**career/new business planner template**

**planning template and process for career change, self-employment or new business start-up**

People who are successful and happy usually work at something they love.

We rarely achieve great happiness and success working at what we dislike.

Also, what we love doing we often do very well. In turn we love it more because we are very good at it.

These inter-related 'secrets' of success are often overlooked, as many people find themselves doing work which they dislike, or even starting a business which they will not enjoy.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Often through necessity our work is not our ideal choice, but there are many times when we can choose a new direction, or maybe start a new part-time venture while keeping the 'day-job'. Through life we have more opportunity to choose a new or additional direction than we might realise. Sticking to habits or the expectations of others can prevent discovering greater success and fulfilment.If you want to make a change, consider this model. |   |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| enjoyment, passion, natural inclination, and love of something **→** | effort, determination, practice, knowledge, and experience **↓** |
| **↑** reward, satisfaction, independence, and free choice | **←** expertise, quality, reputation, value, and efficiency |

 |

Being good at something enables high quality results to be produced for customers - in a way that competitors have trouble beating. When we excel and work hard at something we inevitably become better at it. We develop expertise and specialisms. We innovate and create. Making constant improvements in work or business happens much easier when we enjoy and love what we do.

This effect enables many people to build successful businesses around their hobbies or passions. If you build a career or new business plans around a personal passion, or an activity or interest that you love, you will tend automatically to harness several vital elements for success:

* you will work very hard and be determined and persistent
* you will constantly improve your skills and knowledge, which will improve your product/service quality
* you will have a smile on your face, and your enthusiasm will transfer to staff, customers, suppliers, supporters, etc
* you will quickly build a strong reputation - especially for reliability and quality
* you will treat mistakes and failures as lessons learned and challenges to be met - instead of obstacles and problems
* you will keep up to date with trends, and you will increasingly lead new trends
* you will build competitive advantage - especially in quality, customer service and value
* you will be efficient and so make profits easier
* you will be happy in your work - which helps sustain success and life-balance

These principles underpin the processes and template below.

**process and template purpose**

These process and template methods are designed to help identify, plan and achieve a career or business, for example:

* starting a career, after school or college
* career new direction and/or change
* new business start-up
* buying a business or franchise
* starting a part-time business or second job
* or becoming self-employed or freelance

The tool and process are for people facing or seeking a career change, especially a move into self-employment or starting up their own new business. Redundancy, for example, or losing a job for other reasons, is a difficult experience, yet can offer a great chance to find a new and better direction.

The materials and methods can also be used with groups of people seeking career change, direction, or help with planning self-employment or new business start-up.

The ideas could be helpful to you if you've googled search terms such as:

* career planner
* find my ideal business
* career plans template
* find the right job for me
* find my ideal career
* decide my career
* what's my my ideal job?
* decide a new business direction
* business start-up process tips
* achieve success and happiness
* be happy in my work
* start a new (whatever) business - the 'whatever' being your passion
* be my own boss
* fresh start after redundancy

**passion to profit planner**

The exercise is not a substitute for conventional 'outplacement' counselling and training support, or for [new business planning](http://www.businessballs.com/freebusinessplansandmarketingtemplates.htm).

It's an additional (quick and early) planning tool - perhaps to open more possibilities - which for some people is helpful beyond traditional career advice, or complex business plans, since it focuses on making the most of your own passions and strengths, rather than being influenced by the job market or other market pressures.

The process also enables more creative ideas and possibilities than are normally encouraged in traditional business planning.

Here is a quick simple outline of the process and template:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [1](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#1) |   | [2](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#2) |   | [3](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#3) |   | [4](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#4) |   | [5](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#5) |   | [6](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#6) |
| your passion or passions | + | your strengths and your preferred working style | + | some research |  + | shape it all into something that people want  | + | time to grow and develop  | = | your new career or business, your independence and security |

Here is the process explanation in more detail.

