, large student debt, health limitations or geographic constraints are challenges, not weaknesses. You may need to update your SWCG Self-Assessment Profile frequently. It will drive your self-improvement programs and help prepare for future opportunities. Never forget, denial is the enemy of self-awareness; so, become brutally honest with yourself. Embrace and live your values.

2. Work Style Value Profile

This matrix examines how you like to work and how you want to deliver value to your customer. Everyone has a customer for their work, it may be an internal customer or your organization's final customer. Remember, your customers, not your boss, ultimately determine your work's value. Please see the Self-Assessment exercise, Appendix D, for further detail.

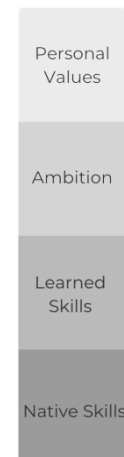


With this matrix model, you may choose to be anywhere in the matrix and **no segment is better than others**. A lawyer or doctor may be in segment I while a high-tech salesperson in segment III.

3. Your Value Profile

Your career value is built on your native skills, learned skills, ambition and personal values. You have little control over your native skills, but a lot over the others. Here's where you invest in you. Your learned skills can come from formal training and education, continuing or lifelong education, reading and study, and life-work experience. You have so many ways to build and increase your value. You will progress in your career by building your personal brand. Invest in it. It may not be the biggest investment you ever make, but it will be the most important and, probably, the most valuable.

YOU



What is a Career?

Career is not simply your current occupation. Careers are a lifelong progression, through a series of jobs enhanced by ongoing learning and experiences, helping

to make you a more effective and valuable person. Think of your early career as an investment in your future.

Careers are strategic. Think 50 years. You will need a career strategy that isn't simply a linear progression of jobs aimed at a predefined goal. Be open and flexible; **probably the best jobs in the future don't even exist today**. Career strategies are different from constructing a building where architects and engineers design everything around proven principles and only start when every detail is fully defined. In careers, you are growing and maturing, and the world is changing. Everything is dynamic and your vision and values are your foundation. It's ok to have uncertainty, even if it clouds the future. Begin with an **action-centric** career strategy.



Nike has a point when they say, “Just Do It.” Knowledge gains value as it’s put into practice. Commit to excellent performance in all your jobs, then commit to lifelong learning and self-development. Finally, prepare yourself to be a candidate for the broadest range of future opportunities by developing leadership and communication skills, becoming an ever more effective adult, and earning trust.

Return to your self-assessment goals. Are you willing to invest sufficiently to gain the skills and do the work required to support these goals? You’re determined to invest your time and money to build something of great value - your career! You’re fully committed; you see great possibility in the mirror, and you’re determined to achieve your full potential. Be patient, don’t expect immediate recognition and rewards, they will come. Your employers, particularly early in your career, are key to your career development. Do they have a worthy mission and live a values-based culture? If you commit to them, will they invest in you? While no job offers 100% enjoyable and satisfying work, can you look forward to showing up each day?

Career Moment

Your Career - New Reality - As a student, you are the customer. It’s all about your education symbolized by your grades and your graduating degree. Very early in my career, I suddenly realized that I was now part of a business committed to serving its customers. Even though I didn’t yet know all the members or their roles, I joined a team with

customer impact as the ultimate measure of value. As we faced challenges, I had to learn how to collaborate and develop effective solutions that earned the trust, respect and support of the entire team. This can be frustrating and time consuming, but when everyone contributes to and owns the solution, you can march forward. To do this, teams need leadership and effective teams draw on leadership from all members when needed.
Jon R. – ZF Alum

It's very normal, and reasonable, to have a career strategy without a detailed plan. **You don't necessarily need to try to predict who you will become and what future career opportunities will unfold.** Look around you for gaps that you fill, volunteer, learn and contribute. Just be opportunistic, flexible and prepare. As you learn more, you will modify and clarify your vision and strategy. You will learn from setbacks and change is not failure.

Graduate School?

Even though your career plan may be ambiguous, don't just default to graduate school. Unless you plan to enter a profession that emphasizes academic credentials, such as medicine, law, academia or scientific research, graduate school is simply one of many tools you can use to learn and build knowledge and skills. Your value, both economic and intellectual, comes from applied knowledge. Whether you go to graduate school or not, lifelong learning is essential for personal and career growth.

Career Moment

Integrating work and academics for career growth - When I graduated, I was over "school". Committed to my career development, however, my bosses pushed me to continue my formal education. My company further supports this by contributing to the financial expense. Particularly in technology fields, we need to have a formal education program to stay up to date. Combining graduate school with my work enabled me to achieve personal financial self-sufficiency and to merge my work experience and academic focus. In doing so, I discovered a specific field where I am developing unique and valuable skills and I'm excited to apply them to each day's new challenges. Jon R. – ZF Alum

It is best to go to graduate school when you need immediate academic knowledge or credentials; don't choose graduate school just because you have yet to develop a career vision. There are many different ways to further your education. Think about all the learning paths easily available:

- Attend graduate school immediately following graduation.
- Delay graduate school for a few years to gain career experience.

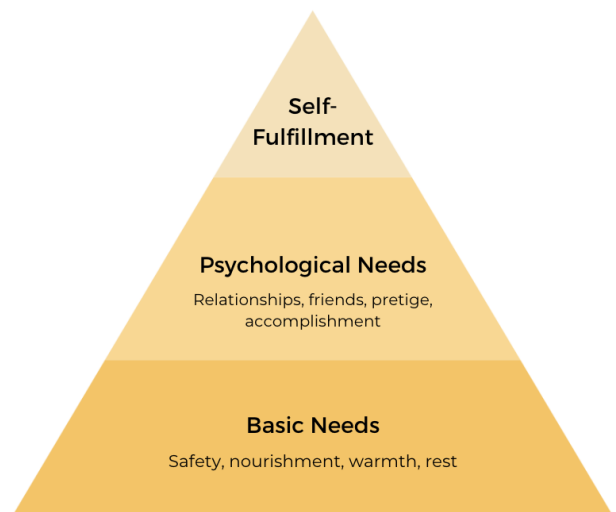
- Research discount tuition from your alma mater or funding from your place of employment for graduate school.
- Take graduate courses on nights or weekends while working (“night school”).
- Read books and journals in your fields of interest.
- Use your job as a laboratory and your boss as a mentor.
- Explore relevant topics with family, friends, and colleagues.

