

# How to Write a Professional Growth Plan

A professional growth plan is a document that outlines professional goals, strengths, weaknesses, and an action plan for achieving career objectives. Although graduating students, educators, employees in large companies, and executive coaching clients are the individuals who commonly create career development plans, growth planning is useful for anyone who wants a concrete strategy for achieving career goals. Here are the steps for writing a professional growth plan.

## The Process

### **Write down your professional goals.**

- Reflect on your goals daily. If you are unclear about your career direction, write in a journal for a few minutes each day. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a particular work setting doing the relevant tasks of a particular profession. Notice the feelings and thoughts associated with each image.
- Choose and focus on careers that motivate and inspire you. For example, you may be working as an administrative assistant, but feel excited by the idea of managing your own projects for the same company. Or maybe you are a marketing manager for a large company and are energized by the thought of starting your own marketing firm.

**Consult with a mentor.** Find experts in your intended career and ask them to mentor you. Your mentor may be a professor at your university, your supervisor at work or a friend of a friend. Ask your mentor to guide you in writing your professional growth plan.

**Evaluate your knowledge and skill level.** Determine if there are specific gaps in your knowledge, technical skills or other expertise that might prevent you from attaining your desired position. Make a list of the skill areas in need of strengthening.

**List the steps you will take to reach your professional goals.**

- Specify the required actions and steps for achieving your career goals. For example, becoming a project manager at your present company may require asking your supervisor if you may take on more project responsibilities. If you are a new graduate, getting a job at an engineering firm may involve sending out resumes to local firms, speaking to your social network and/or cold calling the firms.
- Identify any professional obstacles, fears or concerns. Reflect on any challenges that may be slowing your progress. For example, if your intended career requires you to speak in public and this is a fear, make a note of this concern.
- Address obstacles by strengthening your skills. For example, if you are afraid of speaking in public, plan to take a public speaking course. If your desired career requires proficiency in a specific computer application, sign up for a class at the local college, study online or learn by reading the application manual. Be specific about the steps you will take to gain new skills.

**Assign a time line to each action step.** Setting a specific time by which you must complete particular tasks helps to minimize distractions by keeping you on track. If you plan to take a particular course, give yourself a deadline for completing it. Your professional growth plan also should include a time line by which you will achieve your ultimate career goal.

Your growth plan will be due May 27, 2016 @ 5PM. No late work will be accepted.

It should be no more than 1 page.

Start working on the process immediately. Revisit is regularly.

Like a budget, this should be a living document which you revisit and revise on a regular basis as goals are completed and new ones are added.

First draft is due Fri April 22, 2016 @ 5PM.