



ASU W. P. Carey
School of Business
Arizona State University

Career Blueprint

A blueprint enables you to design with the big picture and goals in mind. In this way, you can ensure you reach every milestone and build consistency throughout the life of your career — even when faced with uncertainty or surprises.

**Career work is not resumes and interviews.
Truly foundational career work begins here.**

Welcome!

We're happy

you're here.

Inside you'll find guided exercises and information to support lifelong career management. Approached with an open mindset, it will allow you to navigate the complexity of career decision-making and learn how to find clarity and focus in the process. Revisit your Career Blueprint over the next several months, years, and throughout the course of your career as new developments and transitions come along.

The framework

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- B. Why the Career Blueprint
- C. Mindset matters
 - 1. Growth vs. fixed mindset
 - 2. Blueprinting mindset



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- A. Mind map — I am here
- B. Reflection — Where I've been
 - 1. My experiences
 - 2. Skills and strengths
 - 3. Work values and priorities
 - 4. 70:30 Exercise



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- A. Market launch plan

THE FRAMEWORK

The work in this guide is focused on helping you build a lifelong skill set of how to approach your career in a deeper, yet simpler way.

Career Management Model >

Why the Career Blueprint >

Mindset matters >

- Growth vs. fixed mindset >**
- Blueprinting mindset >**

Career Management Model

To prepare for careers in today's complex and ever-changing business environment, students and working professionals at every level need much more than a resume, cover letter, and sharp suit. They need a strategic mindset, a comprehensive set of tools, and a communication plan they can use to showcase their assets — not only their work experience and academic achievements but also the characteristics and talents that set them apart from the competition.

W. P. Carey Career Services Center has designed a new framework to support students and alumni with their lifelong career and professional development, regardless of where they are in their personal journeys. Our approach is designed to simplify what can feel complex, and mirrors the process of bringing a product to market — and in this case, the product is YOU.

Our Career Management Model encompasses four essential themes of lifelong career management: Strategy, Market Research, Product Development, and Operations.



Strategy

What problems do I want to solve?

Take the time to understand yourself, where you thrive, and what that means to setting achievable and fulfilling career goals.



Market Research

Is this really what I think it is?

Test your assumptions, get to know more about industries, and define a clear goal.



Product Development

How do I put myself out there as a relevant candidate?

Craft your recruiting messages for your audience, build advocates, and hone skills to stand out and differentiate — in all the right ways.



Operations

How do I get the job?

Communicate effectively on your path to get hired.

In our experience, job seekers often jump to the last step of resumes, cover letters, and applying for jobs and then get frustrated if they don't get called for interviews or get an offer. Doing the work we have outlined for **Strategy**, **Market Research**, and **Product Development** will ensure that your **Operations** steps are much easier and more effective.

The model provides a framework for achieving your immediate goals, as well as understanding how to revisit the essential themes and activities of career management throughout your life. Below you will see the key concepts in each of these stages.



Strategy

Take the time to understand yourself, where you thrive, and what that means to setting achievable and fulfilling career goals.

- Assessment
- Personal career decision-making
- Career Blueprint



Market Research

Test your assumptions, get to know more about industries, and define a clear goal.

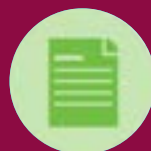
- Day to day: Function
- Market position: Company
- Trends: Industry
- Location



Product Development

Craft your recruiting messages for your audience, build advocates, and hone skills to stand out and differentiate — in all the right ways.

- Personal introduction
- Networking and informational interviews
- Executive presence
- Mentorship



Operations

Communicate effectively on your path to get hired.

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Interviewing
- Offer assessment
- Online profiles

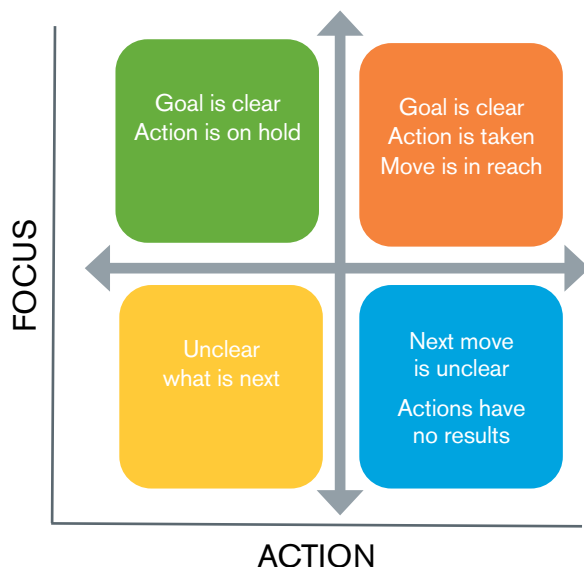
Why the Career Blueprint

A blueprint enables you to design with the big picture in mind. In this way, you can ensure you reach every milestone and build consistency throughout the life of your career — even when faced with uncertainty. Notable about the Career Blueprint is that it is iterative and allows you flexibility to make adjustments as you move through Strategy, Market Research, Product Development, and Operations.

The process of career planning and decision-making is serious, but it can also be fun so let's get started!

Identify where you are today

You are doing this work to get a better understanding of yourself and to define a clear career goal. As you begin the Career Blueprinting experience, consider where you are on your career journey using the visual below. This will inform areas of focus and action you will ultimately take as you go through this process and beyond.



Do you have a specific next career step in mind?
Have you been taking actions in the market, but don't seem to be getting the traction you want?
Have no clue what's next or where to even start?
No matter what your career situation is, you're in the right place.

Your Career Blueprint will help you navigate the market and understand exactly what foundational steps are necessary to clarify, take action toward, and reach goals throughout your career.

Mindset matters

Growth vs. fixed mindset

Mindset is a set of beliefs that shape how you make sense of the world and yourself. It influences how you think, feel, and behave in any given situation. In other words, your thoughts and beliefs create your feelings, actions, and results so it all starts with your mindset.

According to Carol Dweck, Stanford psychologist, your beliefs play a pivotal role in what you want and whether you achieve it. Dweck notes that there are two basic mindsets, fixed and growth. If you have a **fixed mindset**, you tend to believe your abilities can't be changed and may not be open to trying new things to avoid failure. A **growth mindset** allows you to see the possibility of learning and growing from every experience.

