Developing Your Career--Know Your Career
Anchors and Develop Your Options

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October 1980   W.P.1148-80

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Developing your career is ultimately your own responsibility. The evidence is growing from a number of studies of companies and of individuals in managerial, technical, and professional careers that the best kind of career management both from the point of view of the company and the individual starts with career _self_-management.* No matter how carefully the employer plans for the employee in today's technologically and socially complex world, the chances of career _mis_management are substantial unless the employee takes an active role on his or her own behalf.

In this paper I will first present a model of how the career evolves and how people gradually form "career anchors" which begin to stabilize, guide, and constrain their careers. Different people develop different career anchors which have quite different consequences both for the person's management of him or herself and for the organizations's planning of reward, incentive, and control systems. I will explore these differences and provide a self-diagnostic exercise at the end of the paper to help the reader to begin to understand his or her own career anchor. Finally, some suggestions will be offered on how the individual and the employing organization can jointly plan a better career management program.

TALENTS, MOTIVES, VALUES

Research on career evolution has shown that as people move into their career they gradually develop a clearer self-concept in terms of their

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*Most of the material in this paper is based on my book Career Dynamics. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

1) <u>abilities and talents</u>: what they are good at and what they are not good at; 2) <u>motives and needs</u>: what they are ultimately seeking out of their career (e.g., good income, security, interesting work, opportunities to be creative, etc.); and 3) <u>values</u>: what kind of company, work environment, product, or service they want to be associated with.

Talents, needs, and values come to be inter-related into a more or less congruent total self-concept through a reciprocal process of learning to be better at those things we are motivated to do and value, learning to want and value those things we are good at, and avoiding those things which we are not motivated to do or do not value, thereby gradually losing our abilities and skills in those areas. People differ in whether it is their talents, their motives, or their values which dominate their self-image and thus lend a kind of central theme to their careers, but it is in the nature of human development to begin to seek congruity and consistency among the elements.

When people first enter the world of work they have many ambitions, hopes, and fears but relatively little good information about themselves, especially in the area of their abilities and talents. Through testing and counseling they can get an idea of their interests and their values, but they cannot really determine what they will be good at and how they will really like doing certain kinds of work. For example, many young people who aspire to be managers do not realize that they might not be very talented in working with people, or, even if they had the talent, they might not enjoy it. As work experience accumulates in the first years of the career, people gradually learn about themselves in the areas of their talents, their motives, and their values. This process is often painful and full of surprises because we enter work situations with illusions and dreams about ourselves which may not stand the test of reality.

In almost every occupation which has ever been studied, sociologists have found what has come to be called "reality shock"--the discovery that the actual world of work is not at all what the person had imagined it to be during the educational or training period. Not only is the work different than expected--more boring, less rational, more fraught with interpersonal and political issues, etc., but the person discovers his or her own preferences, limitations, skills, needs, and values to be different than expected. For example, we may think, based on experiences in school, that we function well under time pressure yet discover that our ability to handle such pressure in a less structured task is much lower (or higher) than we had anticipated. Sometimes new employees face their first supervisory opportunities with great fear because they are convinced that they are too young or inexperienced, only to discover that they have real talent for working with and inspiring others. One of the most important parts of the early learning in a new job, therefore, is the learning about oneself.

SELF-CONCEPT

As people accumulate different kinds of work experience they begin to get a more realistic picture of themselves and begin to discover what is really important to them. The self-concept becomes clearer and more articulated. Dominant elements emerge--a critical ability or skill that one really wants to exercise, an important need one has discovered, a crucial value which dominates one's orientation. One may have known in a vague way about these elements of one's own personality, but until they have been tested in actual life experiences one does not really know how important they are, and how any given talent, motive, or value relates in a subjective hierarchy to other elements of the personality. It is only when one is confronted with

difficult choices that one begins to know what is really important to one.