**new career/business planner - basic principles**

* You will be successful and happy at work if your work is built on your own strengths and passions.
* Successful self-employment or freelance work is ideally based on your own personal strengths and passions too.
* So too would a successful new start-up businesses, if that's what you'd like to do.
* On the other hand, conventional miserable employment tends to be built on received or inherited or conditioned ideas of what work should be: the need to get a job, any job; the obligation to pursue aspirations of parents or other authority figures; the reluctance to or fear of change; and habits of lifestyle, social circles, spending patterns, etc., which constrain personal freedom and thinking.
* Employment is traditionally considered (and advocated by parents and teachers, etc) to be safer and more secure than self-employment and running your own business. Usually it's not, especially today. Being in control of your own work as a supplier or freelancer, or running your own business, is commonly the most reliable way to earn a living and build financial security and confidence.
* Whether you pursue your career through employment or self-employment or by starting your own business, the vital change is to see yourself as - and act like - a supplier, fulfilling a function which makes use of your passion(s) and strength(s).

This process seeks to:

* Suggest a more satisfying idea of what work is and can be.
* Reduce or eliminate dependence upon an employer for work and financial security.
* Offer a path - in achievable stages - away from miserable unsatisfying employment, especially if required due to redundancy or an unacceptable work situation (stress, travel, life-balance, or the simple need to be happier, etc).
* Encourage and enable self-determination, self-reliance, and independence.

The process is contained in the template below, and essentially follows the [passion to profit formula above](http://www.businessballs.com/career-planner-template.htm#passion_to_profit_at-a-glance_formula):

For the purposes of this exercise, '**passions**' are the things you **love and enjoy**, and typically that you are **naturally good at** too. **'Strengths'** are your **working and thinking styles** - for example whether you are good with people or not; whether you are good with numbers, or machines, or processes; whether you are a logical or an intuitive thinker, etc. You will know your passions. The [Multiple Intelligences Self-Test](http://www.businessballs.com/howardgardnermultipleintelligences.htm) and the [VAK Self-Test](http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstylestest.htm) can help to confirm your natural strengths and preferred thinking and working styles. There is some overlap between passions and strengths, but essentially passions will tend to suggest **what** you can do and offer, whereas strengths tend to suggest **how** you will provide whatever offering you develop.

**Experience**, **knowledge**, **skills** and **attitude** can feature in, and for many people contribute to, both passions and strengths, but for the purposes of this exercise are best considered within **strengths**.

My personal situation provides an example of how a passion and strength can combine to create more meaningful work and a new business. One of my own passions is personal development. One of my strengths is writing. The combination of these two enabled me to develop this website. I am a better writer than a face-to-face trainer (although it took me a while to realise it). I know now that I can make very effective use of my passion by channelling it through written delivery. The internet offered a way to turn this into a new business. I'm not a web designer or programmer, but the combination of a passion and a strength proved powerful enough for me to overcome the technical challenges. This sort of approach is possible for anyone: combine a passion with a strength, and amazing things can happen. I've seen it in very many people and the formula always seems to be similar.

Here's a different hypothetical example:

You might be stuck in work you hate. You might have a passion for working with animals. You have strengths in working with people and organising and scheduling. Just a little research will confirm the enormous potential for all products and services related to animals. With some creative open-minded thinking, and adding in your other passions and strengths (all you are good at and love and enjoy - plus relevant experience, knowledge, skills and attitude), many possibilities for a new business or freelance service - working with animals and related products services - will begin to emerge. If you commit your time to develop and allow these ideas to grow (which is the essence of turning ideas or dreams into reality), then real choice and change inevitably follow, and an exciting new business if you want.