Understanding this and working to develop more of a growth mindset can be the difference between finding that career and job you really love or settling for one that may not be a good fit.

Blueprinting mindset

Defining your next move can be difficult. Our goal is to help you make it easy and the work fun.

As you move through the Career Blueprinting process, keep these eight principles in mind to ensure you benefit from this experience as much as possible.

- 1. Be curious:** About the viewpoints and reflections that show up in the process
- 2. Stay open:** To new ideas and perspectives
- 3. Take action:** Even when it's uncomfortable
- 4. Build your story:** A critical part of feeling confident in building a network and a career
- 5. Accept failure:** It's all part of the learning opportunities along the way
- 6. It's a process:** You will revisit this many times as it's not a one-time event
- 7. Bring your all:** Remember that you get out of this process, what you put into it
- 8. Have fun!**

Part 1: Who you are

When thinking about who you are and what you bring to the career landscape, it's easy to get overwhelmed. Going through a process to segment the pieces helps you better see a holistic image of yourself.



Strategy

Take the time to understand yourself, where you thrive, and what that means to setting achievable and fulfilling career goals.

Mind map — I am here >

Reflection — Where I've been >

- **My experiences >**
- **Skills and strengths >**
- **Work values and priorities >**
- **70:30 exercise >**

Mind map — I am here

This exercise will take a complex idea and make it more digestible and meaningful for the work ahead — especially when crafting your go-to-market messages.

This process is a great way to generate ideas by using both sides of your brain, coming up with words and ideas while drawing things on paper. It allows you to take a lot of information about yourself and pull it together in one simplified, visual place. It's also a place for you to see themes that may have been lost before.

WHAT: It generally starts with a core idea or topic in the center with related ideas around it, connected with lines. Let's create a map that will help you tell your stories and see where you thrive.

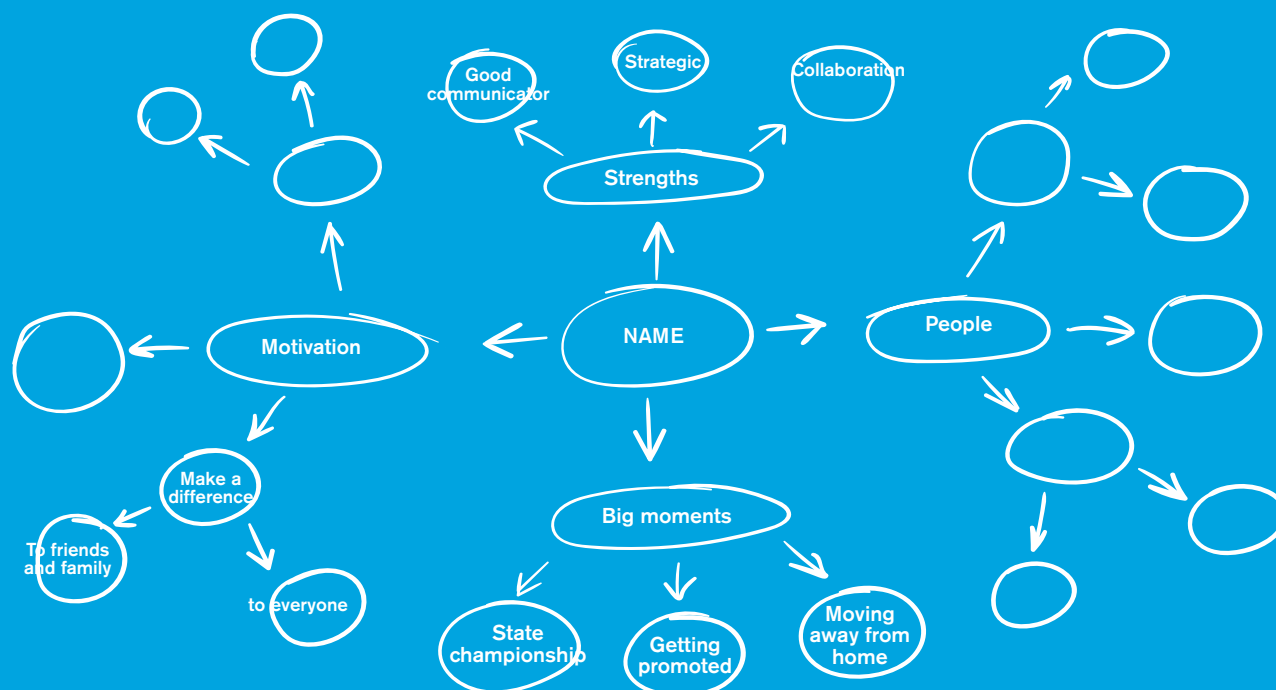
For this section of the Career Blueprint, you are going to create your own personal map, unpacking the experiences that have been instrumental in getting you here today, including the decision to pursue the program you did at W. P. Carey.

When pulling together a mind map of who you are, we want to encourage you not to overthink it. This is private work, and can be fun and a way to let your brain and your thoughts find their own way to the paper.

Here are [eight blueprinting mindset tips to keep in mind](#).

How do I create a mind map?

Allow yourself some quiet time to do this exercise. Many report that revisiting this periodically over a 2 to 3 week period helps to facilitate even more depth and insight.



Put your name and date in the middle. Then, notice and jot down what comes to mind for each of these areas:

Pivotal moments: What were some of the biggest moments in your life so far? Why were those pivotal? What did you learn about yourself through them?

Social media: When you look at your posts and profile, what is it you think people see or assume about you? What are the common themes in your messaging? Are they accurate? What do you want them to see?

Champions/critics: Who are your biggest champions? Who are your biggest critics? What feedback have you gotten from these individuals? Why do these people fall into their respective buckets? What elements do you agree with?

Strengths: What are your greatest strengths? Why are you proud of these? What areas do you strive to further develop in yourself? Why are these areas important for you to grow in?

Motivation: What drives you to do the things you do? How do these show up in your daily life? How do you harness them? What are your goals? What differentiates you from others?

Flow: Are there times you remember that you were working (or playing) and you were just “in the flow.” It was like time just disappeared you weren’t even aware of it. What were you doing?

Other: Are there any other elements of “you” that differentiate you and/or that you want to ensure is captured on this summary?

