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Introduction

There are new rules for career success in today's organizations, whether the organizations are corporate, educational, or not-for-profit. Career success is no longer what our parents believed it to be—climbing up the career ladder, with all of the accompanying promotions, salary increases, and perks. We no longer accept without question their assumptions:

- Happiness and wealth are synonymous.
- Who we are is defined by our employers.
- Sixty-hour work weeks are the secret to success.
- We will complete our education by age 25, work until age 65, and then retire and play.

For some people, a few of these assumptions still hold. But for most of us, they do not fit today's realities. Our parents' formula of choosing an employable major, obtaining the "right" credentials, and going for the gold watch has changed. We have more career opportunities now than our parents could possibly have imagined. The new rule is to take advantage of every opportunity—to actively make it happen for ourselves rather than rely on our employers to make it happen *for* us.

Making it is directing your own career exploration.

Most important, we cannot take anything for granted as we set out on the path to "making it." There are no "right" degrees and credentials. Sometimes credentials are bypassed altogether in favor of unique experiences or ideas. As we develop and gain experience, we may discover that wealth is not what makes us happy; that who we are is much more than how our employers define us; that play, family, and lifelong learning are just as important as career achievement; that retirement is not age related; and that gold watches have lost their meaning. Some of us will learn these things through experience, by "trying on" different careers until we find the one that fits. If you are reading this, it probably means that you are not willing to wait for your best fit to happen by accident, that you believe there is a better way. There is.

Career Exploration for College Students is designed to help you use your *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) and *Strong Interest Inventory*® (*Strong*) results to direct your exploration of organizational career options. You may be finishing college and entering full-time employment for the first time, or you may be considering internship opportunities while you're still in college. You may even be just choosing your major and want to consider the connection between college course work and future employment.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Strong Interest Inventory® Profile

Your four-letter MBTI type

A resource that describes the MBTI instrument, preferably one of the following publications:

MBTI® Interpretive Report or

MBTI® Interpretive Report for Organizations

Introduction to Type,® 6th ed.

Introduction to Type® in Organizations, 3rd ed.

A resource that describes careers, preferably one of the following options:

Strong Interest Inventory® Interpretive Report

Internet access to Web sites that contain career databases (specific addresses are provided in later pages of this booklet)

Set of blank index cards or a small notepad

At least five interesting job descriptions (get from friends, family members, a career library, or Web sites of organizations that interest you)

In any case, what makes an organizational career successful is that *you* direct it, through self-knowledge, growth, flexibility, and change. Successful career exploration requires knowing what you are all about at this point in your life—your skills, your interests, your values, your life focus—and knowing how those qualities can meet your career development needs. Just as important are the strength and confidence you bring to prospective employers by knowing what you are all about.

How to Use This Booklet

The following chapters will help you use your results on the *Strong* and *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* instruments to shape and direct your career exploration. You may be using this booklet as part of a career development program in your college or university, or you may be using it on your own. In either case, set aside a few blocks of uninterrupted time to work on this project. Plan to spend at least an hour or two each time you sit down with it in order to benefit from continuity of thought and maintain your momentum. Following these five steps will help you use this booklet in your career exploration.

Step 1 Be sure you have taken the *Strong* and MBTI assessments recently and have talked with your college counselor or career advisor about your results. Get answers to any questions you have about your results or about the inventories. Also read the next section, *Strong* and MBTI® Basics, so that you have a solid foundation for working with the results in later chapters. Note that if your life or school situation or your career direction has changed significantly since the last time you took the two inventories, it might be a good idea to retake them and have the results interpreted before you begin using this booklet.

Step 2 Gather the materials (listed at left) you will need to do the activities. In two places, you will notice that you can choose one of several options—in these cases, you don't need *each* resource. On the facing page is a list of a few additional materials that are recommended but not required. If you have other publications that are *not* listed—such as the MBTI® Career Report, *Introduction to Type*® and *Careers*, or publications your career advisor has given you—you may use those resources as well to complete the activities. Visit your college or university's career or placement center, career Web sites, a career center library, or the public library to become familiar with resources on career planning. When you are in the final sections of this booklet, you will also need to use materials at the library or on corporate or career Web sites to research career opportunities in organizations.

Step 3 Build the foundation of your career exploration process by completing Chapter 1. This chapter leads you to the secret of directing your own career management: self-knowledge. You are asked to answer four questions:

- WHO am I?
- WHAT do I want to do?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Skills Confidence Inventory edition of the *Strong* Profile (this edition includes the standard *Strong* Profile *plus* results assessing how confident you are in your skills)

Where Do I Go Next? Using Your Strong Results to Manage Your Career (rev. ed.)

What's Your Type of Career? Unlock the Secrets of Your Personality to Find Your Perfect Career Path

Resources at the library: published corporate indexes, directories, annual reports, and handbooks; trade journals and professional magazines; *Business Employment Weekly*

You are about to take a very big step in directing your career exploration. Good luck as you take charge!

- WHERE do I want to do it?
- WHY do I want to do it?

Your answers to these four questions are key to directing your career exploration. And although your answers to these questions will differ at various times in your life, the sources of the answers are the same: you and your *Strong* and MBTI results.

Step 4 Plan the strategies you will use in your career exploration by completing Chapter 2. Your answers to the Who, What, Where, and Why questions are the starting point for this chapter. Additional activities will help you determine what your options will be.

Step 5 Chapter 3 will help you put your career plan down on paper. You will discover how to find the right setting for yourself and how to get support from others for your exploration. You will also gain an understanding of what your preferred style of career exploration is likely to be.

Strong and MBTI® Basics

The activities in this career exploration booklet are based on your results on the *Strong* and *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* instruments. Your career professional chose the *Strong* and MBTI assessments because they are well-respected tools in the field of career development. Both inventories have been used for decades and researched and revised to reflect current vocabulary, employment trends, and user requirements. Their reliability and validity for career-related applications are well established.

Strong Interest Inventory® Instrument

As your career professional explained to you, the *Strong Interest Inventory* instrument is based on the idea that there are six types of people and six corresponding types of work environments. The more similar you are to the environment in which you work, the more satisfied and productive you are likely to be. Your *Strong* personality is determined by comparing your likes and dislikes with those of people who enjoy their work in a wide range of occupations. The *Strong* General Occupational Themes are arranged around a hexagon (see chart 1). The closer the Theme letters are to each other on the hexagon, the more the Themes have in common. Your Theme may have one, two, or three letters. Circle the corners of the hexagon in chart 1 that best describe your Theme.

In this career exploration booklet, you will use the following information from your *Strong* Profile:

Theme code: printed on page 2 of the Profile. If a Theme code was *not* printed for you, work with your career professional to derive a code based on those Themes, Basic Interest Scales, and Occupational Scales on which you scored the highest. Write that code on page 2.