Please consider the economic benefits of integrating graduate school alternatives and your career. Be proactive; pick a career path, go to work, learn and discover and adjust with new knowledge and passion.

Economics 101

Think About: Financial Self-Sufficiency, Affordability, Debt, and Interest Paid vs. Savings and Interest Earned, Think Lifetime Earnings

In our world today, like it or not, almost everything has a price. In 1943, Abraham Maslow published “A Theory of Human Motivation” introducing Maslow’s Pyramid of Needs. The Pyramid, shown here, describes a hierarchy of human needs that generally must be filled from the bottom up, much like a building requires a strong foundation. While only the basic needs directly require economic resources, economic resources enable the higher needs.



Economic value ultimately funds all work. If you work for a private industry, customers buying your product or service fund your paycheck. If you work for a non-profit, philanthropy funds your paycheck because they value what you do. If you work for the government, taxpayers fund your paycheck and voters ultimately set government priorities. Professional entertainers and athletes are funded by fans who pay to see them perform.

Once we understand economic realities, we can start making pragmatic lifestyle decisions - with less fear of unintended consequences. Beware of the widely used term “free” because **few things are truly free**, usually someone else is paying for it – probably with a self-serving motive.

Career Moment

Working to live, easier said than done - As a twenty-something coming out of college and embarking on my career path, I wasn't thinking about buying a house immediately, or getting married, or starting a family. I was focused mostly on learning as much as I could and growing as a career driven individual. I put in long hours, and I was totally OK with that. I was fulfilled. However, there came a time where all of those other life things hit me and I was at a point where I was successful, built a good reputation, working in an industry that I loved, but I was sacrificing a lot of airport and travel time away from one of the main reasons we all go to work: our lives. One day while in the Logan airport terminal A in Boston, I realized that when I calculated my time at home vs. my time at work, I was traveling 80-90% of the time and the benefit no longer outweighed the cost. That day I made the scary, but exhilarating decision to embark on a career move that would still support myself and family financially, my brain intellectually, provide me with a new challenge, and allow me to live outside of my job more often. This career moment allowed me to really dig into what I needed as a working professional (reinvent myself in a totally different industry and prove to myself I can add value anywhere if I put the work in) as well as LIVE my life. My lesson here was even if you are comfortable in your career, take the time to evaluate if it is really fulfilling your need as an individual occasionally, it may lead you to something even better!

Ashley D – ZF Coach

As we mature, we will adjust our economic and non-economic priorities. Our goal isn't to maximize our economic value; it's simply to align our lifestyle expectations with our likely career economics – think affordability and financial self-sufficiency. Beginning while a student, consider the financial ramifications of your academic focus, career choice and lifestyle goals. For most of you, it has already started. High School seniors (and often their families, too) are making college choices that trigger student loan debt (and interest) that may burden them for years into the future. You may already be aware that this eventually requires rigorous repayment.

Recognizing this, ZF developed its [College Affordability Toolkit \(CAT\)](#) providing easy to use planning and financial budgeting tools for students. We guide you through estimating college costs and resulting loan requirements. Different than many organizations, we then guide you through estimating your early career economics and loan repayment burden. The CAT is available to all at zeniefoundation.org and it's free – because ZF's mission is to help everyone become effective adults.

Many of you will graduate with student loan debt and may likely incur other expenses, such as a car payment or a mortgage if you choose to purchase a home. Please be cautious before incurring any additional debt. While we all come from different levels of income and privilege that may affect our ability to be financially secure/independent, a financial goal of an effective adult would be to earn interest, not pay interest. If you can earn just 4% on money you save and invest and pay just 6% to borrow, you actually give up 10% when you borrow to purchase now rather than save and buy later – that costs you \$100 per year on every \$1,000 you borrow – in addition to loan repayment.

Our challenge as effective adults is to plan and live responsibly. Accept that **economic constraints may be difficult but ignoring them can be catastrophic**. If you add a spouse or committed partner and then a family, this changes your economic model; you incur financial obligations beyond yourself. Update your self-assessment. Will you have one or two professional careers? How does this impact your lifestyle goals? If you decide to have children, will you have the financial resources to pay for their personal electronics & communication, transportation and travel, healthcare, and education? Dependents are actually dependent. Are you ready?

Finding a “Career-Building” Job

Think About: Finding Career-Building Jobs, Due Diligence, Self-Awareness, Career Strategies and Professional Selling

The Best Place to Work - Find Admirable Leaders

1. Admirable leaders are relationship driven.
2. Admirable leaders create safe space for risks to be taken.
3. Admirable leaders display uncommon humility.
4. Admirable leaders, in the end, will make those around them better.

Warren Buffett – Inc. Magazine

It's easy to blast resumes across a broad spectrum of potential employers hoping a few will earn a response. In doing this, you become a commodity and suffer the consequences. So, clear the deck, ignore the distractions, and get started.

**If you work at it, you can find a job.
If you work hard, you can find a good job.
And if you work very hard, you can find a career-building job.**

Most colleges provide career counseling services; take advantage of yours. They can help you prepare your resume, develop interviewing skills, develop strong references, and advise on how to use online recruiting services and their placement services. Keep in mind, however, that they want to help you find a job while you want to launch your career. **Don't adopt any advice, including this, until you've thought it through and believe it reflects your values.** No matter how strong your academic credentials, you are an entry-level applicant. While most applicants will claim to be hard working and thorough, you will want to demonstrate why you're special throughout your application process. How? Due diligence, persistence, and a personalized, benefits-oriented approach for each prospective employer.

The Gig Economy (careers that are based around on-demand work, think freelancers, independent contractors, project-based workers and temporary or part-time hires) seems here to stay. Like any career, there are pros and cons. At their best, gigs pay well for top talent, while allowing you to be self-employed and independent. At their worst, gigs are competitive, low-paid, and leave you dependent on your customers/audience. When considering this career path, explore and discover all options!