What will I do with my mind map?

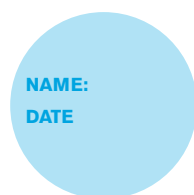
This drawing will be something you might refer to many times throughout your career journey. It can be used to anchor your understanding of yourself and the point from which the rest of this process will build.

It is a concise summary, a snapshot, of who you believe yourself to be — as of today. It will change over time as you gain new perspective, remember concepts, and get comfortable with creating this.

Action item: Drop some dates in your calendar to revisit this, edit, and make additions or subtractions. This is a living document that is private to you, but will help you shape your launch to the market when you are ready.

Your mind map – I am here

The activity: Block quiet time to do this.



Now, look at what you have drawn. Do you see any themes? What is it telling you about where you are now and what you're interested in? Write a few sentences below:

Reflection — Where I've been

As you move toward a future career goal, an important first step includes taking the space to consider your past experiences. In this section, you will consider the elements of your past work, volunteer, and life experiences that you enjoyed/didn't enjoy, how these translate to valuable professional skills you have gained, key insights about what you loved or didn't, and those you'll want to develop throughout your life.

Whenever you reach a career Operations milestone such as networking or interviews, this foundational work will play a role in giving you stories to consider in your personal preparation.

[My experiences >](#)

[Skills and strengths >](#)

[Work values and priorities >](#)

[70:30 exercise >](#)

My Experiences

WHAT: Set a timer for 10 minutes. The time pressure will ensure you don't overthink this. Answer the prompts below based off your past life, work, internships, or leadership experiences.

<p>1. Accomplishments Given your previous life, work, and volunteer experiences, what are three accomplishments you are most proud of?</p>	
<p>2. Strengths What strength or expertise have you most leaned on? Why is this important to you?</p>	
<p>3. Professional development What is a professional skill or attribute that you have seen in others that you felt you would like to develop? Describe these skills and explain why you feel they mattered.</p>	
<p>4. Education Thinking about your decision to go to business school, what professional skills did/do you hope to gain?</p>	

<p>5. Experiences</p> <p>List two things you enjoyed about your previous job(s), volunteer, or leadership experiences.</p> <p>Be specific.</p> <p>Consider personalities, roles, responsibilities, outcomes, and accomplishments.</p>	
<p>6. Flow</p> <p>Think about those times in your previous job(s), volunteer or leadership experiences, or just in life when you were doing something and lost track of time (in a good way).</p> <p>Identify when you were “in the flow” and be specific about what you were doing.</p>	
<p>7. Summary</p> <p>As of today, how do you believe all of these past experiences have impacted your career and academic decisions?</p> <p>What will this mean for your next career move?</p>	

What will I do with this information?

As time and your career management progresses, you’ll refer back to this work and adjust as you remember things, receive feedback, or if your research takes you down new paths.

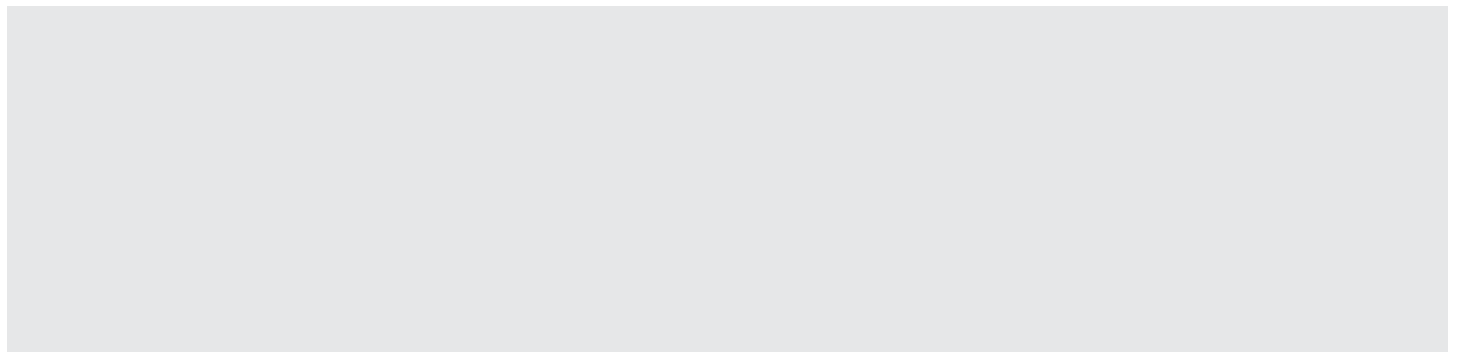
You will use this to develop your plan — reconnecting to your career goals, your strengths, and the stories you will tell in interviewing and networking. This is foundational to getting comfortable talking about the work you are moving toward in the next chapter of your career.

Skills and strengths

Now that you have considered what you've done and where you thrive, the goal of this section is to help you organize, understand, and articulate your professional, technical, and transferable skills. Identifying which skills are strengths will help you have a framework when doing market research on job requirements, determine what you bring to the market, and to integrate this into building your career goals and action plans to get there.

There are typically two kinds of skills that employers talk about — hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills are often those that are taught in schools or other formal learning environments through certifications or in previous, early work experience. They are quantifiable and specific to jobs — example hard skills include Python, advanced Excel, and marketing strategy. Use the space below to list your hard skills.



Soft skills are typically more interpersonal and revolve around how you interact with others, as well as your approach to the work. Soft skills tend to be more transferable between jobs or industries and your goal is to get clarity on what these are and why they matter to the industries and roles you are considering.

WHAT: It's time to take inventory of your soft skills. Resources include information from formal assessments, past performance evaluations, the mind map in this process, and the work you did in the [my experiences](#) section of the Career Blueprint.

The list that follows will help you identify the skills you feel are the strongest, the ones that you most enjoy using, and those you would like to develop further. Complete the table to identify and assess your enjoyment and proficiency of these skills.