CAREER ANCHORS

As one develops more self-insight, one gradually learns how to make more rational career choices. The dominant elements which govern those choices can be thought of as career anchors because the self-concept begins to function to guide and constrain choices. In talking to people who are ten or more years into their careers, one hears more statements about how they discovered that they did not like some new assignment or area of work and felt "pulled back" to something which they liked better --hence the metaphor of an "anchor". People develop a clearer image of the sorts of things they are good at and the sorts of things they need to avoid because they are not good at or don't like. Anchors tend to develop around the following kinds of dominant themes:

1) Security, stability, organizational identity

Some people discover that they have an overriding need to organize their career in such a way that they will feel safe and secure, that future events will be predictable, and that they can relax in the knowledge that they "have made it." Everyone needs some degree of security and stability, and at some stages of life financial security can become especially important to anyone, as when one is raising and educating a family. But for some people security and stability become an overriding central issue which comes to guide and constrain all career decisions. Such people often seek jobs in organizations which provide job tenure, which have the reputation of never laying off people, which have good retirement plans and generous benefits, and which have the image of being strong and reliable in their industry. Government and civil service jobs are often attractive to such people, and they obtain some of their self-gratification from identifying with the organization even if

they do not have very high ranking or important jobs in such organizations.

In our research we have found at least two kinds of people whose careers are anchored in security/stability concerns. One kind of security/stability oriented person becomes a kind of "organization man" and turns over the responsibility for career management to the employer. Another kind of security/stability oriented person links himself or herself to a geographic area, putting down roots in a community, investing in a house and a way of life. The former kind is willing to become a pawn in the career game, moving to whatever functional area the company assigns him or her, and making geographical moves whenever they are demanded. The other kind of person will pick a geographic area, invest in it by putting down roots, and shift jobs or companies whenever it is necessary in order to avoid being uprooted.

Both types appear to be willing to trade off career advancement for security/stability. The highly talented among them may move to fairly high ranking managerial or functional jobs within organizations, but they prefer work that is stable and predictable such as production. Others who are geographically bound may attempt to start their own businesses in order to stabilize their situations. If they are less talented they level off in middle level managerial or technical/functional jobs and gradually become less work involved. If they get the security and stability they are seeking, they will be content with the level they have attained. We should not assume that everyone wants to keep rising in the organization. Many people like the ones I am describing have a feeling of "having made it" even if they are not very high up in the organization. If they have unused potential, they may prefer to find non-work and non-career activities to satisfy those unused portions of themselves.

The security/stability oriented person sometimes feels that he or she has failed against the standard success criteria of "climbing the corporate ladder," or feels guilty for not having more ambition. Such conflicts and feelings reflect the degree to which the more hierarchical thinking of the managerially oriented people(who will be described later)dominates the career success criteria of everyone in the organization. Yet if people are different and want different things from their careers, it is important to begin to recognize the validity of these distinctions and increase one's self-insight and self-acceptance.

2) Autonomy and independence

Some people discover early in their working lives that the/ cannot stand to be bound by other people's rules, by procedures, by working ours, dress codes, and other norms which inevitably arise in most organizat.ons. They discover that whatever the area they are working in, they have ı need to do things in their own wa), at their own pace, and against their own standards. They find organizational life to be restrictive, irrational, and/or in-trusive into their own private lives and therefore prefer to pursue their careers on their own.

As with security/stability, everyone has needs for autonomy and in-dependence, but some people discover, as they encounter organizational norms, that they have an overriding need to feel they are masters of their own ships. Sometimes such feelings are associated with very high levels of education and training which inculate a strong feeling that one is a "professional" who can be trusted to act responsibly and who knows what he or she is doing. Sometimes such feelings are developed in childhood by certain kinds of child-rearing methods which put a very high premium on self-reliance and

independence of judgment. Whatever the original reasons for the feelings, people who have such feelings will tend to be pushed or pulled toward work situations in which they can exercise that sense of autonomy.

Many people who discover in the early years of their career that they have overriding needs for autonomy, gravitate out of large bureaucratic organizations into more autonomous professional careers such as teaching or consulting. However, many others find that it is possible, even in large organizations, to find jobs and career niches where sufficient autonomy exists to satisfy their needs. For example, many kinds of jobs in engineering, research and development, sales, data processing, market research, financial analysis, plant security, and automated production units involve large areas of freedom. In many kinds of work the targets and deadlines are tightly controlled but the method and pace by which they are accomplished is left to the employee, thus providing an opportunity for autonomy needs to be met.

