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Career Resource Guide: Guiding Principles

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Self-Discovery: Guiding Principles

Dr. Tim Butler, Director of Career Development at HBS and author of [Getting Unstuck](#), created a process that results in a list of clear, concise statements, that act as a compass or **guiding principles** related to navigating your career. For example, someone who notes that they need a high degree of interpersonal interaction in their day to feel excited about their work may not ideally want to be in an analyst type role in a closed-in office space. This “list” of career criteria make up your guiding principles and may cover areas of your life such as functional responsibilities, culture, lifestyle, and more. Below, Tim’s system is summarized for you.

The Nuts & Bolts of Your Guiding Principles

- Goal is to craft 7 to 12 career themes that hold true meaning for your professional career fulfillment.
- This work is a vital component to determining your future career goals and creating your marketing plan.
- The best time to do this assessment and reflection work is when you are not seeking a change!

What are Career Criteria?

- Phrases or short sentences that hold essential life meaning for you.
- They create focus and clarity.
- They are ingredients that, when combined, bring career fulfillment.
- When you have identified them, you know what to consider when evaluating career options.
- Should have a lifespan of roughly 5 to 7 years. Core of these themes will remain throughout career.
- Prioritize them so that #1 is most important and, most likely, non-negotiable. #10 or #12 might be a “nice-to-have” and important, but not a deal breaker.

How are Career Criteria Determined?

There are multiple inputs including a conversational or narrative approach as well as assessments that go into identifying nuggets or kernels that may lead to a career criteria statement. Ultimately, you decide what will bring you career satisfaction, but this approach is intended to give you unique and customized hints that are worth considering.

1. Narrative Approach to Self-Understanding – *MOST IMPORTANT*
 - Leverage a career coaching session to dig deep into your stories with the goal to identify skills, interests, motivators or passions, and values.
2. Self-Assessment Exercises including things like StrengthsFinder, 100 jobs, CareerLeader, 360 reviews, BIRKMAN, Insights, MBTI Personality Test, and hundreds of others.

How are Career Criteria Written?

- You must find the right words that tell your story.
- Keep them basic and to the point with one key meaning per statement.
- Craft them around elements of Functional Interest, Culture, Environment, Compensation, Life Needs, and Other Values important to you.

END GOAL: 7 to 12 identified Career Criteria statements, referred to as Your Guiding Principles.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE EXAMPLES

Examples are listed here to showcase a clear and concise statement.

Interest/Functional

- High interpersonal interactions with client facing opportunities
- Manage a global team of 10+ direct reports
- Ability to use data to influence decision making
- Strong c-suite mentor or sponsor or potential for one in organizations
- Part of senior executive leadership team
- Opportunity to build or grow a team of direct reports
- An organization with HR functioning as a strategic partner
- Autonomy to run a business unit with CEO support and resources to achieve success

Culture/Organization

- Believe in product or service represented
- Organization that saves or improves lives
- Organization that values innovation and utilizes cutting edge technology (or creates it)
- Back corporate values with community involvement priority
- A global organization with growth in China
- In alignment with company mission and values
- Must respect Corporation, CEO, and leadership team
- Passionate about social impact and sustainability efforts
- Well connected to larger metro community with support for board participation

Compensation

- Minimum compensation of \$____
- Ability to be paid for performance-incentive compensation with unlimited upside

Life Needs

- No more than 5 days of travel monthly
- At least 50% monthly travel with international opportunities
- Must live within 20 miles of international airport
- Weekends free of work obligations
- New York City or Washington D.C.
- Work from home when not traveling



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