Skill category	Skill criteria: Circle all that apply	Enjoy using	Level of proficiency (1 = least, 5 = most)
Communication	<p>Understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and nonverbal/body language abilities.</p> <p>Employ active listening, persuasion, and influencing skills.</p> <p>Communicate in a clear and organized manner so that others can effectively understand.</p> <p>Frame communication with respect to diversity of learning styles, varied individual communication abilities, and cultural differences.</p> <p>Ask appropriate questions for specific information from supervisors, specialists, and others.</p> <p>Other:</p>		
Leadership	<p>Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision.</p> <p>Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction.</p> <p>Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude.</p> <p>Motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust.</p> <p>Plan, initiate, manage, complete and evaluate projects.</p> <p>Other:</p>		

Skill category	Skill criteria: Circle all that apply	Enjoy using	Level of proficiency (1 = least, 5 = most)
Critical thinking	<p>Make decisions and solve problems using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgment.</p> <p>Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem.</p> <p>Proactively anticipate needs and prioritize action steps.</p> <p>Accurately summarize and interpret data with an awareness of personal biases that may impact outcomes.</p> <p>Effectively communicate actions and rationale, recognizing the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of stakeholders.</p> <p>Other:</p>		
Teamwork and relationship management	<p>Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions.</p> <p>Effectively manage conflict, interact with and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience.</p> <p>Accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables.</p> <p>Employ personal strengths, knowledge, and talents to complement those of others.</p> <p>Exercise the ability to compromise and be agile.</p> <p>Collaborate with others to achieve common goals.</p> <p>Build strong, positive working relationships with supervisor and team members/co-workers.</p> <p>Other:</p>		
Technology and adaptability	<p>Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies.</p> <p>Use technology to improve efficiency and productivity.</p> <p>Identify appropriate technology for completing specific tasks.</p> <p>Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making.</p> <p>Quickly adapt to new or unfamiliar technologies.</p> <p>Manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals.</p> <p>Other:</p>		

Skill category	Skill criteria: Circle all that apply	Enjoy using	Level of proficiency (1 = least, 5 = most)
<p>Equity and inclusion</p>	<p>Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives to make inclusive and equity-minded decisions.</p> <p>Actively contribute to inclusive and equitable practices that influence individual and systemic change.</p> <p>Advocate for inclusion, equitable practices, justice, and empowerment for historically marginalized communities.</p> <p>Seek global cross-cultural interactions and experiences that enhance one’s understanding of people from different demographic groups and that leads to personal growth.</p> <p>Keep an open mind to diverse ideas and new ways of thinking.</p> <p>Identify resources and eliminate barriers resulting from individual and systemic racism, inequities, and biases.</p> <p>Demonstrate flexibility by adapting to diverse environments.</p> <p>Other:</p>		
<p>Career and self-development</p>	<p>Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development.</p> <p>Identify areas for continual growth while pursuing and applying feedback.</p> <p>Develop plans and goals for one’s future career.</p> <p>Professionally advocate for oneself and others.</p> <p>Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.</p> <p>Assume duties or positions that will help one progress professionally.</p> <p>Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help one professionally.</p> <p>Seek and embrace development opportunities.</p> <p>Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support one’s career.</p> <p>Other:</p>		

*Source: Adapted from National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies.

Bonus: Think about your top three skills and list them below with an example:

Skill: Example:	Skill: Example:	Skill: Example:
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What will I do with this information?

Identifying your current skill set and understanding how you want to continue to use those skills will help you to understand and feel more confident about what you bring to companies or roles you are interested in.

Understanding both the skills you have and those you want to develop will allow you to intentionally and confidently select opportunities to pursue. Further, it will help you differentiate yourself as a top candidate in terms of relevance to the work, and also as someone with the maturity to have self-identified a passion and interest.

You will refer to this part of the Career Blueprint in the Market Research theme of your lifelong career management work. This will be a tool to assess if your goal is realistic as an immediate one or as a longer-term goal that needs some gaps filled first.

Work values and priorities

What's important to you? While many of us can say whether we like or don't like our work, it's sometimes quite complex and harder to identify what really matters. In this worksheet, we've provided a way for you to unpack characteristics of where you thrive and more clearly identify what you value at work. This will guide you in your career decision-making and goal setting.

Notably, what you value may change over time so it is important to continue to re-evaluate these throughout any transition process. **Having a clear understanding of your values can help you make decisions on which roles to pursue that you will feel deeply committed to.**

WHAT: In thinking about the next 1 to 3 years, identify what you consider the most important to least important parts of your work on a day-to-day basis.

Refer back to your mind map to see what themes and values emerged as you thought through those elements. **The process that follows will help you see what you prioritize in your work when you are thriving.**

1. Check three values, from each of the four groups below, that are most important to you.

<p>Through my work I need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of achievement Balance Independence and autonomy Influence Integrity Honesty Power Respect from others Spirituality Status Other: 	<p>In my work environment I need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast paced / Measured Flexible / Clear High earnings Learning Location (city, region, remote, hybrid) Predictability of tasks Quiet Relaxed Structured Time freedom Other:
<p>Work interactions I value:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition Collaboration Diversity Friendships Leadership visibility Open communication Recognition Support Teamwork Trust Other: 	<p>Characteristics I value within my role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical Challenging Creative Helping Leading edge Physical Public contact Research Risk taking Variety Other:

2. Once you have picked three in each group, indicate the #1 value from each section you feel is always important to you.

3. Reflecting on your top four values, write a sentence on why you chose them and how you want this reflected in your career.

Value 1:
Value 2:
Value 3:
Value 4:

What will I do with this information?

Understanding what you value can help you determine what is important to you about your work and what makes it meaningful for you. While all of these may not be present in one role, this gives you a framework for assessing your priorities as they relate to the roles you research, companies and industries you want to explore, and the questions you will want to ask during informational interviews and before accepting an offer.

The 70:30 Principle

It's important to understand that no job is going to be full of enjoyable tasks 100% of the time. However, if you can do work that keeps you in your "70:30" most of the time, this is where you will feel most engaged, fulfilled, and at times stretched in the best possible way.



©GIANT Worldwide and Source Credit: Cockram's Law

The concept of this principle is that **70% of the time, you will be doing things that come naturally to you.** You can sometimes do them without thinking, they energize you, and/or you are developing or have mastery in. That leaves **30% of the time for you to do things that are more a learned behavior.** These are your conscious competencies that you have had to work a little harder to do. Doing much of this work can be draining and diminish how much you enjoy your role.

WHAT: Think about any past jobs, internships, or volunteer roles you have had and how the responsibilities of those roles fell into these categories.