Management jobs have to be carefully analyzed by the employee who is autonomy anchored because they vary greatly in the amount and kind of autonomy they provide. Once one becomes a manager responsible for other people, for a budget, and for certain outcomes, one clearly limits one's degree of freedom. From one point of view, therefore, moving into management is the worst thing a strongly autonomy oriented person can do. On the other hand, management provides much more latitude in how to get work done, freedom from arbitrary constraints such as punching a time clock or having one's work paced by an assembly line, and the power to set up rules and norms which suit one's tastes. Within management, one finds huge variations by type of function, geographical isolation, and the style of the organization in how much autonomy is possible. Many managers in

lower and middle level jobs complain that they have too little autonomy.
Managers at the level of plant, division, or geographical region
often report a high degree of autonomy. If they move into the head-
quarters organization, they often report a loss of autonomy. Some regional
sales managers and some salesmen, for example, refuse promotions into the
headquarters organization primarily because they are unwilling to give
up the autonomy they enjoy.

In others words, it is possible for autonomy anchored people to remain
in organizations either in the role of individual contributor or in certain
kinds of managerial jobs which provide sufficient degrees of freedom. How-
ever, if the autonomy anchor is strong, if the person is perpetually upset
by "silly rules," "arbitrary procedures," "bureaucratic red-tape," "Mickey
Mouse," it may well be that such a person will only find career satis-
faction in consulting, teaching, or some other form of work which provides
more freedom. It should also be noted that the very things which irritate
the autonomy anchored person may be a source of comfort to the security/
stability anchored person, and the freedom which may be essential to the
autonomy anchored person would make the security/stability anchored person
feel insecure and at sea.

A reminder is in order at this point. The fact that a person is
anchored in either security/stability or autonomy does not mean that he
or she is indifferent to the other need. Everyone needs a certain amount
of both. What I mean by a career anchor, to repeat the point, is an over-
riding concern or need that operates as a genuine constraint on career
decisions. The anchor is the thing that the person would not give up if
he or she had to make a choice. Often in life one can find situations
where one can satisfy quite different sorts of needs. But if one confronts

a career choice that makes it impossible to satisfy different needs to an
equal degree, then it is important to know what one's anchor is, what one
will protect and not give up.

3) Creativity and entrepreneurship

Some people discover early in their careers that they have an overriding
need to create a new business of their own by developing a new product or
service, by building a new organization through financial manipulation, or
by taking over an existing business and reshaping it in their own image. I
am not talking about the inventor or the creative artist here, though some of
them sometimes also become entrepreneurs. Rather, I am talking about the
kind of people who really want to create a new organization or develop a
new business around a product or service which they may or may not have in-
vented themselves. We should not confuse these types of people with the
creative people in research or in marketing (who will be discussed next
under a different career anchor concept). The entrepreneur's creativity
reflects a particular need to make his or her mark through creating an empire,
a successful business which will survive on its own, a financial fortune
which will reflect the skill of the entrepreneur.

Many people dream about founding their own businesses and making large
fortunes. Often such dreams are expressed in ambitions while the person
is still in school or early in the career as a goal for later on. Many people
in middle management express the desire to "get out on their own." However,
most of my research suggests that those entrepreneurs who are ultimately
successful begin their activities fairly early in their careers and pursue
them relentlessly even if they suffer early and repeated failure. Many who
dreamed about it in school discover after one attempt that they had neither
the talent nor the motivation to take the risks involved. Many who talk
about it in the middle of their managerial career discover gradually that

they really want autonomy or security/stability rather than the excitement and tension of building their own business. In other words, persons who end up being anchored in creative entrepreneurial activity discover fairly early in their careers that they have both he talent and the motivation to pursue this career course. Most such people spend only a few years of their careers in traditional organizations before they break out on their own, or they remain in organizational jobs as a kind of sideline while pursuing their entrepreneurial activity on their own time.

It is important to understand this career anchor because e ther the organization or the individual can unwittingly mismanage the entrepreneurial career. From the point of view of the organization, it is probably hopeless to try to retain this kind of person, unless the organization is willing to let him or her have his/her own patents or 51 per cent control of any new enterprises he/she may form. From the point of view of the individual, it is important not to confuse autonomy needs ("the desire to be on one's own") or security/stability needs ("the desire to run one's own business in order to have a guaranteed income or the assurance that one will not have to move every few years") with entrepreneurial needs. Entrepreneurs may actually have to sacrifice both autonomy and stability/security in order to create a new organization. To be anchored in entrepreneurial activity means an overriding pre-occupation, for some people even an obsession, with creating something of their own and proving to the world that they have done it. Whatever the origins of such motives may be, it is important to recognize that the combination of motives and talents which are involved in this career are genuinely different from most other careers that I am discussing here.