Career Moment

Networking in Job Search - When looking for a job, talk with every single person you know about what you're looking for. Don't be shy. When you meet someone and they ask, "How are you?" Respond with something like, "Great! I'm job hunting in x field." You chitchat about it for a minute, and hey - that person just might have a connection. It's how I landed my first job as a reporter with a television station in Erie, PA. It was the day of graduation and I still didn't have a job lined up. I bumped into someone in my friend group and we were chatting about our futures. When I told him I was looking for an on-camera position as a reporter, he told me his dad actually knew someone who actually owns TV stations! After graduation, I applied for dozens of jobs online for a month without hearing a peep back from a real person. Then one day, the president of Lilly Broadcasting called me. It was a cold-call phone interview at 8am and I was still half asleep. When he identified himself, I went from dozing to heart-pounding nervous. But I had prepared myself for that moment. I'd done my due diligence and so truly believed I was qualified and the right person for the job. I had three internships in major TV markets (Boston, Los Angeles, plus the CBS London office) and had won a fellowship with a TV station in Phoenix. I had prepared for any potential opportunities by writing out answers to interview questions and practicing my answers. I knew that even if my skills weren't 100% there, I was ready to work hard to learn

the skills to become a great employee. I think ultimately, all of that came across. They flew me to Erie, I went through the in-person interviews, and got the job. Deedee S. – ZF Advisor

Due Diligence: Do Your Research!

Due diligence is simply a process of research and analysis used to evaluate future alternatives. Its purpose is to identify the benefits and risks associated with each alternative. In your job search, you will use your due diligence to determine both the benefits and risks to you as the applicant and to your potential employer. You can access a huge amount of information online about most potential employers except very small local organizations. Publicly traded businesses must disclose their financials and material events and most choose to disclose and share their strategies. CEOs of public companies publish shareholder letters in their annual report and often present their story at investment conferences. All you have to do is dig, read, assimilate, and prepare. Most applicants won't do this because it's too much work.

Step one of your due diligences should ask whether an organization has a worthy mission. How can you build an exciting, energized work environment without a worthy mission? Why would you want to work in an organization that's primary mission is to raise money (non-profit) or maximize profit? By worthy, we don't mean philanthropic. Serving customers, creating jobs, developing employees, and investing in its future all contribute to a strong economy that, in turn, benefits all. During your interviews, you can determine whether the mission is deeply embedded into its culture.

Interviewing Basics

The purpose of your resume and its cover letter is to get an interview. Even with electronic submissions, you need to convey how you plan to help this organization achieve their mission and goals. Use your due diligence information to tailor your message in a cover letter or by customizing your resume for each potential employer. Try using LinkedIn for due diligence on company and employees. Earlier we described the importance of personal economics, but we also stressed that **your career is strategic - a marathon not a sprint**. As a personal entrepreneur, you expect to invest in your future just as your family invested in your care and education. Yes, it's hard work and time consuming, but it shows you're special.

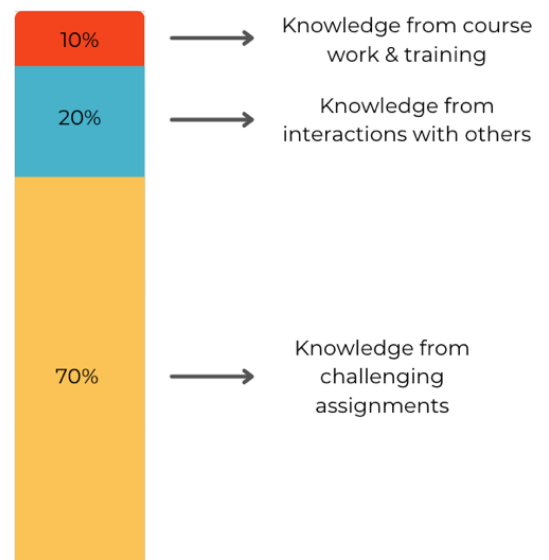
Interviews are your opportunity to sell yourself and learn more about the prospective employer.

- Prepare by brushing up on your due diligence and resume.
- Develop questions about the employer’s mission and strategy, their culture, and their challenges. You are trying to determine if this would be a career-building job for you.
- Arrive a little early and dress professionally.
- You don’t need to try to show how smart you are, just demonstrate how well you listen and how much you want to learn.
- Demonstrate confidence, not arrogance.
- If asked about expected compensation, we recommend that you defer to them by saying you expect appropriate compensation and an opportunity to learn and develop and earn greater compensation in the future. If the employer embraces win-win values, all will work out just fine.
- Pick the job that you think offers the greatest opportunity to learn and grow.
- Don’t oversell yourself in your resume or in an interview. This could trigger a couple of bad outcomes – it encourages expectations that you cannot meet and will expose you are not qualified and potentially you will be fired. Be honest and over perform.

In Pursuit of Learning

One of ZF’s core principles is Discover. Especially at the beginning of your career, you should take opportunities to explore and try new things that you may not have considered before. Upon graduating college, there’s often a pressure to have a “good” job, or to be working for an institution or individual whom you really admire. This of course, would be ideal, but in reality, you may work a job that doesn’t fit your exact needs and interests. You may start a job that you think matches your needs and interest, only to discover it does not.

Learn By Doing



When looking for jobs, **be open to possibilities**. Try to work for a “Learning Company”. When becoming CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella said: “Look, we’re going to orchestrate a major culture change. For a long time, we’ve been a know-it-all company, and we need to become a learn-it-all company.”

Everything is a learning opportunity and can bring you closer to your true passion. No one’s career path is linear. Listen to your gut and trust yourself.

Getting Started

Think About: Your Immediate Supervisor, Coaches and Mentors, Demonstrating Leadership, Support Your Colleagues and Learn and Prepare

Just like your interviews, show up early and look professional as you begin your career. You’re no longer an esteemed college senior, you’re a rookie. You have a lot to learn, so encourage your new colleagues to teach and coach you.

Extend your due diligence, learn as much as you can about your organization’s mission, strategy, and culture. Ask yourself, how can my job contribute to these? Probe to understand who your customers are and your value proposition to them. No matter your job, find ways to meet and interact with your customers.