This is a good check-in to evaluate past **roles and consider new ones and/or how you want to restructure what you're currently doing.**



Getting to your 70:30 balance

What three things would you like to be doing to get you closer to 70:30?

Once that's clear, you can make a plan to get there. You could consider new opportunities, running for a different role in a student organization, restructuring your job, targeting your search based on roles that are better aligned, or make a plan with your manager to rework your responsibilities.

1.
2.
3.

What will I do with this information?

Understanding what you enjoyed and didn't enjoy in your work, and how much time you spent doing various tasks, can help you determine what is important to you and what makes it more fulfilling and energizing.

Part 2: Where you're going

Market Research is an essential theme of career management work. This is an area you will return to again and again as a student and alum. Visit the W. P. Carey Career Services Center website for 24/7 access to helpful resources, industry insights, and career expertise, curated for your entire journey. Wherever you are, we have you covered.



Market Research

Test your assumptions, get to know more about industries, and define a clear goal.

- Who You Are >
- Career Decisions >
- Industry/Function/Role >
- Career Pathways >
- Research >
- Needs Assessment >
- Career Direction >

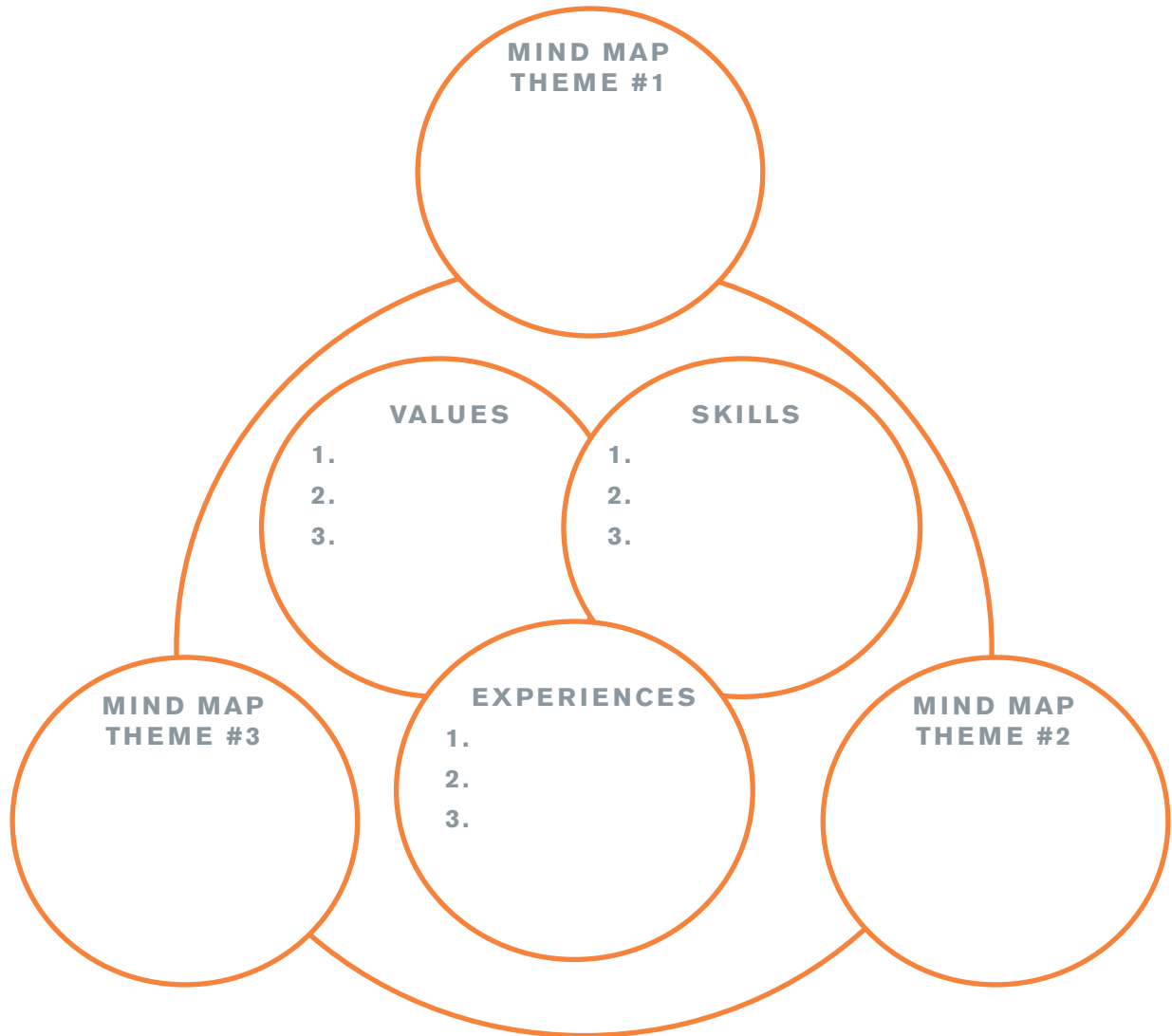
Who You Are - Bringing it all Together

This is an opportunity for you to visually bring together the work you did in Part 1 to include your top experiences, skills, and values and surround those with the three main themes from your Mind Map exercise that all inform what you need to thrive in your career.

This Venn diagram will allow you to start visually seeing the relationships between each of those areas, where they come together, themes, and how you might want to access them going forward.

WHAT: Fill in the diagram below using the information you completed in Part 1: Who You Are to include your top three Experiences, Skills and Values, three themes from your Mind Map, and trends from the 70/30 exercise around where you thrive.





WHERE I THRIVE (PULL FROM THE 70/30 EXERCISE)

What will I do with this information? This will provide you with a visual reference, a picture of you, as you work through the next section of the Blueprint. You can refer back here to guide you as you evaluate future career directions.



Career Decisions

Thinking about choosing your career or changing a career path, can seem overwhelming.

Where do I start? What if I don't make the "right" decision? Can I just stay "open to everything?"

Although it may sound best to keep your options open, it can make the process more difficult for you, and ultimately others who might be in a position to help you. Being open to everything can make it harder to research the options you are considering and to begin targeting your communications both online and in person. On the flip side, being too narrow in your scope limits your ability to consider relevant opportunities that align with what you are seeking.

As you move through the career management model from strategy to market research, the goal is to become **more informed and targeted**. This allows you to enter the market as the most relevant candidate for the career move you desire to make.