4) Technical/functional competence

Some people discover as their careers unfold and as they get into
certain areas of work that they have a strong talent and high motivation
for a particular kind of work. For example, some people who enter organi-
zations in an engineering job discover that they like engineering and are
very good at it; others have similar feelings about financial analysis --
they discover that they have the talent for and like managing money; still
others like data processing because they have a talent for analyzing certain
kinds of problems in a certain kind of way; some discover that they are
good at sales or marketing, and so on. As these people move along in their
careers they further discover that if they are moved into other areas of work
they are less happy and less skilled, and begin to feel "pulled back" to
the area they are competent in and like. They build their sense of identity
around the content of their work, the technical or functional area in which
they are succeeding, and develop increasing skill in that area, becoming the
modern version of the craftsman whose ambition is to become better and better
in the craft.

Every occupation has its craftsmen -- the doctor who wants to be the
best neuro-surgeon in the world, the professor who becomes a specialist in
a certain area, the lawyer who specializes in a certain area of the law, the
engineer who is the best designer of a certain kind of product, the salesman
who can "sell anything" or who specializes in a certain line, and some
categories of managers for whom the function they are managing is ultimately
much more important than the management process itself (the sales manager,
the R&D manager, the production manager, the chief engineer, etc.). Such
people develop in their self-concepts the dominant theme that they are
specialists and craftsmen, that they have certain talents around which their

identities revolve. This identity, the need to exercise and display their skills, overrides other kinds of needs and concerns such as security/stability, autonomy, or entrepreneurial activity.

In other words, to be anchored in one's technical/functional competence means that one would not give up that area of work even if one had to sacrifice a certain amount of security or autonomy to remain in it. On the other hand, what people anchored in this way seek is challenge in their area of competence, opportunities to be creative in their area, recognition for their talent and their accomplishments, opportunities to continue to grow and develop in that area of work, and the status that goes with high achievement in one's craft. Technically/functionally anchored people will follow wherever job challenge leads them. If one organization continues to provide opportunities for growth in that area, they will remain in that organization, but if interesting work runs out, they are likely to move to another organization, or go into consulting or teaching. The criterion they use is the opportunity to continue to do challenging work in their area of expertise.

Most organizational careers start out in a technical/functional area in the sense that most new employees are given a specific job in finance, production, marketing, etc. and are expected to master it--to become a specialist. Does that mean, then, that all careers start out being anchored in technical/ functional competence? The answer is to be found in how people react to their early years in those specialized jobs. For some, the job is a means to organizational membership and security more than an end in itself. For others it is simply a stepping stone to a higher rung in the organization (the group to be discussed next). For some it is an opportunity to learn a skill which they feel they need before they launch off on their own in entreprenurial activity. The group I am describing in this section is those people who find

the work intrinsically meaningful and satisfying because they discover they
have a real talent for it and really like it. They begin to specialize because
they begin to see themselves and their careers in terms of that specialty.
In other words, just because someone is in a technical or functional job
does not mean that that person sees himself or herself as a specialist
anchored in that area. For many it is just a stepping stone or just a job
to be done, not one to be mastered as an element of one's basic self-concept.

It is the technically/functionally anchored people who are most vulnerable
to career mis-management because most organizational careers are designed by
generalists who put a high value on learning several functions and learning
management per se. The very senior positions in most organizations
are the general manager jobs which require managing people from different
functions and integrating those functions. It is often very difficult for
the general manager to understand and be sympathetic to the orientation of
the specialist as is reflected by the difficulty of making so-called "dual
ladders" work in companies. Even though it is acknowledged that the highly
talented scientist, engineer, financial analyst, programmer, or market
research specialist is crucial to the functioning of the organization, the
pay scales and rank levels available to such individual contributors often
stop well below those of general managers.

