

Personal Strategic Career Plan

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Introduction

Designing a personal strategic career path allows an individual to plan and prepare the development of their career's future. As Stowell and Mead (2005) stated, the key elements to designing a strategic career path is to assess what you have, where you are, and what direction you're heading. As a young professional at the age of twenty-five, I find myself in the exploration phase of Super's Self-Concept theory (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). The exploration phase is the second of five phases that an individual goes through in his career, which means I am still growing in my understanding of what is to come from my career path. Because of this, I have searched for a better understanding of what my career could entail by pursuing a Master's in Human Resources Development, while also educating myself through a series of books by authors describing career paths and responsibilities.

During the preparation of this paper, I was challenged to not look at my end goals as a title but as a purpose. Richard Boles (2017) states in his book, "What color is your parachute?", that we are a person, not a job. In this paper, I will share how Stowell and Mead's dashboard of seven basic elements of strategic planning followed by a list of goals I have challenged myself with in order to be more than just a title at the end of my career path. At the end of this paper, you will find a list of twenty-five goals and the hierarchy of some of the goals to display my career path in a more visual standard.

Seven basic elements of strategic planning

Stowell and Mead provides an outline of a personal strategic dashboard in their book, *Ahead of the Curve*, in order to assist their readers in understanding how to maximize their time, energy, and resources that they will need to utilize in order to invest well in their career path. They provide a list of seven basic elements: customers, people, products, resources, processes,

you (as in our self), and sponsors/stakeholders. These seven basic elements will help an individual maintain a vision of shaping their future by using all of the elements.

The first element, is customers which is people who you will affect throughout your career. Currently, as an HRD professional, my customers that I interact with are my colleagues at work. Whether that's my direct teammates and supervisor or employees within the organization that are involved in my HRD programs, such as assisting in the process or going through the process. An example of this is new employee orientation. The customers for orientation are the new employees and their department. Each person or group is affected by the plans that I create for the new employee. However, as I look to the future in better developing myself my customers will change and even expand in numbers.

The second element that Stowell and Mead suggests is our relationships we have with people who have an impact in your life. For me, this is made up of my supervisor, teammates and professors at Texas A&M. As an employee, my supervisor can affect my workload and projects that I get to participate in developing. She can also assist in mentoring me by teaching me new skills and providing me knowledge through personal experiences. My teammates can also assist with educating me as they all have more experience than me in the field of HRD. In addition to my teammates at work, I can also learn from future mentors or people who work or have worked in a similar field as mine.

The third element is products as in what we can create or deliver. In reading Stowell and Mead's book, *Ahead of the Curve*, they stated that we should focus on "maximizing and optimizing your personal contribution to the common good" (p.3). In other words, we should strategize our career path with the focus of making an impact for the good of others. As an HRD

Professional, my job is to provide development, training, and tools to assist people in furthering their career.

Stowell and Mead's fourth and fifth suggestions are to know your resources and to know the process. We need to be active in understanding who we can work with and what practices or procedures we need to know in order to develop ourselves. This relates to earlier steps in knowing our customers and building relationships. We also need to learn our resources and understand how they work. And in relation, we need to know the best practices in order to develop our skills and knowledge so that we can achieve our goals. We need to be actively creating our future.

The sixth strategic element that is mentioned is yourself. That we need to focus on what is going on in our heart, mind, body, and soul. We need to fixate our plans on what we desire and what brings us joy. As I mentioned earlier, I was challenged in my discovery for this paper to look at my career path not with a job in mind but with who I am in mind. What are my skills, experience, and knowledge and how they can play a role in contributing to the common good? I want my contribution to the common good to be remembered for helping others to go from good to great.

The seventh and final element mentioned in Stowell and Mead's book, *Ahead of the Curve*, is to look and see who we would consider as our sponsors and stakeholders. Who is invested in what we do and in return benefits from the results. As mentioned in the first two elements, my coworkers and my customers will end up benefiting from my development which means my employer will also benefit. Outside of work, my potential future family will benefit as well from my success in reaching my goals.

Career Goals

While having Stowell and Mead's advice in mind, I was able to lay out a list of career goals for myself for the next twenty-five years. At the end of this paper, you can review a list of twenty-five goals grouped in three sections: low-level, mid-level, and high-level goals. They are grouped in these three sections based off of their importance to my career and level of difficulty of completion. The following sections below will go into more detail with examples of goals labeled in that level. These goals will help the reader understand my current vision for my career and the process I will take to achieve them.

Low-level Goals

Low-level goals are characterized as goals that are either easily achievable, not requirable or both. With that said, these goals can still impact my knowledge, skills, and experience. An example of a low-level goal for me is to attend Houston's HR Symposium in 2017. I enjoyed last year's symposium and would like to attend again as I became informed about subjects related to my current role. It's also a great event to get to make peers outside of the organization, which can align with a few of Stowell and Mead's seven basic elements of strategic planning.

