

# Career Anchors\*

**Activity:** Of the following 8 Career Anchors which two or three serve as motivators for you?

## **Security, stability, organizational identity**

Stability, long term, commitment, security, regular, loyalty, rooted, identifies more with company than a profession, alignment, identifies with job title, need to link to mission, vision, values, supportive, prestige, self-determination, resistant to change

## **Autonomy/independence**

Independent, prefers to have a choice, discretion, do things their way, doesn't take direction well, constrained by bureaucracy, likes being unique, likes unique and challenging jobs, loyalty to self, self-reliance, responsibility, ownership, freedom to innovate, status, distinctive

## **Technical/functional competence**

Proficiency, expertise, savvy, skill, command, judgement, knowhow, specialized, restricted, vocational, scholarly, scientific, very knowledgeable, identify with their expertise, strong self-concept, want to stay connected with their field, outstanding contributor

## **Managerial competence**

Advancement, decisive, authoritative, organizational, career growth, high income, estate building, enjoys situations of uncertainty, problem solving, influencer, leader, achiever, energized, proactive, responsibility, authority

## **Entrepreneurial/enterprising creativity**

Challenge, change, fix innovative, risk taker, problem solver, complexity, creativity, desire for personal gain and/or recognition, rooted in ownership, fast paced, few rules, innovation, will not stay with an organization a long time

## **Sense of service/dedication to a cause**

Service to others, helping providing comfort, supportive, caring, commitment to a set of values, personal recognition of a cause, world values or issues, the environment

## **Pure Challenge**

Competitive, winning, being the best, reaching for the highest, challenge, problem solving, complexity, success, difficult, stimulating, assertive, daring, risk taker, multi-tasker, multi-project, fast paced

## **Life-style integration**

Mixture, balance, work life balance, personal wellness, lifestyle oriented, health conscious, family conscious, various interests, family friends, lifestyle is the major guide to achievement, diversity

*\*as presented at the Westman Human Resources Conference (Sept 2015)*

# Career Anchors - “What you would not give up...”\*

**ACTIVITY:** Once a person has identified their primary anchor(s), the following provides additional detail regarding each of the 8 Career Anchors in relation to what they value most and what motivates them.

## **Security, stability, organizational identity**

If security, stability, organizational identity is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is employment security or tenure in a job or organization. Your main concern is to achieve a sense of having succeeded so that you can relax. The value is illustrated by a concern for financial security (such as pension and retirement plans) or employment security. Such stability may involve trading your loyalty and willingness to do whatever the employer wants from you for some promise of job tenure. You are less concerned with the content of your work and the rank you achieve in the organization, although you may achieve a high level if your talents permit. As with autonomy, everyone has certain needs for security and stability, especially at times when financial burdens may be heavy or when one is facing retirement. People biased in this way, however, are always concerned with these issues and build their entire self-images around the management of security and stability.

## **Autonomy/independence**

If autonomy/independence is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to define your own work in your own way. If you are in an organization, you want to remain in jobs that allow you flexibility regarding when and how to work. If you cannot stand organizational rules and restrictions to any degree, you seek occupations in which you will have the freedom to seek, such as teaching and consulting. You turn down opportunities for promotion or advancement in order to retain autonomy. You may even seek to have a business of your own in order to achieve a sense of autonomy; however, this motive is not the same as the entrepreneurial creativity described later.

## **Technical/functional competence**

If technical/functional competence is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to apply your skills in that area and to continue to develop those skills to an even higher level. You derive your sense of identity from the exercise of your skills and are most happy when your work permits you to be challenged in those areas. You may be willing to manage others in your technical or functional area, but you are not interested in management for its own sake and would avoid general management because you would have to leave your own area of expertise.

## **Managerial competence**

If managerial competence is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to climb to a level high enough in an organization to enable you to integrate the efforts of others across functions and to be responsible for the output of a particular unit of the organization. You want to be responsible and accountable for total results and you identify your own work with the success of the organization for which you work. If you are presently in a technical or functional area, you view that as a necessary learning experience; however, your ambition is to get to a generalist job as soon as possible. Being at a high managerial level in a function does not interest you.

## **Entrepreneurial/enterprising creativity**

If entrepreneurial/enterprising creativity is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to create an organization or enterprise of your own, built on your own abilities and your willingness to take risks and to overcome obstacles. You want to prove to the world that you can create an enterprise that is the result of your own effort. You may be working for others in an organization while you are learning and assessing future opportunities, but you will go out on your own as soon as you feel you can manage it. You want your enterprise to be financially successful as proof of your abilities.

## **Sense of service/dedication to a cause**

If sense of service/dedication to a cause is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to pursue work that achieves something of value, such as making the world a better place to live, solving environmental problems, improving harmony among people, helping others, improving people's safety, curing diseases through new products and so on. You pursue such opportunities even if it means changing organizations and you do not accept transfers or promotions that would take you out of work that fulfills those values.

## **Pure Challenge**

If pure challenge is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is the opportunity to work on solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, to succeed over tough opponents, or to overcome difficult obstacles. For you, the only meaningful reason for pursuing a job or career is that it permits you to succeed in the face of impossible. Some people find such pure challenge in intellectual kinds of work, such as the engineer who is only interested in impossibly difficult designs; some find the challenge in complex, multi-faceted situations, such as the strategy consultant who is only interested in clients who are about to go bankrupt and have exhausted all other resources; some find it in interpersonal competition, such as the professional athlete or the salesperson who defines every sale as either a win or a loss. Novelty, variety and difficulty become ends in themselves, and if something is easy, it becomes immediately boring.

## **Life-style integration**

If life-style Integration is a primary Career Anchor for you, what you would not give up is a situation that permits you to balance and integrate your personal needs, your family needs, and the requirements of your career. You want to make all of the major sectors of your life work together toward an integrated whole and you therefore need a career situation that provides enough flexibility to achieve such integration. You may have to sacrifice some aspects of the career (for example, a geographical move that would be a promotion but would upset your total life situation) and you define success in terms broader than just career success. You feel that your identity is more tied up with how you live your total life, where you settle, how you deal with your family situation, and how you develop yourself than with any particular job or organization.

*[\\*Open for Business Article/Career Anchors - Cardiff University](#)*

# Using the 8 Career Anchors

An awareness of the 8 Career Anchors will be particularly useful for:

## Individuals:

- looking for a role or career suited to their values, motivators, and competence
- seeking to understand why they may not be happy or finding success in the role or career they are currently in

## Employers:

### Recruitment & Hiring

- creating a job description (what are the competencies that are required)
- advertising a position (using the right words to attract the right person)
- interviewing for a position (asking behavioural-based questions to align the position with the person whose anchors align with the criteria, the working environment, and the culture)

### Employee Performance & Development/Career Development/Succession Planning

- dealing with concerns around performance (perhaps the work does not align with the employees anchors)
- building on the strengths of their employees (ask people about what they like best about their role, what their career aspirations are, areas they would like to develop)
- developing an awareness around employee's strengths and motivators which helps connect people with opportunities within the workplace (ie. stretch assignments, promotion or lateral move)

### Reward & Recognition

- reward and recognize employee achievement based on what motivates or means something for them individually