

# Your Career Management Guide



## Unit one: Taking Charge

Self-management skills

Project manage your study

Understand employability

Develop the professional you



THE  
**CAREER MAZE**

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a resource to introduce you to effective career management skills and strategies for your study and future employability in the 21st century.

## **The TOP 10 TIPS for 21st century Career Management**

- 1. Take charge-it is up to you**
- 2. Understand employability**
3. Discover your craft
4. Build career capital
5. Know yourself, your best skills
6. Grow a reputation, a personal brand
7. Become an active learner and knowledge builder
8. Adapt! Adapt! Adapt!
9. Create chance
10. Dream!

## **In this resource you are learning how to develop the top 2!**

**Career Management Skills** are the strategies and abilities required to navigate the working world and successfully manage the career building process.



### **Did You Know**

While academic and technical qualifications open doors, career management skills largely determine your selection, success and advancement in careers ...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jarvis, P. (2003). Career management skills: Keys to a great career and a great life. Retrieved from [www.crccanada.org/symposium](http://www.crccanada.org/symposium)

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# 1

## TAKE CHARGE

Take charge of your career – it is up to you!

### **You are in charge of:**

- Your learning
- Your commitment
- Your progress
- Your dreams and goals

### **And there are strategies and people to help.**

Even while you are in learning situations, when it feels like you are being ruled by the demands of your courses and study, you are the one that makes it all work.

*Dana had got through her final year of secondary school with lots of involvement in school activities, but no real planning of her work, managing to get her assessments done with a flurry of last minute panic. In her first year of first year of university, she said, 'I realised suddenly I was on my own, no one was going to make me do this, or care if I did it well or not. So it was up to me to organise my work, set my own goals and pass. I wished I had taken more notice and learned more about how to do this earlier. '*

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## TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LEARNING

Self-directed learning is about taking both the initiative for knowing what to do, and the responsibility for doing it. It helps of course if you know how to do this.

### **Want to learn a useful approach?**

Whether you are finishing school years, in tertiary study or workplace training, here is a new way to approach your tasks that introduces you to skills you will use later in your career.



## Career Management Skills

Self-management and project management

Look at your school/training/study as a project.

**Projects must be delivered on time, to budget and to specifications.**

**Examples of a project in the working world:**

- construction of a house or building is a project requiring the co-ordination of trades workers, working to budget deadlines of time, money and specified quality standards
- setting up a new business - selling an online product, setting up a retail outlet, a restaurant, or business as an electrician requires the co-ordination and budgeting for business requirements: location, site or online, vehicles, marketing and planning of service delivery
- rolling out a new service or product - creating a new software product, even a band embarking on a rock tour has all the components of a project with planning for costs, schedules, and finally, delivery to quality required!

You can see that whatever the form of your future career, from IT to retail to social services, project management is a skill you will need to learn. You can start now.

**How does it relate to study?**

- Your study must be completed by due dates,
- using a budget (your time and effort)
- to the quality required for passing your subjects.

# PROJECT MANAGE YOUR STUDY

Work through the following table to learn a Project Management approach:

Project Management Skill	Your task	Your 'to do' list/ comments
<b>Manage</b>  Managers lead projects, and are results and deadline driven	<b>Self-Management</b>  Drive your own study/training by organising yourself. Be clear about the results you want-you will get what you 'budget' for.	<b>The results I want</b>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Planning</b>  Create plans to bring the project in on time and to budget	<b>Plan</b>  Plan your workload  Prioritise essential tasks  Create a timeline for assessments and a study schedule.  Consider all your other activities and work out your best use of time.	<b>What needs to be prioritised</b>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Organisation</b>  Ensure all the materials and resources required are available as you need them	<b>Organise yourself</b>  Make sure you have whatever you need in time for assessment dates, or exams. Check you have noted all dates and use a bring up file -put them a week ahead in your calendar.	<b>List all the resources you will need and when</b>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

<b>Communication</b> Ensure you understand completely all that is required of you.	<b>Develop key skills of Questioning - asking when you are unsure.</b>  Listening to instructions - to be sure you have the right task.  Asking for help – if you are confused, lost or think you are on the wrong track.	<b>Practise these</b> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Budget</b> Resources must be allocated efficiently, so that tasks get done on time and to budget.	<b>Manage time and commitment</b>  Use the timeline and schedule above to work out your best use of resources. Analyse the time required for each event and schedule it. Be strategic and give the most time to the most essential events.	<b>Add detail to your timeline</b> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Analyse risks</b> Work out in advance what could go wrong.	<b>Calculate your risks, identify problems</b>  Poor time management? Other activities, eg sport? Socialising – how much? Too much?	<b>List here</b> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Problem solve</b> Think of ways to avoid risks.	<b>Develop solutions to above</b>  Write your ideas →	<b>Ideas</b> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**When you organise yourself in this way,**

- You are developing and using important skills that you will use and improve in the future.
- You are learning to track and monitor your own progress.
- You are developing the language and strategies of the workplace.