**passion to profit template**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **action** | **your own notes, aims and commit- ments\*** | **guidance notes** |
| 1. List your passions. In no particular order or structure - passions are what you love and enjoy, and will tend to be things that you are good at.  |  | Everyone loves and is very good at something, and generally two or three things. Keep an open mind when you consider your own passions. It is possible to make a new career or business out of anything. Passions are not necessarily related to conventional work and how we imagine work to be, and yet every passion can be a career or a new business. A hobby is often a passion. A yearning or feeling drawn to a natural capability is often a passion. Get feedback from positive friends about your own passions, especially if your confidence is at a low ebb. Everyone is [fantasticat](http://www.businessballs.com/fantasticat.htm) something, or potentially so. A passion (or combination of more than one passion) is the root of a truly successful new venture - be it a career change, becoming freelance, or starting a new business. |
| 2. List your strengths. Strengths are your preferred working styles, including the way you prefer to connect with people. |   | [Measure your Multiple Intelligences](http://www.businessballs.com/howardgardnermultipleintelligences.htm) and your VAK style, to see your basic strengths and working style preferences (e.g., inter-personal, or numerical, or words and language) which will indicate your most natural and effective type of work **and** ways you can do and provide the work. Get feedback from positive friends, especially if your confidence is at a low ebb.You experience (including hard knocks and tough times), your knowledge, skills and attitudinal strengths are all part of your strengths |
| 3. Combine your of passion(s) and strengths. Look for combinations which could work together to produce an offering that people want or need, in a way that you can provide it enjoyably. |   | Mix and match your passions and strengths to create combinations which would work together as products or services, or a special expertise which others might need. [Brainstorming](http://www.businessballs.com/brainstorming.htm) is very useful for this stage of the process. Allow possibilities time and space to emerge. Do not let finance be an obstacle. It is possible to start most things on a small experimental scale with very little money. Time and commitment are far more important than financial investment. If there are some missing pieces (for example a qualification or vital bit of knowledge or training) use the [goal planner](http://www.businessballs.com/goal_planning.htm). Use the goal planner anyway if you like to see organised elements and a timeline. [Project management methods](http://www.businessballs.com/project.htm) are helpful for people who prefer a structured or strongly planned approach. Other people prefer to work more intuitively, which is fine. You probably will not be able to decide and confirm exactly what you will be doing, and for whom and how, at this stage. Aim simply to come up with a shape of a new direction or offering, or set of ideas that excite you. |
| 4. Research - investigate the potential for your ideas and possibilities above. Consider the best 'route to market' as well as the demand and values aspects. 'Route to market' includes in this context whether your offering is best provided via an employed position, or as a freelancer, or via a shop or office, or via the web, or other method of delivering what you have to offer, to the people who want it. |   | Ask friends. Look on the web for existing similar offerings, and for demand. Begin to imagine how a product or service could be provided and within what sort of business or financial model - basically how you'd monetise the provision - make money from it - which can be done in very many different ways. This process is just as useful for career change for employed work, as it is for breaking out as a freelancer or starting your own business. Crucially your research must give you confidence that the basic financials are viable: that there is demand for what you will be doing or providing; that the costs of provision do not exceed the price that people will pay or the revenues which can be generated from the activity. Be creative about the ways that revenue can be created. This website, for example gives everything away free, but due to its high traffic levels produces revenues via advertising, which is an effective financial model for many web businesses. Freelancing with several clients is often a much better way to derive income from a specialised personal offering than conventional employment. Some consumer offerings are better supplied via mail order, or door-to-door; other ideas are better suited to a shop, or a rented office. This is all part of the research: exploring and considering the best ways to deliver your offering. And remember that even if you stay within the world of employed work, you will work more enjoyably and profitably if you think and act like a supplier. The most successful employees behave like a business.  |
| 5. Time to grow and develop. Consider and decide how quickly you need to implement your plans.  |   | Any worthwhile change usually takes time. Even if you have a lot of money to invest in a new business start-up, or some working capital to get you started in self-employment of some sort, time is crucial for refining and developing your offering, and for establishing yourself. That's why is useful to start now. A substantial new business can be built in five years easily. Google had achieved world dominance in ten. Self-employment takes two years to get properly established. A shop can open in a matter of days, but it takes many months to become established, no matter how much money is spent on advertising. This website took ten years to build. But it cost me nothing - just time. Think how you will feel if you are still in a job you hate in five years. Five years is enough for virtually any sort of career change. If you have plenty of time, start now, and your costs will be very low. Change costs more when it needs to be rushed. Given time you can start any sort of consumer business from home on a budget less than your weekly bar bill. Give up a holiday or two, and that's easily enough to start a small business. A small business, built on someone's passion(s) and strengths quite soon becomes a big business - enough for your personal security, independence and your pension. Time is no problem if you start now. Time also helps ideas to become polished into real gems. If you have a passion to work for yourself one day, or to start your own business, don't wait until you are forced to do it. Start it now in your spare time. A couple of hours a week would get you started. Then once you are started, your project has a life of its own and will pull you along with it, provided of course that you love and enjoy it. Again refer to the [goal planner](http://www.businessballs.com/goal_planning.htm) and if necessary the [project management](http://www.businessballs.com/project.htm) and [business planning](http://www.businessballs.com/freebusinessplansandmarketingtemplates.htm) content, and any other relevant materials and tools here. That's what they are here for. |
| 6. Your new business - this is you - working in whatever way is most appropriate and fulfilling for you, specialising in your passion, using your natural strengths - whether employed, self- employed or running your own business. |  | People going through this process will mainly or eventually tend to end up working for themselves or running their own business. That's not to say you will start off like that, especially if you are young, when it is very helpful often to get your experience and establish contacts by working for an employer. The crucial point, whatever your work status, is to carve out a special value and independence for yourself that puts you beyond the whims of the employment market and uncaring employers. Certain people are always in work that they enjoy and are satisfactorily rewarded for. This is because they are doing something that they love and which they are brilliant at, which allows them to behave very independently. This option is available to everyone, and its value to the individual is greater than any pension fund. Visualise it and write it in the notes and commitments column, left.* Believe it and commit to making it happen.
* Refine it constantly as it develops.
* Give it time and space to grow.
* Enjoy building it.
* Start very small if you like.
* Start now.
 |