Career Moment

Self-Awareness - My First Review – Early in my career, I was an accountant working for the President of the company. At my first-year anniversary, he scheduled my annual review. I went into his office and found he had written down the positives and negatives that he saw in my work over the past year. How silly I felt that he had to take the time to do this. I committed to never letting my boss, coach or mentor, have to prepare from a blank sheet of paper to review my work. From that day forward I took an active part in assessing my career by providing a written assessment to my boss well ahead of an annual review. This critical self-assessment process helped me see my strengths and weaknesses, write them down, and provide them ahead of time to my boss for his/her thinking. As a result, our reviews became a valuable experience driving us both to productive programs, goals, and career building steps. I encourage all my employees to be active self-assessors and continually use their boss as a mentor and touchstone. I encourage this type of assessment OFTEN, not annually. Sit-downs every quarter or every six months are even better.
Tim P – ZF Coach

Your first manager should be your most important colleague. Try to develop a **symbiotic relationship** along these lines – I will devote my energy to doing a good job for you and this organization, in return I'd like you to coach me, recognize and reward my accomplishments, and advocate for my career development. Consider these tips for developing this relationship.

- Encourage timely and frequent feedback from your manager.
- Whenever possible, support your boss and other managers. They need your help as much as you need theirs.
- Find others that you respect and ask for their advice and coaching. Seeking advice makes you stronger not weaker. Listen carefully and take notes as you gain these valuable insights.
- Of course, you will help others as you develop your leadership skills.
- Be positive and avoid organizational politics. Every organization has problems and it's easy to criticize; be part of the solution. If you need to address problems with management, be constructive.
- Remember, how your organization deals with problems and stress will provide insights into its true values and culture.
- Don't think of your colleagues as competitors. You share a common mission of helping your employer succeed and that success will create abundant opportunity.
- Try to meet other career-building professionals performing other functions and teach each other how you fit into the integrated mission.

You may not want to become a manager but reach to achieve leadership stature by living and advocating a values-based culture. As you gain experience, try to coach and teach your work colleagues and the next generation of rookies.

Opportunities needn't be promotions. You're still learning and investing. Look for gaps and try to fill them. Grab opportunities that create new challenges and broaden your experience. Don't worry; the financial rewards will come.

Career Moment

Be ambitious and earn a good reputation early in the job - After college graduation, I worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in NYC as an auditor. As it was a large firm with many new hires, I wanted to make a name for myself. So, when I had some downtime, I asked my supervisor if I could become more involved with one of my clients and ended up planning the audit, which was unusual for a staff person. My supervisor was impressed with my "drive" and recommended me to some of her peers who ended up requesting me for their jobs. In turn, it led to being staffed on a high-profile new client that was frequently in the news for their business success. My reputation also led to being asked to be part of a proposal team that was trying to win over a new client. This was the first time the firm had

included a staff level person in the proposal process. To this day, many years after leaving the firm, I can rely on them to provide me a good reference when needed.
Sharon B. – ZF Advisor

Career Moment

Your communications become your brand and legacy - In the mid 1950's, the earliest days of the computer industry and me in my mid 20's, I was a field engineer for Remington Univac. One of my responsibilities was a product called a Card to Tape Converter. Our product read IBM punched cards, stored the data in the industry's first magnetic core memory, converted it to binary code and wrote the information on magnetic tapes that were read by the Univac computer. Occasionally our machine wrote incorrect data on the tapes. After a thorough analysis, I found that a section of the core memory was defective. At that time, most engineers believed that, however primitive, magnetic cores could not fail. My assignment was to prove that I had an actual failure and should get a replacement. I submitted my report to my manager. He thought that the technical presentation was excellent. But said the rest of my report was barely average and that my work represented me poorly and would damage my credibility. That manager caused my first eureka; realizing that my written communications was "Me" to all its audiences. In many cases it became their first impression of me. I resolved that everything I wrote would get my own "How does this project Me" second look. Initially it took extra effort, but over time became part of my process and has served me well throughout a long career. While this example is about written work it applies to everything we do. Always doing your best work will set you apart and earn pride in your performance.

Art C. – ZF Friend

Win-Win Strategy

In the workplace, your colleagues and co-workers are your team, you are all interdependent and they are not your competitors. What does interdependence look like? In childhood, we are dependent on our parents/guardians/community. As we grow, we strive to achieve independence. After this independence is reached, if we are to succeed and have impact in life and career, **we need to integrate our skills and contributions with those of others.** In our careers, we need the self- confidence to balance our independence with interdependence on our colleagues. This pathway is called Dependence Maturity: a principle by author Stephen Covey that's critically important for students beginning their careers.



Along with this, we have the concept of “Bigger Pie Careers”. Essentially, a self-serving motive would be to cut yourself a bigger slice of the pie, while a win-win motive would be to make the pie bigger, so everyone’s slices are bigger. Great careers are bigger pie careers! BPCs define the power of win-win cultures.

BPCs build trust and combat politics. Even though you will have defined jobs as you progress through your new career, you can amplify your impact by linking it to the broader mission and strategy of your employer. And don’t worry, many people will notice and remember. They might even describe you as a leader.

**A bigger slice is one thing,
a Bigger Pie is everything.**

Source: Bigger Pie Strategies

Bigger Pies & win-win strategies are fundamental to building a career with the potential to become your foundation for retirement and future legacy reaching Maslow’s apex, self-actualization.

Leadership - In Life and Career

While STEM education and careers are promising, they may be overemphasized. The perception that technical studies offer more employment options and financial security than liberal arts, and that interpersonal skills can be acquired naturally, slight the need for a hybrid skill set. Critical thinking, persuasive writing, communications, and teamwork are not fluffy, nice-to-have additions. They are hard-won and rigorously maintained abilities that might better be referred to as “power skills”.

- Forbes

Don’t confuse management with leadership. Managers allocate and deploy resources and assets. Managers in bureaucratic organizations frequently just translate orders from above to their local work group. Leaders, on the other hand, inspire people to achieve worthy goals. Many managers are effective leaders, but many are not. You will know the difference as your career progresses. **You may not want to be a manager, but you should work to become a leader.** It’s simple; live your values and seek win-win outcomes. Before long, your colleagues will seek your advice and coaching.

