
Creating a Professional Development Plan

Suzanne M. Rivera, Ph.D.
Associate VP for Research
Case Western Reserve University

What is a Professional Development Plan?

- ☐ A roadmap
- ☐ A script
- ☐ A set of specs
- ☐ A recipe
- ☐ Assembly instructions
- ☐ A commitment to yourself
- ☐ An investment in your future

Why Should I Plan?

- ❑ Nobody else cares about your career as much as you should. If you don't plan it, who will?
- ❑ The economy is shaky– nobody is indispensable.
- ❑ Studies show a plan put in writing or shared verbally with others is more likely to be actualized.

No Path? Make One.

- Does your institution have a formal training program for career advancement?
 - Yes = 13%
 - No = 82%
 - Don't know = 5%
- Does your institution have an informal training program for career advancement such as mentoring?
 - Yes = 22%
 - No = 71%
 - Don't know = 7%

Preparatory Steps

- ❑ Reflect on your job history, your current job, and your fantasies of a future job.
- ❑ Analyze your strengths, what you enjoy, what you like least about work.
- ❑ Do research. What are your options?
- ❑ Seek feedback as a reality check: what do others think about your strengths and future potential?

Exercise #1: Self Assessment

- ☐ What aspect of Research Administration interests/excites me the most?
- ☐ What are my job “must-haves” and what are my job “would-be-nices”?
- ☐ What are my limiting factors?
- ☐ How much change am I willing to tolerate (or put my family through)?

Set a Short-term Career Goal

- ☐ Promotion from Specialist to Manager
- ☐ Move from Department to Central
- ☐ Jump from non-exempt status to salaried job
- ☐ Become Lead Administrator for a regulatory committee
- ☐ Open a gourmet cupcake side business

Identify Action Steps

- ☐ Update my resume
- ☐ Attend conference/seminar
- ☐ Enroll in class(es)
- ☐ Strengthen skills in _____
- ☐ Apply for next opening in X office
- ☐ Move to different city/state
- ☐ Volunteer for new/extra duties

Name Your Dream

- This is a longer-term, aspirational goal
 - Director of Sponsored Projects
 - VP of Research Administration
 - Winner of American Idol
 - Retired at 55

Identify Barriers & Solutions

- ❑ I need another degree.
 - Can I find a part-time program?
 - Does my university offer tuition benefits?
 - Will my boss let me flex to attend class?

- ❑ I would have to leave my University.
 - Are there other schools, med-centers nearby?
 - Could I telecommute part-time to a job outside of my city?
 - Am I able to move for a great job?

Make a Five-Year Plan

- ❑ Set a target date for a reasonable short-term goal, add steps to get there
- ❑ Identify a longer-term aspirational work goal, add steps to get there
- ❑ Add non-work goals and commitments that may impede/support your work goals (and adjust accordingly)
- ❑ Note barriers/solutions at the bottom
- ❑ Update annually

Five Year Plan-April 2011

Family member	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
You	Take an accounting class Take on extra duties	Promotion to Manager			Promotion to Asst. Director
Partner	3rd year of PhD	4th year of PhD	5th year of PhD	Academic job-yr 1	Academic job-yr 2
Kid #1	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade Eagle Scout
Kid #2	Pre-school	Kindergarten	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade
Family		trip to Disneyland	get dog	buy house	
Barriers:					
Solutions:					

Five Year Plan-April 2011

Family member	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
You	Take an accounting class Take on extra duties	Promotion to Manager	ave second child	Work half time	Return to work full time
Partner	Academic job-3 rd year	Academic job-4 th year	Academic job-5 th year	Tenure review	Promotion to Associate Professor
Kid #1	Daycare	Daycare Potty train	Pre-K	Kindergarten	First Grade
Kid #2				Part-time daycare	Full-time daycare
Family			Kid #2 arrives	Move for better school district	
Barriers:					
Solutions:					

Exercise #2: Five Year Plan

- ☐ Enter a reasonable short-term goal in year 1 or 2
- ☐ Enter a big aspirational goal in year 3, 4, or 5
- ☐ Enter concrete steps you would have to take to meet your goals
- ☐ Fill in major family/life events to identify potential conflicts/issues
- ☐ Identify barriers and possible solutions at the bottom of the page

Find a Mentor (or Two)

- ☐ Choose someone(s) who has or has had the job you hope to have someday.
- ☐ Sometimes it's hard to find mentors who can advise about balancing work & family.
- ☐ Ok to have a mentor in your office and another one somewhere else.
- ☐ Should be someone you trust enough to show your Five Year Plan.

Take Advantage of Career Development Opportunities

- ❑ Your own HR department
- ❑ On-campus lectures in the School of Management or other applicable academic discipline
- ❑ Programs put on by professional societies like NCURA
- ❑ On-line motivational listservs
- ❑ The alumni networks from your college/university/grad school

Visualize and Act

- Imagine your desired future job.
- Perform as if you have the job you want next.
- Imagine yourself in the goal job now and act accordingly:
 - Work ethic
 - Attire
 - Language
 - Interpersonal behavior

Stay Informed & Be Alert

- ☐ Subscribe to job-search websites/listservs in your field to be aware of trends, required qualifications, etc.
- ☐ Know your value.
- ☐ Have a mental “freebie” list.
- ☐ Keep your resume on the desktop and update it regularly.

Take Care of You

- ❑ Get to know your colleagues (happy hour, walking group, book swap).
- ❑ Pay attention to your health.
- ❑ Protect time for recreation and physical activity.
- ❑ Sleep more, drink less, quit smoking.
- ❑ Nurture your personal relationships-- love is good for you!

EXIT 211 A



WEST

Utopia