\* Expand the second column width - wide enough for your own notes. Make your notes action-based, with purpose, clear measurable aims, and timescales where helpful. Refer to or use the [goal-planning process and tool](http://www.businessballs.com/goal_planning.htm) if it helps you. Give yourself aims that are achievable steps. Refer to the [delegation methods and SMART planner tool](http://www.businessballs.com/delegation.htm) - you are effectively your boss, delegating tasks to yourself.

**group activities using this template**

This process and template can be used with groups of people who seek help in identifying new career or business direction and ideas.

The way you run group activities is crucial for their effectiveness.

Read the tips for [planning and running team building activities](http://www.businessballs.com/teambuilding.htm).

Also helpful are the tips on [planning and running workshops](http://www.businessballs.com/workshops.htm).

Ensure that team-building activities comply with equality policy and law in respect of gender, race, disability, age, etc.

Team-building games and activities have to agreeable and acceptable to group members, and the exercises have to be fair.

You can use this process and template with groups to help with any of the following:

* finding more enjoyable personal or career direction
* finding satisfaction and personal fulfilment in work
* identifying and developing a move into self-employment
* early planning and visualisation for new business start-up
* exploring opportunities for changing an existing business
* outplacement and redundancy support
* seeking self-determination and independence

**summary**

Whether you want to start your own business, become self-employed, freelance, or prefer to be employed, the principles within this process still apply.

Think of yourself as a company, whether you work for yourself or for someone else.

Be your own boss - give yourself opportunities, aims, a vision, and plan the steps to achieve what you want.

Making a lot of money is not always the main aim of people seeking a new career or to start a new business. Many people who start their own businesses or become self-employed want choice and independence - to be on control of their own decisions and future.

For many people, profit, and sometimes substantial reward, are the natural results of working hard doing something they love.