To succeed, you will have to develop your time management, presentation, and communication skills - listening, writing and verbal. These are leadership and core skills that will help you wherever your career takes you.

Career Stamina

Think About – Be Prepared, Win-Win Outcomes, Lifelong Learning and Worthy Goals

Stamina is the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort. Career goes beyond any job; it's defined by each person's lifelong work. It's a marathon - with marathoners known for stamina. Just as building physical stamina requires hard work, career stamina requires hard work and personal discipline throughout your career. Focus on your career strategy: keep Doing, Learning and Preparing. It's win-win; **you are competing with your own potential**. As you learn and discover more about yourself, you might change your career direction. That's natural and you will find that much of your prior experiences will serve you well going forward.

Adaptability Stamina

The days of lifetime employment are over. It's no longer common for someone to stay in the same job or career for their whole life. Many factors outside your control can force you to find a new employer. You also are a "Free Agent", meaning you can change employers whenever you conclude your current situation is no longer a win-win and a career-building opportunity. It's essential to expect the unexpected and be able to adapt to inevitable change in your career. Always perform your current job as though you will be there indefinitely into the future – until you are no longer there.

Career Moment

No path is linear – I worked summers and school vacations at Shaw's Supermarkets from junior year of high school through junior year of college. I was promoted from Bagger to Cashier to Customer Service Representative in my first month. They seemed to like my work ethic. I majored in Biology and, during my junior year, found an internship at a diagnostic laboratory company and I joined them as a Medical Technologist following graduation. At the same time, some trusted family friends advised me to continue my formal education along with my work and I chose an MBA program to complement my Biology with Business and Leadership skills. My employer subsidized 75% of the cost. After two years, I realized that I didn't want a lab career. I wanted to work with people and use my technical knowledge to help them solve problems. Shortly thereafter, I briefly joined a biology-based start-up and discovered the chaos and unique challenges of early-stage

businesses. Each of my jobs helped me discover my next career step - technical sales where I could work with and help customers solve their problems. I recently joined a life science tools company in an entry-level sales position. What fun, I'm developing professional sales and personal management skills along with exposure to product management and marketing. I love what I'm doing, learning a lot and preparing for future career opportunities. Erik R – Friend of ZF

Performance Stamina - Master the Fundamentals

Your career is a lifelong mission requires unrelenting job performance. You build the stamina for this journey by mastering work-related and personal fundamentals. You can and should get help from family, friends, and colleagues, but begin with self-awareness so you can be your own key mentor. Maintain your professionalism. Set high standards; be loyal particularly to organizations and leaders that create career-building opportunities. Be professional and realistic when setting goals. Goals have three levels:

1. **Sandbag Goals** - to conceal or misrepresent one's true position, potential, or intent, especially in order to gain an advantage. Never sandbag, it's not professional and it will inevitably fail.
2. **Achievable Goals** - for work tasks and output that others depend on. Should be a stretch and you will occasionally fall short. Do your absolute best, clean up any mess and move on.
3. **Personal Goals** - not impossible, but the leading edge of your vision. You may never hit your personal goals, but you are likely to achieve your full potential. For example, young climate activist Greta Thunberg set out to pressure the Swedish and other global governments to reduce carbon emissions. Within this bureaucratic and political world that we live in, she unsurprisingly fell short of this goal, but nevertheless succeeded in starting a global climate movement. Don't sell yourself short when setting personal goals.

Some key work fundamentals:

1. **Listening** - perhaps your most powerful tool. Learn and lead by listening. You learn by thoughtfully listening to facts and opinions. And by thoughtfully listening, you earn trust and leadership credibility. An effective listening technique is to ask "open-ended" questions followed by "clarifying" questions. For example, "What keeps you up at night?" followed by "What caused the problem of missed deadlines?"
2. **Reading** - you can learn almost anything through reading. It's an infinite source of knowledge and easily accessed through the internet. Commit

some time every day to reading.

3. **Due diligence** - related to listening and reading. You may make wrong decisions, but you should never make uninformed decisions.
4. **Time management** - time is our most precious resource. Plan and budget your time. Work on the most important topics, not those you enjoy. Eliminate distractions. Respect your colleagues' time in meetings and communications.
5. **Writing** - become a skilled writer. Learn how to deliver a clear and easily readable message. Take the time to write and then read and edit – multiple times if needed. Test your logic. Read one final time from the perspective of your target audience. Will they understand and be influenced by your message? See Appendix C, APEX Writing Method – it outlines a powerful writing technique.

Failure Stamina

Failure is essential; it's a vital part of your learning process. If you never fail, you're being too cautious. In your due diligence and interviews, test whether this organization encourages risk and recognizes the value of failure. When you do fail, remember the three principles of failure response:

Principles of Failure Response

1. Admit, apologize, and take full responsibility.
2. Do everything you can to mitigate any consequences.
3. Commit to learning from it and improving in the future.

Emotional Stamina - Be Positive + Strong

Emotional stamina is not about winning the battle. It is the strength and resilience to power through the storm and constructively move onward.

**“The greatest glory in living lies not in never
falling, but in rising every time we fall.”**

Nelson Mandela

Trauma results from an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience. Traumatic events may involve a single event, or repeated exposure over many years. College, careers, and family often create chronic stress that we must learn to manage in order to remain productive and avoid emotional trauma.

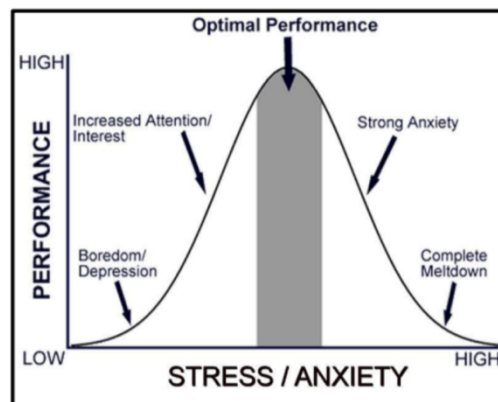
Examples: Will I get into the college of my choice? Can I afford it? What field

should I major in? Am I prepared for my tests? Will (X) accept my invitation to homecoming? Can I achieve my academic goals? Should I go to graduate school? How do I get a job I want? How do I succeed in my new job? How do I earn more pay and promotions? Should I change jobs? Should I start a family? Does (X) share my growing affection?

