

THE CAREER FITNESS PROGRAM

Companion Website
and Success Website

Exercising Your Options

SIXTH EDITION



Diane Sukiennik | William Bendat | Lisa Raufman

The Career Fitness Program

EXERCISING YOUR OPTIONS Sixth Edition

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Preface

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of *The Career Fitness Program: Exercising Your Options*. As authors, we are immensely gratified by the positive feedback from the field, which tells us that we continue to make a contribution to the quality of life for the thousands of students who use our book. We say “use our book” rather than “read our book” because the process of career planning is action oriented at base. We have attempted to balance the text with a variety of exercises to encourage our users to “get into the process” and allow the process to unfold in the many unexpected ways that careers do take shape. We are committed to the process of career planning, which is part science and part art, part logic and part intuition, part inspiration and part perspiration. We recognize the critical role of the teacher/counselor/coach in this process as the voice of experience, reassurance, validation, and wisdom. Just as a personal trainer keeps a well-intentioned exerciser on track, so too, does the teacher keep students on track and moving forward in a process that all too often seems circuitous and convoluted rather than linear and straight forward.

Our book attempts to be a comprehensive and current compendium of the best art and science in the field of career planning. As such, the Sixth Edition has more fully incorporated the electronic medium into the text and exercises without implying that the Internet is the only or even preeminent tool in the process. As with each new edition, we have updated the facts and figures and have added topics that have become relevant to the subject, such as a discussion of multiple intelligences and the role of benefits in a salary negotiation.

Of particular note is this book’s usefulness to the undecided and the liberal arts oriented students. These students have heard all too often that technology is the promise of the future and while that may be true, they need the latitude to explore other career avenues that may be more compatible with who they are. We encourage and support them in this exploration.

We have added a companion website to the Sixth Edition, which can be accessed through www.prenhall.com. Our goal is to enrich and enhance the text material with current information and useful links. We are also looking forward to your comments as teachers and students who can enrich our learning experience. May we all continue to nurture, support, and challenge each other in our own career fitness programs!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following individuals, who reviewed this project in various stages of completion and offered suggestions as to how it might be improved. The book is better as a result of their efforts.

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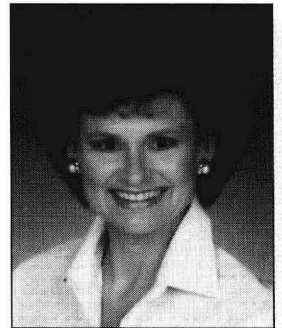
We also appreciate the input of many other professional contacts and colleagues throughout the country and are grateful for the stimulating opportunities to share ideas. In particular, we want to mention Cheryl Matherly of Rice University and the entire academic team who steered the development of the Career Advantage telecourse available through PBS. These contacts have served to influence and enhance this Sixth Edition. Additionally, our sincere thanks to all those instructors who have used the book throughout the past decade. We hope you find this Sixth Edition even more comprehensive and helpful to your students in their career search. We are, as always, interested in hearing your feedback.

Finally, we are indebted to our friend and previous publisher, John Gorsuch, for his encouragement throughout our many years of association. We are also grateful for the professional editorial assistance we have received during the past decade from Gay Pauley. Special acknowledgment is to be given to our editor, Sande Johnson, and our publisher, Carol Carter, for their enthusiasm and great ideas for the future of *The Career Fitness Program*.

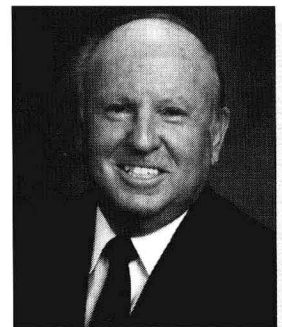
Last but not least, on a personal note, special thanks to each of our significant supporters and partners: Jean Bendat, Bernard Natelson, and Michael Reiss.

About the Authors

Dr. Diane Sukiennik is a career counselor; a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor; and a nationally recognized lecturer and workshop facilitator. She holds an advanced degree from Columbia University and has extensive postgraduate training in industrial psychology, management, and organizational development. Currently Dr. Sukiennik is on the faculty of Moorpark College, in California, where her areas of expertise are career development, personal and professional presentational skills, and managerial effectiveness. She is a consultant, has a private practice, and has contributed to the development of a nationally distributed telecourse on career and life development called *Career Advantage* distributed by PBS.