A second example of a low-level goal of mine is to get a 3.5 GPR or higher in the Master's program at Texas A&M University. This goal is important to me as I want to succeed greatly in my studies of Human Resource Development, but it is not necessarily a goal that will affect me greatly if I do not meet it. However, this goal is connected to one of my mid-level goals, which is to complete the master's degree by 2019. I will cover this in more detail and explain how it continue to build a career path in the next section.

Mid-level Goals

Mid-Level goals are goals that are mildly achievable and can make a difference in my career. These goals can be either short-term or long-term goals. In continuation from the low-

level goals example about my GPR for the master's program, a mid-level goal that connects is to complete the Master's Program by 2019. This goal has a higher priority than the GPR goal as I can have lower than a 3.5 to complete the program. Completing the program is more important as it can affect my position and job duties at work. A Master's degree can open up more opportunities for me to get to the next step in my career ladder. Another goal of importance to me is to be the lead of a organization development project that will either design or redesign a process for an organization. By achieving this goal, I will increase my knowledge, develop skills like leadership, and gain experience. The purpose of the set date of 2019 is to allow me to have time to complete other goals that might affect my chances of reaching another mid-level goal, which is to be in a management position in HR by the age of thirty-five.

The purpose of this goal is that I believe I have a set of basic leadership skills that would make me qualified for a leadership role once I have gained more experience working in a leading role. My goal isn't to have a spiffy title, but to be able to lead people in projects and in everyday business. This goal could also affect my salary, which would then assist me in taking care of my stakeholders and sponsors, like my family. As of now, I am engaged to be married with the hopes of having children in the future.

High-level Goals

High-level goals are long-term goals that I hope to accomplish in the future. An example of a high-level goal is to continue the development of my HR-related experience to be known as a specialist in a HR-related field or to be in a high up role such as Head of a Human Resource Department or become the Chief Operational Officer of an organization. In order to reach one of these goals, I must be knowledgeable about HR and have experience working in the HR field. This also means that I will be able to have influence with people I work with and able to invest in

others. By meeting one of these goals I will be able to achieve my highest goal, which is to have a seat at the Leadership Table. Like I mentioned a few times earlier in this paper, my end goal is not a job title. Being at the Leadership Table is my goal because I see now in my current role how important they are when making changes and I believe that I can be a voice for many employees when it comes to crucial conversations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the goals that I have set for the next twenty-five years of my career may not meet my desires a year from now nor five years from now. That's one of the challenges of strategically planning out your career. We never know what might come along and inspire us to change. Something new that comes around to impact our lives and get our attention. It can come in the form of achieving one of my low-level goals or even a mid-level goal. It could even change by something outside of my career happening to me personally that could cause me to change my career goals. As I mentioned earlier, a career isn't defined by a job title, it's defined by the person that you are and want to be. I want to be a representative for others by making a difference in helping people succeed.

References

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Giannantonio, C. M. & Hurley-Hanson, A. E. (2006). Applying image norms across super's career development stages. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54, 320-325.

Stowell, S. & Mead, S. (2005). *Ahead of the curve: A guide to applied strategic thinking*. CMOE Press

Goal Hierarchy From**(low-level: 1-13, mid-level: 14-20, high-level: 21-25)**

1. Get promoted to a new title by 2019
2. Get an “A” in EHRD 614
3. Receive a 3.5 GPR or higher in Master’s program
4. Build my own online training course
5. Attend the Houston HR Symposium in 2017
6. Have over 500 connections on LinkedIn
7. Become certified in an online training building software
8. Receive a pay raise during the next fiscal year
9. Be recognized for a RIITE Reward at work (for respect, innovation, integrity, teamwork or excellence)
10. Teach an in-person course that I developed from scratch.
11. Become a mentor in my career field
12. Make an annual salary of \$70,000 by the age of 30
13. Be trained in coaching for leadership development
14. Get Certified as a PHR
15. Become a manager in HR by age 35
16. Publish an article or book related to HR or HRD
17. Complete Master’s program by 2019
18. Work in HR for over a decade
19. Lead the development of a new process in regards to organization development
20. Be a guest speaker at a symposium or university class

- 21. Get a seat at the Leadership table at my employer
- 22. Become a COO (Chief Operations Officer)
- 23. Be known as a specialist in a related field
- 24. Become a board member for a non-profit organization
- 25. Become the head of a HR department

Goal	Get a seat at the Leadership Table	Become COO	Be known as a specialist in HR-related Field	Become a board member for a non-profit	Become head of a HR Department
Importance	5	4	2	1	3
Interesting	5	2	3	4	1
Multiplication Total	25	8	6	4	3

Description

Below is my hierarchy form displaying a few of the goals listed above. I chose to display goals that I felt would play a more noticeable impact than the others. Most of my low-level goals are necessary not able to meet other goals on their own. One of my top goals, become a board member for a non-profit, did not make the form as it doesn't fully align with the subject of my career goal to the full extent. Becoming a board member in a sense is to have a seat at the Leadership Table, but for a different organization. This position isn't necessary but I do see favor in it as I would like to help others who are helping others.