If you become a leader or manager, you will discover new sources of stress and, more and more, people will depend on your advice, wisdom, and stability. We all have our personal demons that thrive on stress. **Don't accept the common advice about avoiding stress. Effective people and leaders learn to manage stress and build their emotional stamina.** In your personal lifestyle and your career, you will need to assess your emotional stamina, its limits, and your capacity to be proactive, empowered, and risk-taking.

Colleges understand the Stress/Performance model shown to the right and use stress to elevate performance. We may resist and complain and then adapt. How do you build your resilience to stress?

- Be self-aware – seek and accept reality.
- Avoid denial.
- Believe in yourself and your emotional strength; you are not a victim.
- Associate with supportive, positive friends and colleagues – let them help you deal with stress.
- Help others when they face emotional stress.
- Review how you have faced similar challenges.
- Discover how others have coped with similar situations. How did they overcome the consequences?
- Be proactive and seek win-win solutions.



Pragmatic Ways to Develop Emotional Resilience and Stamina*

1. **Commit to action and finding a constructive solution – Don't be paralyzed.**
 - a. Replace negative thoughts with positive ones
 - b. Maintain a healthy lifestyle
 - c. Communicate often
 - d. Encourage feedback and criticisms
2. **Relax, breathe and connect**
 - a. Meditate
 - b. Practice deep breathing when you feel burnt out
 - c. Appreciate nature
 - d. Devote time to your family – parents, partner, and kids
 - e. Catch up with old friends
3. **Be positive**
 - a. Recall prior stressful challenges and how you overcame them
 - b. Spend time doing what you love to do
 - c. Invest in some good reads – self-help books, positive thinking, inspirational stories, etc.

* Based on positivepsychologyprogram.com – What is Emotional Resilience and How to Build It.

Financial Stamina - Planning Ahead is the Key

Do you plan to be financially self-sufficient? Self-sufficient doesn't mean rich; it means that your lifestyle is consistent with your economics. This is a commitment that all ZF students make when accepting a ZF scholarship. Going forward, we will assume that you plan to be financially self-sufficient. **To become and remain financially self-sufficient you have to keep score.** Your financial scoreboard is named "Budget". Your budget must project into the future as your life and career evolve. The term "Pro Forma" literally means performed routinely and according to form. In finance, it often means projected financial conditions after assumed events and changes. Starting with your student loans, you will make decisions such as, spouse/partner, family, housing, loans for large purchases, health insurance etc., that impact your future economics. To visualize your economic future, you will need a budget package. Learn about budgeting and build a simple spreadsheet for your budgets. This can include a short term weekly or monthly budget, an annual budget plus several annual pro forma budgets – perhaps 5, 10 and 25 years into the future. Use terminology and detail that suit you and provide space to document the underlying assumptions particularly for your pro forma budgets. When assumptions change, budgets must be updated. Everyone's financial plan must include savings – for both planned expenses such as children's education, your retirement(s) and unexpected emergencies. Don't forget that your savings, when carefully invested, earn compound interest. For example, compound interest on savings of \$100 per month at 6% interest

becomes \$200,000 in 40 years. Pro forma budgeting is strategic and will highlight the lifestyle and decisions necessary for sustained financial self-sufficiency.

Opportunities Abound - Be Prepared

You can't predict what and when exciting career opportunities will present themselves. Your career strategy should be to prepare for the broadest possible range. You won't be "Qualified" for all these, but you can become the best candidate by being known for a high level of commitment and performance, by being a power learner and by living values that earn trust.

Career Moment

My First Promotion – Early in my career, I was an engineer in a small department of a large company. We provided engineering services to our sales departments when they were bidding on complex systems. One day our manager announced that he had too many people reporting to him, and he would have to organize us into teams and appoint a team supervisor. I was the newest and least experienced member of my team. When he called me into his office and appointed me as the new team supervisor, I reacted by asking, "How can you do this, I'm the least experienced and skilled member of the team?" He explained it was easy; my team members were highly skilled engineers who wanted to work on technical challenges. My job was to become their interface with our customers and do the logistical work they didn't want to do. My manager reassured me that they wouldn't have a problem – and they didn't.
– Frank Z – ZF Coach

Career Moment

My Biggest Promotion - I was 35 years old and had recently joined a small scientific instrument company as VP Manufacturing. Things weren't going well, and we had shrunk from about 150 people down to about 100 through layoffs and the sale of a small division. Soon I was the only VP remaining. Unbeknown to me, two of my colleagues asked our venture capital investors to meet with them the evening prior to an upcoming Board of Directors meeting. They explained that we faced weak new orders, low morale and unfocused direction – in short, we were failing. They concluded that we needed new leadership, and they proposed me. The next morning, these directors met privately with the founder, and I was elected Executive VP at our Board meeting. Three months later, I was elected President and CEO. I felt truly unqualified to be CEO and had no idea how to lead us forward, but I had demonstrated a commitment to learning and my colleagues sure wanted me to succeed. Through the sheer will of many people over the next 8 years we became a global leader. Frank Z – ZF Coach

Career Moment

I decided to continue into a Ph.D. program straight from undergrad. I was following my lifelong plan: get my Ph.D. in chemistry or biology, go work for a biotech company, then work towards developing an impactful drug for diseases desperately needing a cure. However, after the first year in my Ph.D. program, I could tell my heart wasn't in it – I was having second thoughts. I didn't doubt that I could finish the program with a Ph.D., but rather it wasn't what I wanted to do after all. I wasn't so sure that working at the bench doing research was my calling. After some soul searching and "alternative" career exploration, I came across science writing. I had always loved reading articles on the latest science breakthrough or new drugs in development, but somehow it never struck me that it was someone's *job* to write those fascinating articles. Once it had dawned on me that science writing may be a good fit, I took the plunge and deviated from my plan: I graduated with my master's degree, began pursuing freelance science writing, and ended up taking my first job as a laboratory technician and clinical study coordinator. Although my college freshman self would have *never* guessed I would be where I am today, I'm so happy I took a leap of faith and pursued my interests. **Moral of the story:** deviating from your original path isn't failing – it's just altering the path as you grow and learn. Always follow your heart and don't be afraid to try new things, especially at the beginning of your career.
Chelsea WB – ZF Alum

Career Change - Go For It!

