

Career Direction - The Logical Approach

THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES TWO WAYS (A & B) HOW YOU CAN IMPLEMENT THIS APPROACH

This career decision making approach is perfect if you're a planner, it involves following a process, being systematic and considering your career options in a logical way. This will involve gathering information, weighing up the options and then making a choice. If you've never applied a logical approach to career decision making this approach is well worth a go. Remember, choosing a new career takes a lot of soul searching and reflection. It's certainly not a five minute job.

A

1 First get yourself a brew (or a wet) and visit the National Careers Service website, 'skills assessment' page: <https://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/skills-assessment>. You'll also need a notebook and pen so you can jot down career ideas as they come to you.

2 The National Careers Service website offers a range of assessments that you can take for free. Initially complete the Discover your Skills and Careers (DYSAC) assessment. This assessment explores your interests, preferences and motivations. Your results will be analysed and a range of careers recommended.

3 If you would like, you can then complete a 'skills check' (same webpage) to help you to identify your work based skills. This is a bit like the battery of tests you might have taken when you joined the Service. There are 10 assessments in total you could complete. This information will help you to understand what you're good at and could help you to make a career decision.

4 The next step is to consider the recommendations made in the DYSAC assessment further and begin to refine your options. To do this you could ask yourself the following question:

- Does the recommended role appeal to you?
- If not, why not?
- If it does, what appeals most about the role? If you like the sound of joining the Police, it might appeal because you'll wear a uniform, or it might be because you want to help others. By drilling down to the thoughts behind your preferences you may find a new direction. For example, if you want to help others there are a whole range of other roles that could potentially suit more than the Police force.

5 By this stage you will have a relatively small number of careers you are considering. In order to further refine this list ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have or could you get the qualifications required?
- Do you have or could you develop the skills and knowledge required?
- How would you feel about working in the environment?
- Are there opportunities for you in your area?

6 So hopefully now you have got 2 – 3 jobs of interest. To further refine this list to the one, try the following:

- Talk to people working in this field and ask them: How they got into their career, what a good day is like and what a bad day is like? What advice can they give you?
- Undertake a work placement to test career ideas further.
- Talk to your family and friends and ask them their thoughts.



If you are not one for taking tests (maybe it feels a bit too much like school) you can still implement this approach by doing the following.

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B

1 Go to the National Careers Service website 'Explore careers' page: <https://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers> You'll need a notebook and pen too, to write down career ideas.

2 Below is a list of job families. Scan your eyes down the list and pick three which appeal to you.

- Construction
- Security
- Manufacturing
- Facilities Management
- Agriculture/Land
- Logistics
- Third Sector
- Sport, Health & Wellbeing
- Retail
- Uniformed Services

3 Now the next step is to drill down (double click on mouse) into these job families further. For example if you would like to 'help others' you might look at the 'Social Care' job family. To do this double click on the 'Social Care' family and you will be directed to about 20 – 30 roles that involve helping others. As you scroll down the list of roles consider if any of the roles appeal. If they do, drill down (double click) and find out more about the specific role.

4 The aim is to develop a list of about 5 – 7 jobs which are of interest to you. I encourage a bit of blue sky thinking here. If your choices seem unrealistic, you can still include them in the list. For example, you may want to be an astronaut, but realise that this might not be possible. However, it could indicate an interest which you could pursue in other ways, such as science, research or teaching.

5 The next step is to consider these roles further in order to refine your list. To do this you could ask yourself the following types of questions:

- What appeals most about the role? – back to the astronaut example, it may appeal because you like space, you like adventure, or enjoy working in a team. By drilling down to the thoughts behind your preferences you may find a new direction that suits you more than the original choice.

6 To further refine the list you could ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have or could you get the qualifications required?
- Do you have or could you develop the skills and knowledge required?
- How would you feel about working in the environment?
- Are there opportunities for you in your area?

7 Hopefully you have a small number of careers you are considering now. In order to further refine this list you can do the following:

- Talk to people working in this field and ask them: How they got into their career, what a good day is like and what a bad day is like? What advice can they give you?
- Undertake a work placement to test career ideas further.
- Talk to your family and friends and ask them their thoughts.

Remember we all make career decisions differently. If this approach doesn't work for you, you could consider applying planned happenstance to your career decision making ([link](#)).

Career Direction - Using the Force

F O R C E

FLEXIBILITY

Respond to change positively by adapting yourself or your aims.

- If things don't go according to plan, then find a different path and look for new opportunities as they crop up.
- The opportunity you may have been offered may not match your 'ideal', but sometimes it can still be a fantastic opportunity. You won't know until you try.
- Apply for a role which is left of field, it might lead somewhere really interesting and be right for you.

Q. How could you be more flexible in your career quest?

OPTIMISM

Believe that opportunities are within your reach and that you can benefit from every experience.

- Optimism is a choice, recognise your negative thoughts and reframe them. If you've applied for a role and heard nothing, don't assume it's because you're no good. It could be because the recruiter is inundated with applications. This doesn't make it right, but it will prevent you from blaming yourself which could impact on your motivation to continue with your job search.
- Assume good things may result from accepting unexpected invitations, attending networking events, trying new activities, and simply saying "hello" to others.

Q. I assume good things will happen when...

RISK TAKING

Whilst this theory does not suggest recklessness per se, it outlines that you should take action and pursue an opportunity without knowing everything about it. This will probably mean stepping out of your comfort zone.

- Follow up on chance events that occur – you may meet someone socially who could help you in your career. Why not make contact and see where it might lead?
- Network with people in your organisation or outside.
- Do a placement, such as the Step into Health (a programme for the armed forces community to work in the NHS) <https://www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk>

Q. I can push myself out of my comfort zone to advance my career by...

CURIOSITY

Explore the things you are curious about.

- Learn new things regardless of where they might lead. If you've always been interested in something, learn more about it, take a course. The following websites offer free courses: Future (<https://www.futurelearn.com>); Alison Learning (<https://www.alison.com>).
- Engage in a variety of activities; you might find something you really like which you've never even considered.
- Network with those working in roles you are interested in. Ask them for some advice about your next steps.
- Explore the national careers website and find out about roles you may not have even considered: <https://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers>.

Q. Can you name three things you are curious about?

ENDURE

Keep going, even when faced with barriers.

- Don't be discouraged by silence or rejection – you might need to approach an employer a number of times before they respond.
- Remember the world is full of people who are doing things which somebody told them they would never do. If you really want something, keep going.
- If you're faced with an obstacle, don't say 'I can't overcome this' say 'how could I overcome this?'
- Don't let indecision be a barrier, instead view it as open mindedness.

Q. Can you outline three ways you could endure in the face of any perceived obstacles you are currently experiencing?

Remember the 7 Ps (Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents P*** Poor Performance)? Well, forget all that – because this approach is completely the opposite. Applying the rational/logical approach to career decision making can work for some. However, for others unplanned events and chance have as much a role to play in the decisions made, career or otherwise. A chance conversation, a hobby, redundancy, etc. can have as much as a role in our life than arguably careful planning ever can.

Planned happenstance is a proper bona fide career theory. It encourages you to make the most of chance and unexpected events. This approach is not the same as being fatalistic, it is being receptive to the opportunities that unexpected events can bring. For example, whilst the 2020/2021 pandemic has been devastating for some businesses, others have prospered: Zoom, Joe Wicks, Pelaton to name a few.

To make the most of these unexpected events you need to develop the following skills and attributes. The theory is that by developing these attributes you will end up in your ideal career by 'happy accident.' Please read through this document and reflect on the questions. Doing this will help you to begin to learn how to use the FORCE and incorporate planned happenstance into your life.