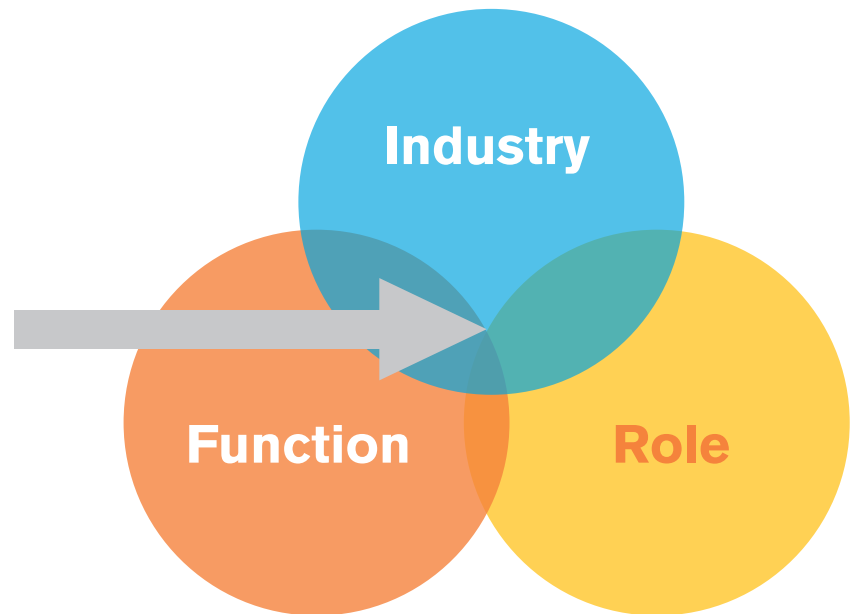


Industry/Function/Role

Three of the primary things to consider as you start developing your career direction are industry, function, and role. Below is a visual model for you to reference while setting your career direction:

Narrow your research to guide decision-making.

Industry, function, and role preferences can create a **career focus area** for decision-making



Industry: categorization of organizations that produce similar kind of goods or services – think, what is the space or type of products/services you want to work in.

Examples: Airlines, Technology, Entertainment, Education, Healthcare

Function: An area within the structure of a company or organization that is grouped by the specific activities and core contributions made to the business - think how do you want to contribute to an organization.

Examples: Marketing, Human Resources, Finance, Accounting, Supply Chain

Role: A set of activities someone may perform within a business function, including day-to-day tasks and responsibilities - think, what is the type of work you want to be doing daily.

Examples: Digital Marketing, Talent Acquisition, Wealth Management, Audit, Procurement

**Note that some functions are also industries - ex. Marketing, Finance, Accounting*



It's time to identify your core interests! Now that you have a foundation for the difference between industry and function, you can determine the core areas within each category you see yourself thriving in.

WHAT: Set a timer for 5-7 minutes and fill in the boxes below with your responses to the prompts.

INDUSTRY

Companies I admire & the industry they fall into:

Products or services I find interesting:

Areas I find myself naturally wanting to learn more about (ex. reading articles, following on LinkedIn/social media):

What **trends** do you see from the boxes above? Are there certain **industries** that are standing out?

FUNCTION

The type of problems I want to solve through my work:

How I want to contribute to an organization:

Topics, trainings, or coursework I find myself seeking to engage with or enjoy learning more about:

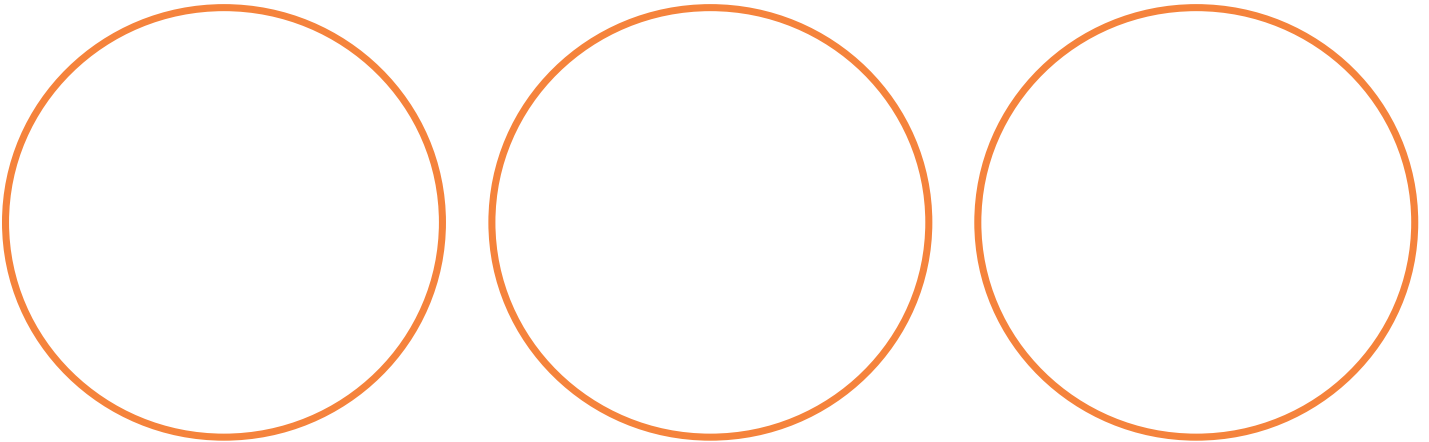
What **trends** do you see from the boxes above? Are there certain **functions** that are standing out?



Career Pathways

As you move from industry and function toward research and career goals, it's helpful to start narrowing down the possible paths that may be most interesting to you. Below are a few questions for you to consider as you think about what careers you want to explore further in the Market Research process. Note: It may be helpful to review some job postings and descriptions that interest you from LinkedIn, Indeed or career sections on a target company web.

1. In each circle below, write a **job role** you are interested in exploring more for your career path.

Three large, empty orange circles are arranged horizontally, intended for the student to write a job role in each.

2. In looking at the three roles you wrote above in the circles, answer the following questions:

Question – Which one sparks the most interest for you? Why?

Question – Which one feels most challenging or like it will stretch you more? Why?

Question – Which one feels most like it's playing it safe? Why?

