

Career Anchors

The concept of the Career Anchors was introduced by Edgar Schein. A Career Anchor is something that develops over time and evolves into a self-concept, shaping an individual's personal identity or self-image and includes:

- » Talents, skills and abilities - the things that we believe we are good at, and not so good at.
- » Motives and needs - what is important to us and take the form of goals, e.g. money, status, challenge, autonomy.
- » Attitudes and values - the kind of organisation that we feel comfortable with, one that matches our own values and beliefs.

How to Rate the Items

For each of the next forty items, rate how true that item is for you in general by assigning a number from 1-6. The higher the number, the more that item is true for you. For example, if the item says "I dream of being the MD of a company" you would rate that as follows:

"1" if the statement is never true for you.

"2" or "3" if the statement is occasionally true for you. "4" or "5" if the statement is often true for you.


"6" if the statement is always true for you.

Career Orientations Inventory

Use the following scale to rate how true each of the items is for you. How to rate each item is shown below.

Never true for me	Occasionally true for me		Often true for me		Always true for me
1	2	3	4	5	6

No.	Question/item	Rating
1	I dream of being so good at what I do that my expert advice will be sought continually.	
2	I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to integrate and manage the efforts of others.	
3	I dream of having a career that will allow me the freedom to do a job my own way and on my own schedule.	
4	Security and stability are more important to me than freedom and autonomy.	
5	I am always on the lookout for ideas that would permit me to start my own enterprise.	
6	I will feel successful in my career only if I have a feeling of having made a real contribution to the welfare of society.	
7	I dream of a career in which I can solve problems or win out in situations that are extremely challenging.	
8	I would rather leave my organisation than to be put into a job that would compromise my ability to pursue personal and family concerns.	
9	I will feel successful in my career only if I can develop my technical or functional skills to a very high level of competence.	
10	I dream of being in charge of a complex organisation and making decisions that affect many people.	
11	I am most fulfilled in my work when I am completely free to define my own tasks, schedules and procedures.	
12	I would rather leave my organisation altogether than accept an assignment that would jeopardise my security in that organisation.	
13	Building my own business is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position in someone else's organisation.	
14	I am most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.	
15	I will feel successful in my career when I have been able to use my talents in the service of others.	
16	I dream of a career that will permit me to integrate my personal, family and work needs.	
17	Becoming a functional manager in my area of expertise is more attractive to me than becoming a general manager.	
18	I will feel successful in my career only if I become a general manager in some organisation.	
19	I will feel successful in my career only if I achieve complete autonomy and freedom.	
20	I seek jobs in organisations that will give me a sense of security and stability.	
21	I am most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to build something that is entirely the result of my own ideas and efforts.	
22	Using my skills to make the world a better place to live and work is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	



No.	Question/item	Rating
23	I have been most fulfilled in my career with I have solved seemingly unsolvable problems or won out over seemingly impossible odds.	
24	I feel successful in life only if I have been able to balance my personal, family and career requirements.	
25	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a rotational assignment that would take me out of my area of expertise.	
26	Becoming a general manager is more attractive to me than becoming a functional manager in my current area of expertise.	
27	The chance to do a job my own way, free of rules and constraints, is more important to me than security.	
28	I am most fulfilled in my work when I feel that I have complete financial and employment security.	
29	I will feel successful in my career only if I have succeeded in creating or building something that is entirely my own product or idea.	
30	I dream of having a career that makes a real contribution to humanity and society.	
31	I seek out work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem solving and/or competitive skills.	
32	Balancing the demands of personal and professional life is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	
33	I am most fulfilled in my work when I have been able to use my special skills and talents.	
34	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a job that would take me away from the general managerial track.	
35	I would rather leave my organisation than accept a job that would reduce my autonomy and freedom.	
36	I dream of having a career that will allow me to feel a sense of security and stability.	
37	I dream of starting up and running my own business.	
38	I would rather leave my organisation than accept an assignment that would undermine my ability to be of service to others.	
39	Working on problems that are almost unsolvable is more important to me than achieving a high-level managerial position.	
40	I have always sought out work opportunities that would minimise interference with home or family concerns.	

At this point, look over your answers and locate all of the items that you rated highest. Pick out THREE items that seem most true for you and give each of those items an additional FOUR (4) points. You can now score your questionnaire.

Career Anchoring Scoring Instructions

In the section below, you will find blank spaces for each of the forty items arranged in order so that you can easily transfer the numbers from your rating sheets onto the scoring sheet. After you have transferred all of the numbers, add up the columns and divide by five (the number of items) to get an average score for each of the eight career anchor descriptions outlined on the following page.

TF	GM	AU	SE	EC	SV	CH	LS
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Total							
+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
Ave.							

Based on Edgar Schien's Career Anchors

Career Anchor Descriptions

You can now interpret your scores by reading the descriptions in the following section. The highest score indicates your preferred career anchor. The letters at the top of the scoring sheet refer to the Career Anchor headings as follows:

TF	Technical and Functional
GM	General Management
AU	Autonomy and Independence
SE	Security and Stability
EC	Entrepreneurial Creativity
SV	Service and Dedication to a Cause
CH	Pure Challenge
LS	Life Style

Technical and Functional Competence

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is the opportunity to apply your skills in this 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 you work permits you to be challenged in those areas. You may be willing to manage others in your technical or function 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.

General Managerial Competence

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up, is the opportunity to climb to a level high enough in the organisation, to enable you to integrate the efforts of others across functions and to be responsible for the output of a particular unit of the organisation. You want to be responsible and accountable for total results and 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 specialist function does not interest you.

Autonomy and Independence

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is the opportunity to define your work in your own way. If you are in an organisation, you want to remain in jobs that allow you flexibility regarding how and when you work. If you tend to dislike organisational rules and restrictions to any degree, you seek occupations in which you will have the freedom you seek, such as teaching or 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 entrepreneurial creativity described below.

Security and Stability

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is employment security or tenure in a job or organisation. Your main concern is to achieve a sense of having succeeded so that you can relax. This career anchor shows up in 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 organisation, 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 you are

facing retirement. People anchored in this way are always concerned with these issues and build their entire self-image around the management of security and stability.

Entrepreneurial Creativity

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is the opportunity to create an organisation 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 organisation 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.

Service and Dedication to a Cause

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is 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 organisations, and you do not accept transfers or promotions that would take you out of work that fulfils those values.

Pure Challenge

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to give up is the opportunity to work on solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems, to win out 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 win out over the 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 interpersonal competition such as the professional athlete or the salesperson who defines every sale as either a win or loss. Novelty, variety and difficulty become ends in themselves, and if something is easy it becomes immediately boring.

Lifestyle

A high score in this area would suggest that what you would not like to 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 the major sectors of your life work together towards 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 successes. 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 organisation.