# 2

## MONITOR YOUR STUDY & LEARNING GOALS

Whether in school, university, Polytechs, private tertiary providers, or home study for up skilling, there are basic self-management skills required.

**Test yourself on these over time, using a self-assessment rating sheet.**



### Career Management Skill

**Self-assessment:** Why is Self-assessment so important? It grows our capacity for insight-into ourselves and our skills. Insight is a career asset of immense value.

#### Study/Learning skills

#### Rate yourself

My ratings over time	/10	/10	/10
I understand I am in charge of my own learning and progress.			
I have set goals that I want to achieve this year, and I am achieving them.			
I can prioritise my work, set a personal timetable for study & stick to it.			
I organise my study materials so that I can easily find what I need.			
I can organise myself to meet the deadlines expected of me in all areas of my learning/ working life.			
I am accurately assessing, planning and using the time required to complete projects or assessments-achieving task and time management.			
I am meeting or exceeding the standards required in my assessments.			

<b>My ratings over time</b>	<b>/10</b>	<b>/10</b>	<b>/10</b>
I get feedback and help when I am not meeting standards.			
I know and can name the skills I need to practise to be a competent learner (eg - committing to task, organising, writing, study skills).			
I am learning in a variety of ways - observing, practising, listening, questioning and problem solving.			

**Expect to improve in these skills, don't expect immediately to be an expert.**

**Find help - it is usually closer than you think.**

- Ask teachers for the help you need.
- Use learning support centres in formal education campuses.
- Use mentoring support if you are in trades or workplace training- skilled workers who are usually happy to help learners.
- Ask highly organised friends for their strategies - and copy what suits you.

Asking for help is sometimes difficult. But if you have taken a strategic approach, identified the problem and looked for solutions, it makes sense to use the resources that are available to you.



## **Did You Know**

The single most important quality in completing tertiary study is NOT your ability at learning, it is your ability to persevere and overcome obstacles that turn up during your learning.



This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark grey circular sticker or logo. Inside the circle, the words "Your Step to Success" are written in a white, handwritten-style cursive font. The word "Your" is at the top, "Step" is in the middle, and "Success" is at the bottom, all slightly curved to follow the shape of the circle.



# 3

## TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CAREER PROGRESS



### Career Management Skill

**Career Decision-making** Involves exploration, researching, questioning, self-assessing

Check your progress now on these skills now, and over time.

My ratings over time	/10	/10	/10
I have spent time finding out about future career options that interest me, including researching them on career websites.			
I talk to people in work and industries that interest me, finding out about the tasks and the learning required, and what these jobs are really like.			
When I read about jobs I ask myself - Is this me? Could I see myself in that work using those skills.			
I am taking time to work out what I do best, and what I enjoy learning; and I am researching the best next step for me.			
I am developing a vision of the future life and work I want.			

**These skills are worth practising because to be satisfied and happy with your career you will need to use them over your lifespan. Aim to improve your ratings!**

My progress on career decision-making

- ☐ I'm stuck, I haven't a clue, I need help
- ☐ I'm getting there. My current ideas are:

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[illegible]

Only a few students are acquiring and mastering the skills of self-management, work and learning exploration and career management they will need to complement their academic and technical skills in becoming self-reliant career managers after graduation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jarvis, P. (2003). Career management skills: Keys to a great career and a great life. Retrieved from [www.crccanada.org/symposium](http://www.crccanada.org/symposium)

# 4

## UNDERSTAND EMPLOYABILITY

There are key ideas to understand about employability - your capacity to get and sustain work in the 21st century.

- Your employability is your security
- You must have a craft or skills to offer, that you are committed to continuously improving,
- You should know what employers expect and produce it - understand all valued employment assets



### Career Management Skill

Developing employability assets

The school or study options you have chosen are foundations for your future skills, knowledge and your future employment prospects. There is more to employability than the completion of training; there are a variety of **assets** required to get and sustain employment in the current climate of change.