One major issue for the technically/functionally anchored person is
whether or not to accept some managerial responsibilities. If the person
has no talent for management and this lack of talent becomes clear early
in the career, there is no issue. However, for many people it is not clear
whether they have the talent and/or whether they will like management. Most
organizations tend to reward high performance in a technical/functional area
with promotion, and, most often promotion means a supervisory position in which

managerial skills are needed. If the person then discovers a strong aversion or lack of talent, the problem is how to get back gracefully into a technical or functional area without loss of face. The organizational solution is to create easy mobility into and out of such early managerial assignments by making them temporary or by developing norms that one can be promoted out of supervisory positions into higher level technical/functional staff or individual contributor positions. From the point of view of the individual it is important to plan ahead what to do if the supervisory job does not work out and to create some viable options before accepting the supervisory job.

Another path which one sees in technically/functionally anchored people is that they discover they do have some talent for management, particularly if they manage only within the function in which their talent lies. They accept functional management responsibilities but remain in that function throughout their career by preference. One can find very senior financial, marketing, manufacturing, R & D, and other managers who have sufficient managerial talent to function at senior levels, but whose preference is clearly for the content of their work, not the management per se. They would find it difficult and unpleasant to move into cross-functional integrative general management positions even if they had the talent. I have met very senior functional managers in corporate headquarters who had been division general managers who described that period of their career as less satisfying and successful than the functional work they did before and after their "tour of duty" in general management.

Another issue for people anchored in some specific technical or functional competence is whether or not they can or want to sustain their special interests in later career stages. It becomes more difficult to keep up, there is

the danger that one's area of expertise will become obsolete, and younger and more recently trained people often know more and can be hired at lower salaries thus threatening the job security of the mid-life specialist. Going into management at this stage is usually not a solution because the technical/functional person typically rejects management either because he or she is not interested in or competent at management. Even those people who have acquired some management skills within their function often find it difficult and unpalatable to try general management. They view general management as being too political, too inter personal, too irrational, too much a "jungle". Finding a viable role within a technical or functional area in one's 40's, 50's and beyond is thus a thallenging and difficult proposition both for the individual and for the employer. Becoming more of a teacher and mentor to younger people is one solution that has worked; careful redesign of work to take advantage of the experience level of the older specialist is another avenue; multiple career ladders and meaningful rewards for individual contributor; and functional managers is a third solution.

It is important to recognize that people anchored in their technical or functional competence are usually the largest group within most organizaitons, and that this group is the real base of competence of the organization. Therefore, the effective management of these careers is a very high priority in most organizations. For the individuals who discover that they are technically/functionally anchored it is especially important to learn how to communicate their career needs so that their supervisors will avoid some of the typical errors such as pushing them into managerial roles which they may not want nor be good at.

5) Managerial Competence

Some people, but only some, discover as their careers progress that

they really want to become _general_ managers, that management per se interests them and that they are competent in it, that they want to reach a level in the organization where their managerial efforts and decisions will make the difference between organizational success and failure. For this group of people it is advancement (climbing the corporate ladder), high levels of responsibility, opportunity to contribute to the welfare of their organization, leadership opportunities, and high income which are the most important job values and become their criteria of success.

Most people when first entering organizational careers _say_ they want to become general managers and sincerely believe it. However, it is only with some work experience and the recognition of what is involved in becoming and being a general manager that people begin to be able to assess whether they really have the talent and the motivation for that kind of work. People who discover that they really do want to advance to positions of general management responsibility talk about having to learn in three basic areas, each of which is important for effectiveness:

a) _Analytical competence_: the ability to identify, analyze, and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty.

In order to function as a general manager it is necessary to learn how to take incomplete information of unknown validity under high time pressure and to convert that information into a problem statement which is clear and which can be worked on. Financial, marketing, technological, and other elements have to be combined into problem statements which are relevant to the future success of the organizations. It is commonly said that managers are decision _makers_. However, it is probably more accurate to say that managers are capable of identifying and stating problems in such a way that decisions

can be made. They manage the process of decision making. The ability to

think cross-functionally and integratively is a particular analytical skill

which effective general managers say they have had to learn before they

could function in general management jobs.

> b) Inter-personal and inter-group competence: the ability to influence, supervise, lead, manipulate, and control people at all levels of the organization toward organizational goal achievement.