Question – What makes you want to get started? Why?

What will I do with this information?

Once you have completed this exercise and identified a few different roles you are most interested in, and why, this will inform the market research into each role you will do in the following section.

**TIP: Check out these [career maps](#) to explore career paths.*

Research

Goals are born in aspiration, but need to live in reality. This research is the bridge for you to begin to see how your targets align with the current market. This information will provide a foundation for your networking strategy and the informational interviews (Market Research) that you will set up to gain richer insights into the work you hope to do in the future.

Next you'll want to define a goal, milestones, and target dates. To get there, you will need to do some research to test your assumptions and the focus you just identified. You may have a specific career goal in mind, but more information is needed to uncover skill sets required, relevant job roles available, and a realistic salary range.

Use this worksheet to guide your individual research and what you will do with networking meetings (Product Development) — before you officially go to market (Operations).

WHAT: Based on your reflection work, mind maps, insights, things you already know from your reading, people in your network, or results from assessments, what are at least two career paths that you want to research, consider, and learn more about?

Complete the following worksheet to expand your thinking and begin to research each. To begin, identify up to three career paths and target roles:

Career Path 1:
Career Path 2:
Career Path 3 (optional):

Example: Supply Chain, Procurement

Fill out the following information for each career path you identified.

Career path and target role:

Job titles associated with role:

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

Why is this the role and titles you are targeting?

Target companies to explore:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are you targeting these companies?

What other companies work with these organizations (e.g., as vendors or suppliers) that you might take a closer look at?

Industry/function trends that are currently impacting these roles:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the implications of each trend, and how do you see it impacting the industry in the next 1-3 years?

Other considerations:

1. Starting salary range:
2. Industries that have job growth in this function:
3. Companies that hire for these roles:

Where are these jobs typically found? On-campus, networking, job boards? How does this affect your timeline?

At least three other W. P. Carey or ASU alumni in this function (research through LinkedIn):

A. Name, organization, title, W. P. Carey/ASU program

B. Name, organization, title, W. P. Carey/ASU program

C. Name, organization, title, W. P. Carey/ASU program

What will I do with this exercise?

This research is the bridge for you to begin to see how your targets align with the current market. This information will provide a foundation for your networking strategy and the informational interviews (Product Development) that you will set up to gain richer insights into the work you hope to do in the future.

Needs assessment

Through this process, you have taken time to reflect on past experiences, which has given you insight into the skills and qualifications you bring to the employment marketplace and some specific roles. Remember your hard skills inventory? That will come in handy.

You have also taken some time to consider a career goal and conducted research on what that role would look like. With all of this, you now have the information needed to assess the areas you want to develop, to get you on your way to your next job and the foundational part of your career.

In order to make a well-informed decision about your career goal and develop an action plan to get there, you will need an accurate assessment of what you bring to the employment market and what you might be missing. Creating an attainable career goal with specific, measurable action steps will lead to a more successful outcome.

WHAT: The activity on the next page will help you map out the needs of the job role against your skills/abilities. This will help you gain a clearer understanding of where to invest your energy.

In the left column, list the needs of the job. In the middle column, assess your current level of ability. In the right column, list out activities to improve this skill.

Skill/qualifications needed in targeted job role	Current level of ability (1 = low, 2 = fair, 3 = good)	Activities and source
Example: Financial modeling		Learn advanced Excel skills Understand financial statements (accounting courses) Practice models
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

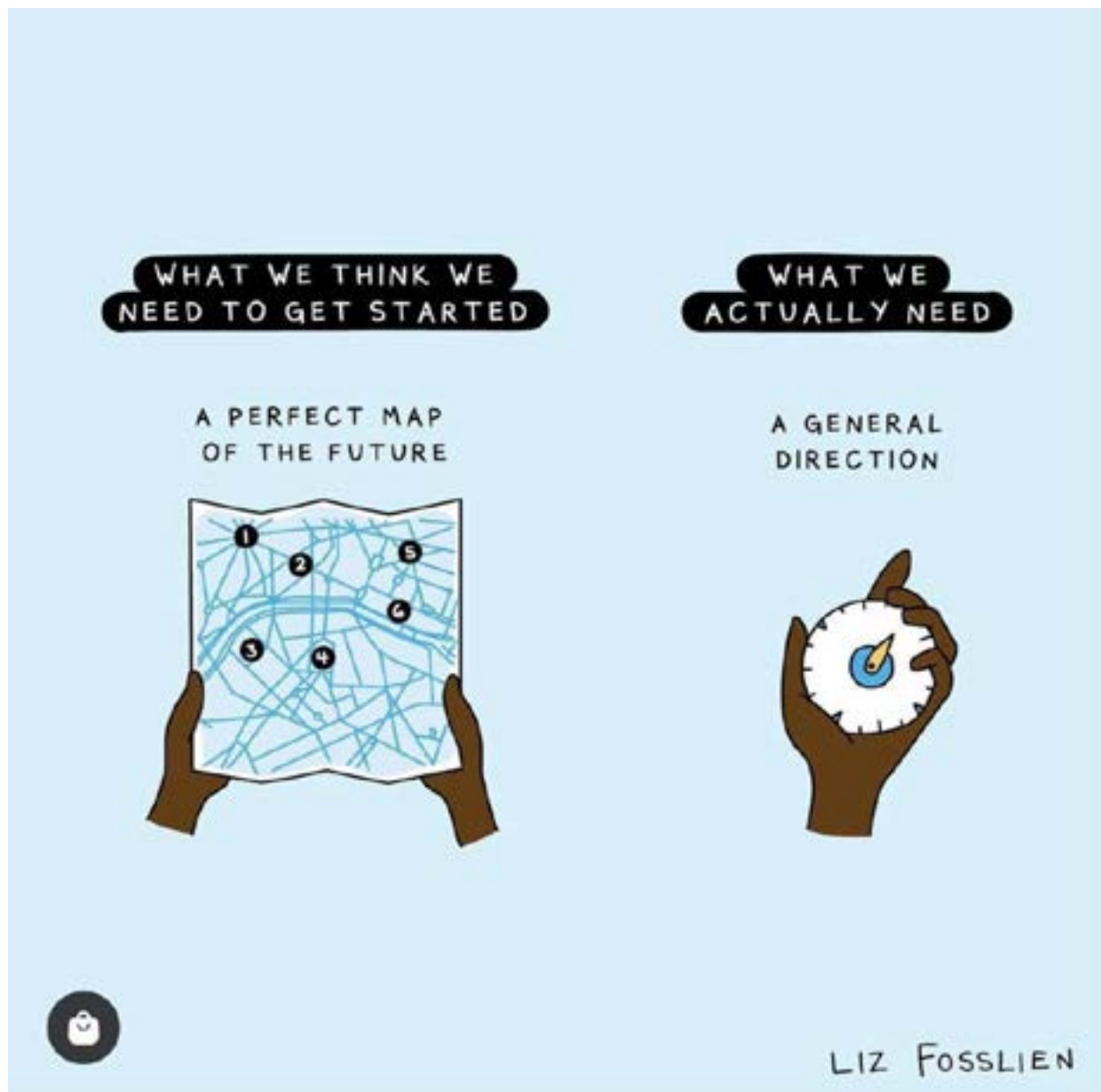
What will I do with this exercise?