Employers talk about '**hard**' skills and '**soft**' skills - what do they mean?

The **hard skills** you are developing are your 'technical' expertise - whatever you choose, or have chosen to train in.

Call it your **craft** - it is your ability to perform the tasks of your work. It is being the skilled in what is expected of a builder, graphic designer, a nurse, a business analyst, an administrator or an engineer.

The so-called '**soft skills**' are just as critical - they are the skills and attributes that help you thrive in the workplace of the 21st century, and include communication skills-written and oral - a customer service approach, the ability to collaborate, to learn, and attributes such as adaptability and resilience - your abilities to respond to change.

Check out your **employability assets**. These represent basic personal and workplace skills at a beginner's level, the skills employers want, and the important asset of professionalism. Assess your workplace skills, depending on your stage of entry.

## The starter list - Personal and workplace skills

Assess yourself on these	Developing	Improving	Competent
Starter skills and qualities	✓	✓	✓
Organisation of self			
Communicates clearly to others, listens			
Writes clearly			
Follows instructions			
Time management, punctuality			
Ability to work in a team			
Honesty and reliability			
Commitment (completes tasks to required standard, willingness to learn)			
Problem solving			
Computer literacy (ability with common packages)			
Personal presentation			
Goal Setting			

What do I need to improve?

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How can I best improve these? What can I practise?

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# WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

A checklist of wanted employability skills and what they mean.



## Career Management Skill

Knowing what's required and practising it

### Check your progress

✓ I'm learning    ✓✓ I'm improving

#### Team work

The ability to get things done with others in a positive constructive way.

Requires reliable contributors, committed to doing their part, respectful of others, understanding of team aims and goals.

*Not wanted: being high maintenance, lazy, temperamental or unreliable, lacking consideration for others, bringing 'too much personality' to work and distracting others.*

#### Communication Skills

Ability to clearly express yourself in a range of situations, using language suitable for work.

Ability to write to the standard (and above) that your future work requires.

*Not wanted: written communication shows poor spelling, poor grammar, cannot accurately summarise; verbal communication - lacks confidence in speaking, uses slang or bad language.*

#### Self-Management

Ability to manage your time and priorities well, can take direction and feedback.

*Not wanted: lateness, inability to meet task deadlines or set priorities, lack of organisation and commitment - all wastes employers' time and money.*

#### Problem Solving

A fast paced work environment means there will always be new challenges and it takes creative thinking, initiative and willingness to solve them.

Employers want you to think logically and strategically with their goals in mind to solve day to day problems. It involves identifying problems and asking the right questions that clarify solutions.

continued ...

## Critical Thinking

This means using reasoning, systems thinking (working out how all the parts of a process interact with each other to produce the overall outcomes) analysing alternative points of view, making judgements based on evidence.

*Not wanted - inability to see the big picture, taking action without thinking, poor decision-making because of lack of awareness of how everything works together.*

## Numeracy and IT Literacy

Learn the level of competence that matches your work/aspirations; continuous learning will be required to stay up to date for future goals.



## Key Career Skill

Collaboration

**Collaboration** is a skill that has gained importance in the 21st century workplace, and is seen by many as a number one skill for employees:

This is the ability of a number of people in a workplace to work together, across areas, for a common creative purpose or project, and to make progress and build solutions through consensus.

To do this they have to be able to

- **share** their learning and their understandings by communicating well
- actively **listen**, paying attention to what others are saying,
- **ask the questions** that lead to solutions

This will be required of you whatever your work, and the underlying skills are those of **communication**, and **teamwork**.

*For Trade Me, it is not just a matter of filling up the positions. 'There are two qualities that are "not negotiable" when recruiting staff, says CEO Jon Macdonald. "People [should have] optimism and energy and a collaborative attitude. That is really important, especially if you consider how quickly we are growing. That growth means inevitably things are changing all the time. People see opportunities out there and embrace them, or people can choose not to. That is why optimism is important to us. Collaboration is important because things change rapidly."*

*Jon McDonald, General Manager, Trade Me.  
Trading Up, cio.co.nz*

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# THE PROFESSIONAL YOU: AN ESSENTIAL ASSET FOR EMPLOYMENT



## Key Career Skill

Professionalism - workplace behaviour to a high standard

**Being 'professional' is about showing a high standard of workplace behaviour – this is a whole new role to learn as you enter work.**

One of the skills and understandings that is most asked for by employers is for new workers to understand professional behaviour in the workplace.