In order to function as a general manager it is necessary to learn how

to supervise, how to work with peers in a team or committee situation, how to

work with others of various ranks from other departments, how to manage groups,

meetings, projects, and task forces, how to manage inter-group situations such

as labor-management negotiations and/or inter-departmental conflicts.

Much of the technical information which goes into decision making will

increasingly be in the heads of subordinates and peers as organizational tasks

become more complex, so the quality of decisions increasingly will hinge on

the ability of general managers to bring the right people together around the

right problems, and then to create an inter-personal problem-solving climate

which will elicit full exchange of information and full commitment from

participants. Increasingly the general manager's job involves the management

of the decision-making process rather than the making of decisions, though it

continues to be the general manager who is accountable for whatever decision

is ultimately made. The complexity of organizational tasks is such that most

general managers discover that they simply cannot any longer make decisions

by themselves. They are highly dependent upon the information and insight of

others and must find ways of eliciting and utilizing the involvement of

those others.

Young managers on their way up the ladder talk vividly about the early

experiences of supervision as being a major self-testing ground. Would they

be able to supervise others, and, more importantly, would they enjoy it?
Most people have fears that they might not be any good at being the boss,
though these fears are difficult to admit early in the career. But once
they had had an opportunity to test themselves and found that they really
could handle it and did enjoy it, their overall self-confidence to pursue
a general manager career increased very sharply. Analytical skills get
tested early, even in school, but inter-personal and supervisory skills often
do not get tested until one actually has one's first supervisory assignment
several years into the career.

Those people who find that they do <u>not</u> enjoy supervision or are <u>not</u>
very good at it probably move increasingly toward a self-concept built
around their technical skills and end up being technically/functionally
anchored. It is important for the organization to make it possible for a
career transition to occur in that direction. Too often the best engineer
or salesman is promoted to project supervisor or sales manager without any
career path being provided for those who will either fail in or discover that
they do not like the supervisory role. Only those who succeed in these tasks
will develop a managerial career anchor.

    c) <u>Emotional competence</u>: the capacity to be stimulated by emotional
        and interpersonal issues and crises rather than exhausted or de-
        bilitated by them; the capacity to bear high levels of responsibility
        without becoming paralyzed; and the ability to exercise power and
        make difficult decisions without guilt or shame.

General managers frequently refer to the painful process of having to
learn to make decisions which are emotionally difficult--laying off a valued
older employee during a period of recession, deciding between two programs
in the absence of clear information as to which will be the better one, com-
mitting large sums of money to a project, sending a subordinate on a difficult
assignment which the subordinate does not really want to do, inspiring a

demoralized organization, fighting for a project or program at higher levels
in the organization, delegating to subordinates and then leaving them alone
(trusting them) even though it is the manager who is accountable for results,
and so on.

Most general managers report that such decisions occur constantly and
that one of the most difficult things they had to learn was how to keep
functioning day after day without getting an ulcer or having a nervous break-
down. It is, in a sense, the essence of the general manager's job to absorb
the emotional strains of uncertainty, interpersonal conflict, and responsibility.
It is this aspect of the job which often turns off the technically/functionally
anchored person, being viewed negatively as the jungle, "the executive suite,"
and interpersonal. It is this same aspect of the job which the managerially
anchored person increasingly seeks, which excites them, which makes the job
meaningful and rewarding, and which provides the high financial and psychic
payoffs.

The effective manager, then, is a person who <u>combines</u> some degree of
analytical, interpersonal, and emotional skills, Each skill has to be pre-
sent in some degree. Obviously people in the other anchor groups can have
various of these skills in even greater amounts, but it is the combination
which is crucial for doing the integrative general manager job. If one looks
at the job from this point of view, two things become obvious: 1) general
managers are oriented very differently and have very different self-images
from technical/functional specialists of functional managers; and 2) it takes
somewhat longer to learn to be a general manager because of the difficulty
of locating situations and assignments in which one's skills can be tested
and one's self-insight and self-confidence can be developed.

ARE THERE OTHER CAREER ANCHORS?