Dr. William Bendat is a recognized leader and innovator in career development theory. While serving as Dean of Student Services at Moorpark College, he managed the award-winning counseling and career programs that gained both California and national eminence. His advanced degrees in counseling psychology, with emphasis in decision making and self-concept, have enriched the material within the text of *The Career Fitness Program*. Dr. Bendat is the Director of Careerscope, offering specialized career workshops to public and private agencies. He is also a licensed therapist, past President of the California Managers of Counseling, and a contributor to numerous workshops and professional journals.



Dr. Lisa Raufman is Dean of Counseling at El Camino College in Torrance, California. She is a career counselor, consultant, as well as a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor. Her master's degree is in counseling with a specialization in the community college and vocational rehabilitation. Her doctoral degree from University of California at Los Angeles focused on higher education, work, and adult development. Previously Dr. Raufman coordinated the Career Transfer Center at Moorpark College. She is past President of the Los Padres chapter of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the California Community College Counselors Association.



Introduction

On Your Mark . . . Get Set . . .

The world of work is spinning at a dizzying pace. As we enter the new millennium, the job market is more unpredictable than ever. Companies are downsizing, rightsizing, restructuring, outsourcing, and undergoing radical technological change. Bigger mega-mergers are occurring and more small businesses are being created. The globalization of industries and organizations presents us with competitive challenges and unprecedented opportunities. You can benefit from becoming aware of the changing job market, by keeping up with trends and identifying how they fit your personal preferences. Seven major trends are shaping the workplace:

1. The majority of jobs are created by small businesses employing fewer than 50 employees. Trends
2. The traditional hierarchical organization is changing into a variety of forms with a flat (reduced middle management) organizational chart becoming more common. Flexible networking of specialists who come together for a short-term project, then reform into a new group for the next project will be commonplace.
3. Smaller companies are able to expand and contract with the changing economy by increasingly employing temporary and contract employees.
4. Just as manufacturing used to be our mainstay, we are now considered a service economy that depends on knowledge workers. (See Chapter 6, the section titled The Need for Knowledge Workers.)
5. Lifelong learning is the rule; getting a degree to get a job may get you entry into a company, but if you don't continually upgrade your knowledge, you will lose your competitive edge. The winners are rethinking, reinventing, and reengineering products, ideas, and services to meet continually changing needs.
6. Global competition and multinational corporations will influence more and more companies. The most valuable employee will be the one most familiar with several languages and cultural customs. The number of women and immigrants will continue to increase in the workforce.
7. The Internet will influence the way we think, act, learn, do business, and manage our careers.

A broad rainbow of possibilities makes this an exciting time in history. Yet many of us are overwhelmed by lack of knowledge about our choices and our place and purpose in the world. One thing that is certain is change. It is essential to prepare ourselves to expect change, accept it, and plan for it. We can best

prepare for it by learning “who we are” in terms of lifetime goals and by taking responsibility for shaping our lives. As we gain information about ourselves and begin to make our own decisions, we acquire self-confidence. In a deep, personal way, we begin to realize that no matter how drastically the world changes, we can deal with it.

The expectations and demands of today’s job market require us to be physically agile, mentally alert, and psychologically able. *The Career Fitness Program* will prepare you to exercise your options whether you are planning for your first job, reentering the workforce, or recareering. This program will help you build the mental stamina and psychological strength you need to be successful and satisfied today. You will also develop the mind-set and acquire the tools for continuing success despite the inevitable surprises and challenges that you will face. *The Career Fitness Program* is designed to assist you in the process of self-discovery and realization. The main goal of this book is to lead you through the process of career planning, which includes self-assessment, decision making, and job search strategy; our primary objective is to assist you in making satisfying career choices. By following our chapter-by-chapter program, you will learn more about yourself and how self-knowledge relates to your emerging career plan.

Let’s review the content of this book to see how it will help you achieve your career goals. The career-planning process is divided into three main parts: personal assessment and the world of work, Chapters 1 to 8, and job search strategy, Chapters 9 to 11.

- In Chapter 1, you will come to understand how the process of self-assessment *begins* the process of career planning. You will explore the concept of *life stages* and give thought to your current life stage. Chapter 1 also discusses the difference between a job and a career.
- In Chapter 2, you will learn how building self-esteem greatly affects your actions. This chapter’s goal is to help you develop a positive approach to life and career planning.
- In Chapter 3, you will identify your needs, wants, and values and explore how they influence your career choice.
- In Chapter 4, you will develop an understanding of and appreciation for your unique personality and interests—factors that will influence your career choice.
- In Chapter 5, you will learn about different types of skills; you will learn to identify and describe your own skills with job requirements in mind.
- In Chapter 6, you will explore societal and cultural norms and biases that may affect your career choices. In this chapter, you will also read about workplace trends, promising occupations, and salary predictions.
- In Chapter 7, you will investigate published and computerized sources of information about careers and specific jobs, including government publications and Internet resources.
- In Chapter 8, you will identify how people make decisions and learn how to improve your own decision-making skills. This process includes learning to set and pursue short- and long-term goals.
- In Chapter 9, you will learn about job search strategies, including informational interviewing, networking, and electronic job search techniques.
- In Chapter 10, you will learn how to write an effective resume and cover letter.

