

Create a Plan

Now that you have identified your interests, priorities, strengths, weaknesses, and goals, the next step is to create a career plan. Your career plan keeps you focused on your goals. Use this exercise to help you get started writing a career plan. Select a short-term career goal and write an action plan for achieving it. Your plan should include:

- specific steps you need to take to reach the goal
- measures you will use to determine whether or not you were successful
- the date by which you want to reach the goal

For example, if your goal is "Within one year, get a first-level manager position in an accounting unit," your action plan might look like this:

Specific Steps

- Tell my manager about my goal and ask her/him to help me by giving me more management responsibilities during the next year
- Take two management training classes in the next three months
- Begin networking with managers in other accounting units
- In nine months, begin looking for open manager positions in accounting units

Success Measures and Completion Date

Success will be determined by whether or not I am in a managerial position one year from now

As you continue to manage your career over time, you will find that you need to continually put forth the effort to make the plan happen. To stay motivated and to maintain your momentum, make a thirty-minute appointment with yourself each week. Ask yourself on a regular basis:

- How did I build and acquire new skills and expertise this month?
- What's the most important thing I learned about myself, my targeted field or job, and the bank?
- How many contacts did I make to help me explore new opportunities at Bank of America? Who are my new contacts?
- What professional relationships did I consciously work to improve?
- How would I describe my progress toward my goal(s)?
- Did I complete any action plan steps or goals?
- Have any additional action steps surfaced that I need to include in my career plan?

It's important to remain flexible and to adjust your career plan as your circumstances, interests, and situation change.

Now that you've got a plan, it's time to carry it out! See *Execute Your Plan* for tips.