You are learning, gaining new experiences, and discovering more about yourself every day. You may well conclude that you should change career paths. Do your due diligence and go forward.

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Yogi Berra, Former Major League Baseball player and manager

Career Moment

When I was in high school, I thought I wanted to become a welder. I chose metal fabrication as a major, as my high school had a vocational branch. I graduated and got a job at a metal fabrication business right away. Within a year or so I decided I had made a terrible mistake. I did not enjoy the work and I regretted not taking courses to prepare for college. I enrolled in a community college and began taking classes while working full-time. I paid my own way and graduated with honors with an AA degree. The classes I chose were science heavy because I thought I might be interested in sports medicine or physical therapy, having spent many years as a competitive gymnast. Upon graduating community college, I applied and was accepted at Boston University which had a good physical therapy program. I began classes and also took a part-time job at a physical

therapy practice. After a few semesters, and witnessing real-life experience of the day-to-day realities of a physical therapist, I again realized this wasn't something I wanted to do. I shifted my major to history because it interested me and I wasn't quite sure at that point what else to do. After a couple more semesters, with my student debt adding up, and realizing I wasn't enjoying my new major, I decided to withdraw from school and work for a while until I had a better sense of what I wanted to do with my life. I took a job as an interior landscaper and immediately realized I loved taking care of plants. I was brought into a management role which I seemed to have an aptitude for. While working for this company, the opportunity arose for me to go to work at the zoo in Boston installing the plants in the new tropical rainforest exhibit. It was the most interesting and exciting job I had ever had! After my time at the zoo as a contractor, the zoo recruited me to work for them and create a horticulture program and department which over ten years gave me the foundation to grow in the industry. After a brief stint helping to plan a botanical garden project in Providence, RI, I joined the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens in Florida where I became the Director of Horticulture, Facilities and Exhibits. I spent 12 years there before being recruited back to the zoo in Boston to become Chief Operating Officer which is where I am now enjoying a new challenge. I never dreamed I would end up in the zoo business but here I am twenty-nine years later with a career I wouldn't trade for anything. My training for horticulture was entirely self-driven and primarily on-the-job. I attended classes, workshops, conferences and seminars and absolutely loved it. I also loved and still love working at a zoo. I rose through management and realized I really enjoyed that. Once I realized my passion, I stuck with it, and it's led me to a successful career. I believe it's been the key to my success. Bob C – ZF Alum.

You Are a “Free Agent”

Think about professional sports where athletes historically were the property of the teams they played for. They could be traded but could not resign and play for another team. Many historically great professional athletes played their entire careers under these rules. Today our professional sports leagues have adopted some form of free agency. Athletes have to earn the unrestricted right to change employers. As unrestricted free agents, athletes can market their skills and potential to join a team of their choice and to gain increased compensation and greater security. It's not a true auction and they're not required to accept the highest compensation; they can consider the entire employment arrangement and pick the one that best meets their needs. Unlike professional athletes, we are automatically unrestricted free agents. **Unless we voluntarily sign an employment contract, we can resign and move to a more desirable employer and job.** Just like professional athletes, however, we need to present our performance and skills to demonstrate our value.

You may never change employers, but you should think like an unrestricted free agent. Keep improving your skills and value. Become a leader. In doing so, you

will become more valuable to your current employer and potential new employers. You will gain new alternatives.

Launch Your Career!

Your career will unfold as you live. It should be fun and exciting, and if not, fix it. Don't worry about failure because you will learn and overcome. Your successful career will open opportunities for every aspect of your life. Sure, it's work, but it's an investment in you and your family. Get ready, get set and GO!

Appendix A - Recommended Reading:

1. The Miracle of Self-Discipline - Brian Tracy – Audiobook -

The "No-Excuses" Way to Getting Things Done.

2. How to Read a Book - Mortimer Adler

Learn about the various levels of reading and how to achieve them, from elementary reading through systematic skimming and inspectional reading to speed reading.

3. The Power of Habit - Charles Duhigg

Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

4. 7 Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen Covey

Powerful Lessons in Personal Change.

5. Personal Finance for Dummies - Eric Tyson

Understand personal finance and put your money to work!

6. Acing the Interview - Tony Beshara

How to Ask and Answer the Questions That Will Get You the Job

7. The First 90 Days - Michael Watkins

Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter

8. Who Moved my Cheese - Kenneth Blanchard

An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life

9. What Color is Your Parachute – Richard Bolles

A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers

10. Emotional Stamina:

a. Book: 10% Happier – Dan Harris

b. What is Emotional Resilience and How to Build It?

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/emotional-resilience/>

c. Resilience Skills, Factors and Strategies of the Resilient Person

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/resilience-skills/>,

d. Trauma and Resilience – Wilder Research

https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/AnokaCountyMWCtrauma_Snap_shot_10-14.pdf

Appendix B - Useful Websites:

1. Zeniefoundation.org – Learn about ZF and their programs. Access ZF Resources.
2. LinkedIn.com – Due diligence and networking
3. Mint.com – Personal financial planning and budgeting

