

CAREER PLANNING

As an artist it is very easy to flow along, jumping from project to project without reflecting on your career and developing a plan for your future. Career planning helps to identify and develop core skills to build bridges from your current project to your next project and encapsulate your passions. Planning will add value while developing your personal and career goals in broad strokes.

This document will help guide you in preparing an effective arts career plan. Planning should involve a planning window of five years or longer and involves a broader set of guidelines and preparation. From time to time it is important to stop and check how your skills development is progressing.

A plan should outline your long term goals and detail the line of attack you can take to achieve your goals as an artist. A career plan will map a clear path between where you are at present and your vision for the future. Over time, revisiting your career plan will help to review your achievements and help you to organise and make decisions for your next steps.

Kick it off

To get started consider brainstorming these questions:

- Who you are? (What drives you, what are your characteristics?)
- Where are you? (Are you an emerging artist? How does your personal life fit in?)
- Where do you want to go (or not go) and why? (Imagine you are 5 years older, how would you like to describe the last 5 years of your life?)
- How do you get there? (list the type of things you will do)
- How do you know *when* you get there?

Below are four career-planning areas. This may provide you with a simple framework from which to consider your own career development.

Self-awareness - having knowledge and understanding about your own personal development and the personal resources (both actual and potential) you bring to the table.

Opportunity awareness - an understanding of the general structures of the world of work, including career possibilities and alternative pathways.

Decision making and planning - an understanding of how to make decisions, and being aware of pressures, influences, styles, consequences and goal setting.

Implementing plans - having the appropriate skill level in a range of areas to be able to translate job and career planning into reality

The career plan is *your* document so setting it up for *you* is important. Be honest in answering the questions and think about mapping out your priority areas.

1. Self awareness

Establish your self awareness by answering the following questions:

- What is meaningful in your work life? Where do you derive your sense of purpose from? How do you contribute?
- Define the rewards and incentives, financial and otherwise, that are truly important to you. How important is money?
- In which environment are you happiest (an office, working outdoors, from home)? How do you like to work (teams, autonomously)? What would be the ideal culture and environment for you to work in?
- If you had multiple offers to consider, what would be the deciding factors?
- How would you ideally like to balance your work, family and free time? How might this be achieved? What value do you place on your leisure time?
- How important to you is where you live?
- What are your skills, professional and personal? What jobs are best suited to these?
- In what country, industry and company do you want to work? Can you identify 20 companies for whom you would like to work and who could use your skill and experience?
- What makes you different from everyone else? What is your personal competitive advantage? Do you need to ask others (colleagues and family) to identify the latter?
- In what areas could you use more training or knowledge?
- If you are unhappy or dissatisfied in your current role, why is this? Is it something you can change, or do you need to move jobs?

2. Opportunity awareness

The most effective way to advance your career is through personal networks and keeping an eye out for any opportunities that you can tackle. To be successful in the arts industry is all about jumping on the train of opportunity. Answer the following questions:

- Have you compiled a list of family, friends and business contacts who might be able to help you? Have you carefully planned what you are going to say to them?
- Are you networking enough? Do you keep in touch with contacts? Do you do your best to be visible and help others? Do you use myspace or facebook to keep in touch? Have you set up a web page?
- Are you using all available resources (career fairs, head-hunters, have you checked out Arts Hub, do you get email updates)?
- Do you have a database to keep track of your applications, contacts and progress? Are you in danger of losing telephone numbers or contact names?
- Have you considered joining professional associations or business forums? If you are a member already, do you network with your peers?
- Do you attend industry events?

3. Decision making and planning

Use the following questions to consider your personal opportunities and decide how best to reach out to them yourself:

- Have you identified your job targets? How much do you know about each of them, their history, culture and financial performance? How can you develop contacts in these organisations?
- Have you showcased your artistic abilities/product?
- Do you have a quality CV that highlights all your achievements? Does it differ in style and tone from the standard business résumé? Is it tailored to match each job for which you apply?
- Do you make covering letters individual? Are they specific to each job for which you apply?
- Is your résumé up to date?
- Have you pre-prepared answers to standard selection criteria questions, including accomplishments and your own questions? Have you practised interviews? Have you identified your interview style? Do you need help?
- Do you effectively deal with office politics/ or collaborations? Could you improve on your people management skills?
- What is your reputation in the workplace? How do others see you? What are your perceived strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you have a mentor that you aspire to?
- Are you responsive to change and up-to-date with the latest technologies and improvements?
- Are you making use of opportunities at work to expand your skills and knowledge?
- Are people aware of the good work you do?

Identifying where there are gaps in your resume or skills or experiences and work to develop strategies and experiences to fill these. These gaps can be addressed under four basic headings

Experience in the world of work

Developing and extending your skills

Developing your networks

Better recording or reporting approach

4. Implementing plans

Use the following to consider your whole career and where you wish to go:

- Do you have a professional development plan? Have you considered relevant professional qualifications? Have you contacted universities and professional bodies with a view to obtaining these?
- Do you have an idea of where you would like to be in one, five and ten years' time? How do you plan to achieve this?
- Do you have a careful financial planning programme? Do you have an effective superannuation, savings and debts, plan?

- Do you have a fall-back option if you lose your job or become ill? Are you continually updating your network in the event that you have to use it?
- Have you identified short-term goals? Are they in line with your medium and long-term strategies?

Self assessment

To help you think about ‘who you are’, this section has outlined 10 skills areas. Read each and rate yourself compared to your peers. Describe in the notes why you think you rate at the chosen level. When you have rated yourself in all 10 skills areas, select 3 strong areas that you wish to develop further, and 3 weaker skill areas that you need to build up. Set a date to do a follow-up assessment and ask yourself how you will measure your development.

SKILLS AREA	RANKING DATE:	NOTES	MEASURE DATE:
Communication Listening, speaking, writing, understanding, presenting, reading editing, negotiating, interpersonal relations.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Teamwork Contributing, cooperating, conflict resolution, supporting, allocating to strengths, achieving goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Problem solving / critical thinking Identifying issues, researching, analysis, evaluating options, innovative, finding solutions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Creativity / design Imagination, creativity and design.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Life management / life-long learning Information and computer literacy, personal happiness, life management and balance, career	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		



direction.			
Initiative / enterprise Risk taking, trying new things, identifying and taking opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Technical / professional Discipline specific skills and knowledge, use of technology.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Managing / organising Scheduling, project and time management, marshalling resources, making decisions, setting and achieving goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Social / ethical responsibility Respecting individual and cultural difference, citizenship, ethical behaviour for individuals and organisations.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		
Leadership Motivating and persuading others, delegating, taking initiative, dealing with conflict, setting goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Low High		

You might like to sum up this section in a paragraph about yourself. What motivates you what are your dreams?

If you require any more information regarding this fact sheet please contact Youth Arts Queensland on (07) 3252 5115 or email info@yaq.org.au.