Once you have a solid understanding of the capabilities you need to build in order to be competitive in the market for these roles, you will be able to put a specific timeframe around the actions to get there. This will help you stay on track as you build toward your ultimate career goal.

Career Direction

We often think we have to have THE career goal. The perfect plan. In reality, a career is more of a winding journey than a straight path to only one destination.

This illustration by Liz Fosslien is the visual that many of us need as we move to clarifying what our career goal or next career move will be.



WHAT: A career direction statement is a written description of your professional objectives. Your statement should be actionable and include steps you're looking forward to.

Examples

- I will land a job as a Data Analyst at a large financial institution by the end of the year. To accomplish this goal, I will improve my skills in Excel and PowerQuery and connect with other Data Analysts in my network to find out more about their job search processes.
- I will be promoted to a Project Lead at CompanyXYZ within the next five years. To do so, I will refine my project management skills, obtain my PMP Certification, and express my desire for growth and advancement to my current supervisor.
- I will advance from being a sales representative to being a sales manager before 2025. I will accomplish this by establishing a track record of exceeding sales goals, earning an MBA, and developing strong interpersonal skills, demonstrating characteristics of an effective leader, and showing enthusiasm for being a critical part of a team, as evidenced by joining a professional association, being goal-oriented, and making purposeful business connections through networking.

Use the space below to write your career direction statement for your short-term (next career move) or long-term objectives.

Refer back to these questions from the Career Management Model to guide you:

What problems do I want to solve?

What kind of work do I want to do to solve those?

What is my why?

What will I do with this exercise?

You can use this career direction statement as the foundation for building your plan, especially to guide the input for your career direction statement.

Part 3: How you'll get there

As you have worked through the Career Blueprinting process, you have gone through the internal phase of reflecting on your past experiences as well as evaluating your skills, values, and setting your career goals. Now that you understand Strategy and Market Research, you are ready to move on to Product Development and Operations.



Product Development

Craft your recruiting messages for your audience, build advocates, and hone skills to stand out and differentiate — in all the right ways.



Operations

Communicate effectively on your path to get hired.

Market launch plan

Now that you understand Strategy and Market Research, you are ready to test your assumptions in the market. The Product Development theme of lifelong career management will have you active in the market, meeting people, networking, conducting informational interviews, and going deeper on the research you have already done on the industry, companies, and roles you are exploring. Go beyond easy-to-access research and draw more insight from meeting people, asking thoughtful questions, and digging a little deeper.

Bonus resources: [Narrative](#) | [Networking](#) (includes outreach planner)

Operations is also an essential theme of lifelong career management. This is where you will develop your resume and cover letter, and participate in interviews.

Bonus resource: [Operations checklist](#)



Strategy

Take the time to understand yourself, where you thrive, and what that means to setting achievable and fulfilling career goals.

- Assessment
- Personal career decision-making
- Career Blueprint



Market Research

Test your assumptions, get to know more about industries, and define a clear goal.

- Day to day: Function
- Market position: Company
- Trends: Industry
- Location



Product Development

Craft your recruiting messages for your audience, build advocates, and hone skills to stand out and differentiate — in all the right ways.

- Personal introduction
- Networking and informational interviews
- Executive presence
- Mentorship



Operations

Communicate effectively on your path to get hired.

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Interviewing
- Offer assessment
- Online profiles

Throughout your career, we'll be here

W. P. Carey Career Services Center connects and enhances the lifelong professional development and recruitment journeys of students, alumni, and employers alike. Visit **career.wpcarey.asu.edu** for **curated resources and events designed with your interests and future** in mind — as well as actionable opportunities to engage with the W. P. Carey community.

The career management framework outlined in this guide is yours to keep for life. Revisit your Career Blueprint over the next several months, years, and throughout the course of your career as new developments and transitions come along.



You'll start with a plan for networking using the worksheet below. Fill in a completion date for each of the networking activities listed.

Networking activities	Date
Create a list of companies	
Use LinkedIn to source alumni contacts	
Identify 10-15 people to reach out to	
Draft email for outreach	
Check in with coach or advisor for feedback on email outreach	
Set up informational interviews (3-5)	
Meet with coach to discuss plan	
Conduct interviews	
Follow up/send thank you notes	

You'll start with a plan for networking using the outreach planner below. Fill in a completion date for each of the networking activities listed.

Name	Goal
Example: Mickie Lara	Do research to better understand their background related to data analysis.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	



As you think about embarking on the next chapter of your career journey, what story are you telling yourself and others about the decision to make this commitment to investing and developing yourself now? What came before this? And, what are your hopes for afterwards?

As you will be invited to “tell me about yourself” in various channels including introductions at meetings, in-company and professional events, informal networking meetings, and interviews for new roles, preparing this is a critical skill set to practice and develop how you want to be known.

Meetings	Key messages	Goals in meeting

Operations is the part most want to jump to first, however, you'll see how much more efficient and effective this will go since you have done the work to define your strategy, to further refine and confirm your goals through research, and to develop your story and your plan to bring this product — which is YOU — to market.

Below is a brief checklist to help you stay on track to achieve your goals.

Career Direction Statement (from [page 42](#)):

Operations checklist	Feedback source	Timeline/market plan
Resume		
Cover letter		
Interview		
Online profile		