Employers want the **professional you** at work, and they want you to leave the **casual you** at home. Work is more than a job and a set of tasks, **it is a contract to behave in a certain way while you are employed.**

It is just as important in a casual job as in the first 'real' job-because if you get it right early you will have good referees that can vouch for you.

**Follow these guidelines for work experience, work placements, internships, casual part time work – and in the first 'real' job.**

Here is what it means, with a checklist for you to rate yourself if you already have part time work:

Professional behaviours mean you...	Always	Some-times	Needs work!
Turn up on time, or before if you need to, so you are ready to start on time.			
Turn up in person – i.e. awake and fully prepared to give the job the attention it deserves for all the hours you are paid to work.			
Take only the time allowed for breaks, lunch. Be your own person, don't follow others lead.			

continued ...

Professional behaviours mean you...	Always	Some-times	Needs work!
Talk and attend to customers, not to friends or workmates.			
Do what's expected on your job description, don't avoid the tasks you don't like. Aim to do your job as well as you can. Look for where you can excel.			
Listen to what your workplace wants from you in terms of behaviour. Don't do what you see others do if it is slack, and you know it.			
Be polite to everyone, treat all workmates with respect, don't listen to gossip, and don't pass it on.			
Turn up in a positive mood - positive employees are highly valued as they help achieve good results.			
Understand your workplace is not your home. You must behave differently in dress, language, manner.			
Understand that your supervisor or manager has the right to tell you what to do, and to expect you will do it. Admit mistakes, apologise, correct them and learn from them.			
<b>Add your score</b>			

### Are You Mostly ...

**Always** - you are well on the way to understanding what an employer wants, and will benefit from that wisdom in the future

**Sometimes** - Try harder - this **will** matter in the future so work to improve on these now.

**Needs Work** - you will be lucky to keep a job. Change your approach now!

### LEAVE the casual you at home.

This is a different role - the person that may at times use sloppy or bad language, is rude, gossips, dresses for the beach, or in dirty clothes, scribbles notes, uses text language in the wrong place, talks loudly to friends, yells at people when you feel like it, drinks or smokes. You can choose to do any of these on your own time, but not at work.



## Key Career Skill

Taking charge

### **Make a decision about the student you will be:**

- Decide to be a competent student- if you are going to do the training, prepare yourself, learn the skills of learning and study
- Accept the workload
- Conquer it, persevere - get help if you need it
- Plan for your assessments
- Do what you are good at **very** well, and aim to keep improving
- Do your best with the rest.

### **The same strategies apply to work, whether casual, part time or your first job**

- Decide to be competent worker - prepare yourself, learn the skills of your workplace
- Accept the workload
- Conquer it, persevere -get help if you need it to do specific tasks
- Plan for your workdays – be organised, on time, show up! (every day is assessment day in the workplace)
- Do what you are good at **very** well, and aim to keep improving
- Do your best with the rest.

Achievement is the reward for this kind of effort - in both study and work

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### **This resource is designed to develop the following career competencies:**

- Developing Self Awareness – including strategies to develop capabilities and interests (and meet potential challenges), interacting positively with others
- Exploring Opportunities - including developing skills for adjusting to education, training and work environments
- Deciding and Acting – including acting appropriately to manage their own career, being able to set goals, develop and implement short term plans.



# THE WORKOMETER- Take this to work for a reference!

Name .....

## 1. Your progress with personal employability skills

	The Work Zone	Demonstrated to employer
<b>Attitude</b>		Underline/tick words that apply, and comment, eg <i>Learning, Improving</i> <i>-Consistently good</i> Initial each comment
<b>Communication</b>	Cheerful, helpful, co-operative, work focussed, positive,	
<b>Presentation</b>	Clear, polite, respectful, customer service skills present	
<b>Commitment</b>	Clean, tidy, smart, to work standard required, asset to firm Clean nails, hair, shoes if work requires this.	
<b>Overall Approach</b>	willing, attentive, eager to learn, looks for work, careful, accurate, punctual, well organised	
	Displays workplace behaviours Understands difference between home and work Looks for opportunities to contribute and to learn	

Rating on Professionalism (workplace behaviours to a very high standard:

1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5

Lacking      Some progress      Average      Good progress      Excellent

Employer signature.....Date.....

Employer signature.....Date.....

Employer signature ..... Date.....