Research on business and managerial careers has shown that most people can be described in terms of the five anchors discussed: 1) security/stability; 2) autonomy and independence; 3) entrepreneurship; 4) technical/functional competence; and 5) managerial competence. However, this does not mean that one would not find other dominant themes in careers. For example, some people develop an over-riding need for variety and change in their careers and will choose only jobs which continue to provide such opportunities. Some people develop very strong needs to ally themselves to a particular cause such as environmentalism and will choose only jobs which provide them opportunities to further the particular values which they hold. Some people develop overriding needs to be helpful to others, to use their talents and skills in the so-called helping professions in which interpersonal skills play a dominant role. Some people are primarily oriented toward the exercise of power and influence. However, needs for power and influence are often met within the context of the other anchors, expecially the managerial anchor. Variety needs are often met in managerial jobs and, indeed, are one of the major reasons why people pursue management. Needs to serve a cause or to be involved interpersonally and in a helping role are often met through becoming a specialist in certain kinds of technical or functional areas such as personnel or organization development. What is ultimately important is for each person in a career to become aware of those needs, talents, and values which he or she will not give up if forced to make a choice, and to describe them in ways that make sense to the person.

CAN A PERSON HAVE MORE THAN ONE ANCHOR?

The way I have defined the career anchor it is that part of the person's self-concept which he or she will not give up if a choice has to be made.

By this definition there can only be one anchor. It is the set of needs or talents which are at the top of the person's hierarchy within his or her self-image. However, most people can avoid situations which force them to make such ultimate choices and thus fail to realize what their real career anchor is. If they can advance up a technical ladder and get into technical or functional management, they can avoid asking themselves the question of whether they really prefer to stay in their specialized area or want to advance into general management. If they can work in a stable organization which gives them both security and a reasonably autonomous work situation, they can avoid asking themselves the question of which need is more important to them. Yet I have found that if one is forced to make a choice, even in a hypothetical situation in an interview, and if one has had 5 to 10 years of work experience, one can, with relatively little difficulty, become conscious of one's internal hierarchy and decide which needs or values are really the ones one would hold on to. And it is important for career self-management to go through such an exercise so that when one is confronted with real career choices, one can base one's decisions intelligently on one's real needs.

DO ANCHORS CHANGE?

All the evidence is not in on this question because not enough people have been studied for a long enough period of time to really determine how careers evolve. But if the process of learning about oneself leads to a clearer and more articulated self-image, a clearer picture of what we are good at, want, and value, it would be my prediction that such a self-image would increasingly become a stable part of the personality. It seems unlikely to me that a technical/functional kind of person would at mid-life suddenly want to become a general manager unless he or she had wanted that all along and had simply lacked the opportunity to develop the skills. Similarly, one

rarely sees a general manager becoming a specialist later in life, unless
he or she had wanted that specialty all along and had only been waiting for
an opportunity to get into it. We have also observed that some technically/
functionally anchored managers who get promoted into general management
do that job for a while without ever learning to really like it. Instead,
they wait to be promoted out of it into staff jobs in headquarters organiza-
tions and are much happier once they are back in their functional area.
Their <u>job</u> changed but their <u>career anchor</u> did not. And people often are
forced to work in areas which are inconsistent with their career anchors.
If they happen to have some talent and if their choices are limited they
will work in the incongruent area, but their career anchor will not change
as evidenced by their relief when they finally get back into a more congruent
area.

HOW TO DISCOVER ONE'S OWN CAREER ANCHOR

The career anchor is the self-image which the person holds of what he
or she is good at, wants, and values. It provides the reasons why we make
the choices we make, because it is human to try to be consistent and to live
out one's self-image. To get at the career anchor, therefore, it is necessary
to find out the <u>reasons</u> why we have made the choices we have made.

Career choices are probably "overdetermined;" that is, they reflect a
whole variety of conscious and unconscious needs and impulses. However,
most of us try to make sense out of our lives and careers, and therefore
attempt to build a coherent and acceptable self-image. Our conscious reasons
may reflect unconscious and unavailable impulses and needs,, but it is the
conscious reasons that become the immediate causes for action and choices.
In looking for career anchors we are looking for these conscious elements
which the individual is willing and able to admit to himself or herself and

is willing to confide in others. There is no intention here of looking for "deep" or unconscious personality elements. Rather, the search is for the patterns of choices, the conscious reasons for those choices, and the patterns or themes which emerge in those reasons.

