



Understanding my career anchors

Leadership Dimensions

Developing capability

Edgar Schein identified eight career anchors to enable people to recognise their preferences for certain areas in their job.

- Technical / functional competence
- Managerial competence
- Autonomy / independence
- Security/ stability
- Entrepreneurial creativity
- Service dedication to a cause
- Pure challenge
- Lifestyle

People are likely to be more fulfilled in their careers

- if they can acknowledge which career anchors are important for them, and
- seek jobs that are appropriate for these anchors

Understanding your preference will help you plan your career in a way that is most satisfying to you, and will help you understand why there are aspects of your role that are not satisfying you.

What to do

Use this tool

- to understand how important the various career anchors are to you
- to identify the extent to which the various career anchor are reflected in your current role
- to review whether there is a mismatch between the career anchors you rate as being most important to you and those that relate to your current situation.

This simple activity can provide real clarity about what it is you want in life and what work or career you might enjoy.

If you find that **most things you value are not part of your current job**, this might give you the impetus to make some specific career plans and move on.

If you find **there is a good match**, you are likely to be in your preferred job or role.

Alternatively

1. List the 8 anchors on paper and spend half an hour ordering them in priority according to what drives you, and what is important to you.
2. Come back to the 8 in two day's time and see if you would swap anything around, wait another two days and test them again.

Review your aspirational career goal to check that it aligns with your career anchor/s

Schein Career Anchor	People to whom this applies as a career anchor	How IMPORTANT is this anchor to YOU?	How WELL is it reflected in your CURRENT role?
Read each description and then score its importance for YOU and its relation to your current role		Score 1– 6 1 = NOT important ➡ 6 = VITAL	
Technical/ functional competence	<p>This kind of person likes being good at something and will work to become a guru or expert.</p> <p>They like to be challenged and then use their skills to meet the challenge, doing the job properly and better than almost anyone else.</p>		
Managerial competence	<p>These people want to be managers. They thrive on responsibility.</p> <p>They like problem-solving and dealing with other people.</p> <p>To be successful, they want to be able demonstrate their emotional competence to deal with higher levels of responsibility</p>		
Autonomy/ independence	<p>These people have a primary need to work under their own rules and 'steam'.</p> <p>They avoid standards and prefer to work alone.</p>		
Security/ stability	<p>These people seek stability and continuity as a primary factor of their lives.</p> <p>They avoid risk and generally their main concern is to achieve a sense of having stabilised their career.</p>		
Entrepreneurial creativity	<p>These people like to invent things, be creative and most of all to run their own businesses. They differ from those who seek autonomy in that they will share the workload.</p> <p>They find ownership very important.</p> <p>They get easily bored. Wealth, for them, is a sign of success.</p>		
Service dedication to a cause	<p>Service-orientated people are driven more by how they can help other people than by using their talents</p> <p>They may work in public services or in areas such as human resources</p>		
Pure challenge	<p>People driven by challenge seek constant stimulation and difficult problems that they can tackle.</p> <p>Such people will change jobs when the current one gets boring, and their career can be varied.</p>		
Lifestyle	<p>Those who are focused first on lifestyle look at their whole pattern of living.</p> <p>Rather than balance work and life, they are more likely to integrate the two.</p> <p>They may even take long periods of time off work in which to indulge in passions such as travelling.</p>		