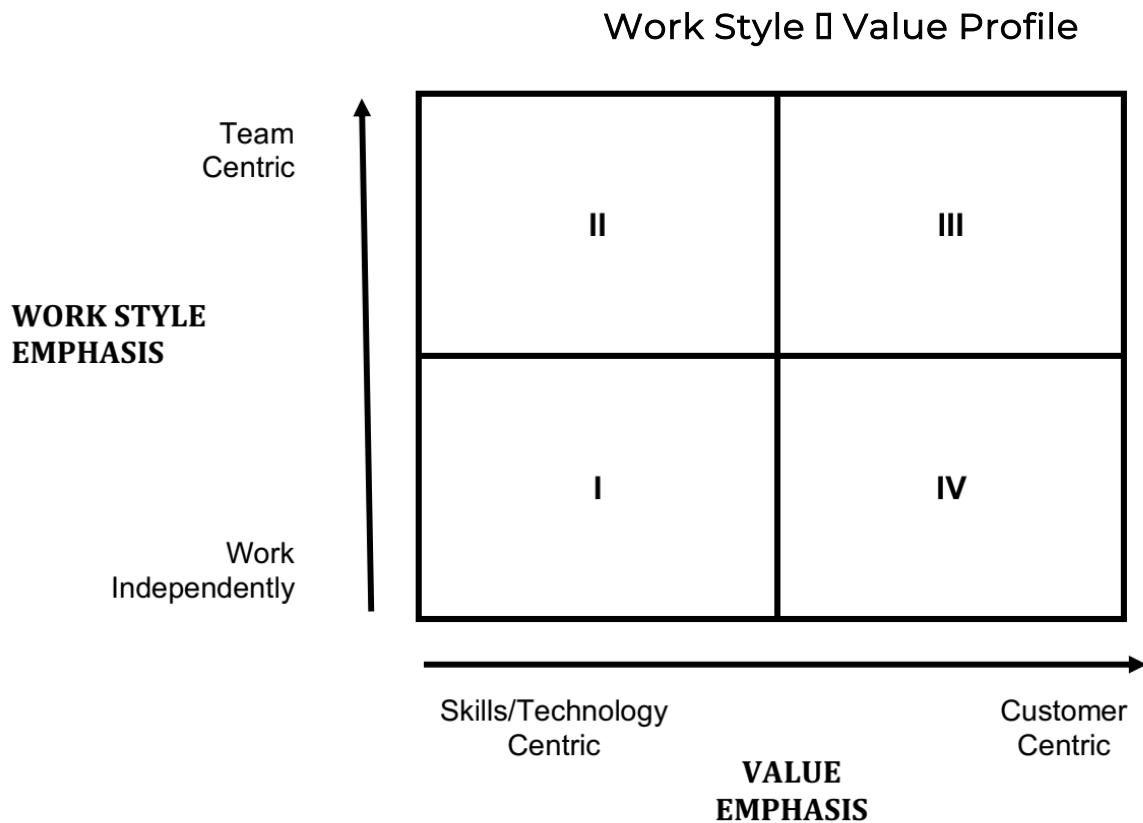
Appendix C - The APEX Writing Model

About fifty years ago my employer invested in me (Frank Zenie) by inviting me to attend a one-day communications seminar called the APEX Communications method. I have no idea whether some successor organization still teaches this method, but I frequently apply it in my communications. The method is simple:

A	Attention- Dramatic phrase and/or graphic that captures your audience's attention
P	Point- what viewpoint or conclusion do you want your audience to accept? In sales and marketing communications, your point is often a strong claim where the ideal response is: "Prove It."
E	Examples- Supporting information or examples supporting your point.
X	X = Strong close- Call to action. Ranges from intellectual acceptance of your point to purchasing our product. It may be a question such as: What do you think or does that make sense?

An ad or business letter may use APEX once, while a longer communication, might be structured into multiple APEX sections. Think of a sales presentation, where you summarize the customer's problem and gain agreement that your summary is accurate. Then you present an ideal solution and get agreement that, although it probably doesn't exist, it would fully meet your customer's needs. Then you present your proposed solution against the criteria of the ideal solution acknowledging any gaps that might exist. Now you're ready for a trial close leading to the next step in your customer's buying process.

Appendix D - Self-Assessment



Realistic, yet subjective, self-assessment provides your foundation to an effective career. Work Style and Value Emphasis provide insight into careers that will effectively use your intrinsic skills and personal work preferences.

Begin by ranking yourself along two key dimensions:

1. **Work Style Emphasis** – Rank your preferred work style on a scale of 1 to 10, starting with working independently being 1 and always being part of a team as a 10.
2. **Value Emphasis** – Rank your value delivery preference on a scale of 1 to 10, starting with unique expertise in your field being 1 and delivering innovative and pragmatic solutions to your customers a 10.

Note: We use “Customer” to be the end beneficiary of your work value. Students, for example, are a teacher’s customer and patients, are a nurse’s customer.

Using the rankings, place yourself in the above graphic. We've divided the Work Style/Value Emphasis area into quadrants for discussion only. You may, in fact, be in a transition area and exhibit more blended preferences and you may well move as you gain experience.

Many people never find where their pure passion meets their jobs and career. Be honest about where you are and where you want to be. Remember, there is no right answer and the answers you give today, are likely not the ones you will give in the future. This activity is not intended to be a static exercise. Mark your calendars and come back to it every 6 months or so and reassess. As you discover, make choices, and live those choices, you will grow and learn...your self-assessment will change. Some examples: All four quadrants offer great career opportunity, and you should head in the direction that best utilizes your skills and provides the greatest career satisfaction. Your entry level job may require Quadrant I type contributions until you discover, develop, and demonstrate how you can best deliver career value.

Quadrant I: You are proud of your technical skills and enjoy working alone to apply them to challenging problems. You might enjoy work in medical technical support, auto mechanics, professional individual sports, computer software development, scientific research or as an expert consultant, airline pilot, architect, or lawyer.

Quadrant II: You are proud of your technical skills and like to work with or lead teams that respect and complement your skills. You might enjoy work in building construction, firefighting, project management, manufacturing and logistics management, professional team sports and multi-disciplined consulting.

Quadrant III: You love being part of a team helping customers solve their problems. You might enjoy work in: business-to-business sales, mental healthcare, management consulting, banking, academic administration, charitable foundations, politics and government agencies, restaurant and hotel management, and commercial service providers.

Quadrant IV: You love working independently to help customers. You might enjoy work in: business to consumer sales, consulting, teaching, nursing and home health, and product service.

Appendix: E - Self-Assessment Profile Worksheets

I. Use the following table to document **your** personal values:

	Date:	Date:
Self-Awareness Values		
Commitment To Learning		
Financial Responsibility Beliefs		
Additional Value Notes		

II. Use the following table to document your own assessment of your top 3 SWCGs:

	1	2	3
Strengths			
Weaknesses			
Challenges			
Goals			

III. Use the following table to document feedback about you from friends and family:

	1	2	3
Strengths			
Weaknesses			
Challenges			
Goals			