The best way to determine a career anchor is 1) to identify all the major choices one has made from school on relating to jobs and career, and 2) to figure out what the reasons were for making those choices. Once the reasons have been identified, one then looks for the pattern in those reasons. If several patterns are revealed which suggest that the person has been able to meet multiple needs in his or her career thus far, it is important to project future choices and to invent hypothetical situations which would force a resolution between different categories.

- MUTUAL INTERVIEWS

A set of questions designed to elicit major events and the reasons for them is given at the end of this paper. A person can attempt to do a self-analysis by sitting down and answering the questions in writing. However, it has been my experience that it is difficult to discipline oneself to go through this exercise. The temptation to be either lazy or self-deceptive is very great. Therefore, the recommended procedure is to find a peer or colleague who is also interested in identifying his or her anchor and conducting a mutual interview. Each interview should take approximately one hour and should lead to a joint decision on the anchor of the person being interviewed. Then the two people switch roles and conduct the second interview again leading to a joint decision on the second person's anchor. At the end they should review both decisions in the light of everything that has been said.

The interviewer should use the questions given at the end as a guide, but should feel free to probe and explore in new areas which may come up so

long as the interview structure remains basically biographical--"what did you do, what events took place?" followed by explorations of reasons--"why did you do that, what were your feelings about it?"

It has been found repeatedly that both the experience of doing the interviewing and being interveiwed are valuable exercises in thinking through one's own and someone else's career. No special psychological skills are needed to conduct such an interview. What is important is a basic commitment to trying to help another person sort out the themes in his or her own career by listening and asking the right questions. If the interviewer tries to play the psychologist with x-ray vision, he or she will be less helpful. The important thing is to help by asking questions, listening hard, and "playing back" to the person what he or she is saying.

The interviewer does not have to be sure of the other person's career anchor. The goal is not to stereotype or measure other people. What is important is that the interview process should lead each person to greater self-insight so that the person can begin to exercise his or her own choices in a more planned manner. If the organization has a career counseling program which involves a dialogue between supervisors and subordinates, it would be essential that each have had some experience in thinking through his/her own anchors and career themes before he/she attempts to talk to the other. Mutual career anchor interviews among peers or colleagues are therefore a prerequisite or a way of preparing for career counseling interviews across hierarchical levels. One should not do the basic career anchor interview across levels because of the danger of distortion of information if one is trying to "impress" someone at a different level of the organization. The interviews should initially be

between pairs of people who do not have any organizational reasons for trying to tell each other anything other than how they really feel about their various career choices.

Career Anchor Analysis Form*

In this interview guide you are asked to inquire about information in the left hand column and reasons for choices, decisions, etc., in the right hand column.

External Factors and Events	Internal Reasons and Feelings
1. What was your major area of concentration in college?	Why did you choose that area? How did you feel about it?
2. Did you go to graduate school? If yes, what was your area of concentration; what degree did you get?	Why did you go or not go?
3. What was your first job after school? (Include military if relevant)	What were you looking for in your first job?

4. What were your ambitions or long-range goals when you started you career? Have they changed? When? Why?

_____

_____

_____

5. What was your first major change of job or company?	Did you or the company initiative it? Why did you initiate it, or accept it?

What were you looking for in your next job

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Continue to list what you consider to be the major job, company, career changes you see in your career. List each step and answer the questions for each step.

6. Change _____

Why did you initiate or accept it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What were you looking for?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Change _____

Why did you initiate or accept it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What were you looking for?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Change_____.

Why did you initiate or accept it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What were you looking for?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Change_____

Why did you initiate or accept it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

External Factors	Internal Feelings

10. As you look back over your career, identify some times you have especially enjoyed it.

What about those times did you enjoy?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. As you look back, identify some times you have not especially enjoyed it.

What about those times did you not enjoy?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Have you ever refused a job move or promotion?

Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. How would you describe you occupation to others?

What do you see yourself to be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

External Factors

Internal Feelings

14. Do you see any major transition points in your career? Describe the transition objectively.

How did you feel about it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why did you initiate or accept it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Review all or your answers in this column and look for the pattern in the answers. Do you see any anchor in the answers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Rate each of the anchors below based on your answers above, from 1 → 5, 1-low importance, 5-high importance

Managerial competence   _____

Technical/functional
  competence   _____

Security   _____

Creativity   _____

Autonomy   _____

15. If you could have only <u>one</u> of the anchors satisfied, which one would you hold on to?

_____