- In Chapter 11, you will prepare for job interviews. This chapter discusses all aspects of the interview process, includes sample questions that you may encounter, and advises you about handling illegal employer queries.

Even if you are not yet in the full-time job market, the job search strategy chapters (9–11) will be a valuable resource for you now. If you are in school, planning to work part-time, already employed, or seeking an internship, you can begin to prepare your resume and practice interviewing skills.

THE PROCESS

In many ways, the process of preparing to meet job and career challenges is much like the process athletes use to prepare to meet the challenges of competition in their particular sport. It involves establishing a fitness program in which the competitor sharpens existing skills, adds needed skills, and, most important, develops a mental attitude of success.

Any good fitness program is a combination of theory and exercise, and our career fitness program maintains this balance. For each step of the planning process, we will explain the theory behind that step, how it relates to the previous and next steps, and how it moves us closer to our final goal of identifying career options.

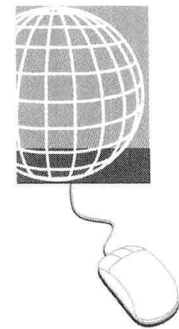
The chapters conclude with a series of exercises designed to bring each step of the process to life. These exercises will help make you more aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and attitudes, and they will also help you summarize what you think is important to remember after each chapter. You will notice that each chapter also contains a section called WWWebwise. These exercises are intended to build your skill in utilizing the Internet and to broaden your exposure to material that is related to the information presented in the chapter. Remember that reading a chapter or a book is a passive activity. However, responding to questions makes you an active participant in the career exploration process. You may find that it helps to share your answers with at least one other person; a classroom setting in which group discussion is encouraged is even better because it adds to your own awareness and perspective.

It is easy for someone to sit back and read about career planning and simply agree with the text, theories, and exercises. *But until you make the commitment to actually get involved in the process, to actively participate, and to experience both progress and occasional discomfort along the way, you will not be able to reap the benefits of the process.*

THE CHALLENGE

Yes, we did mention the word *discomfort* just now. What do we mean by that? Anytime you begin a new physical exercise program, even if you start cautiously and sensibly in relation to your current level of activity, new muscles are stretched, and they let you know about it. They feel awkward. They ache. You become aware of parts of your body that you may never have noticed before. You can also expect this to happen in the process of career planning. Along the way, confusion and some discomfort may occur. We will ask questions to help you dig deep into yourself for answers. In this process of enhancing self-awareness, you will discover much about yourself that you like, as well as some things that you would like to change.

Meeting the challenges



Becoming an active participant:
commitment

The process of change and
personal growth

Because of this self-discovery process, at certain points along the way in our fitness plan you may feel a bit confused, a bit anxious, a bit impatient. All of these feelings are normal. When you start out on a physical fitness program, you idealistically hope that in a week or two you will have the body that you visualize in your mind, even though you know realistically that developing a good physique is going to take a lot longer. Similarly, with your career plan you may begin to feel impatient and want things to move along more quickly or more clearly. It is important to remember that any change or growth typically includes some discomfort, uneasiness, or anxiety. Frankly, if you begin to experience some of those feelings, it is a good sign! It indicates that you are stretching, that you are growing, and that you are moving toward a newly developed awareness of who you are and how you relate to the world of work.



COMMITTING TO THE PROCESS

Benefits of perseverance
and belief

Whether you are taking the time at the beginning of your adult career to carefully and thoroughly examine your options or are finding at midlife it is time to explore new directions, you will reap tremendous benefits in the future. The satisfaction you experience at “the finish line” will be directly proportional to your willingness and ability to deal with the anxiety and uncertainty you will experience at some points in the career-planning process. In essence, the more you put into any activity, the more you are likely to get out of it. Stories that we have heard and read about our cultural heroes and heroines, whether athletes, performers, scientists, or political figures, tell us that the results they achieve, which look so easy and so glamorous, are always and only the consequence of tremendous sustained effort, commitment, and perseverance. A statement attributed to famed artist Michelangelo seems to say it all: “If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful after all.”

Your career search requires a similar commitment. It requires your willingness to go with the process; to seek out specialized assistance; and to move through points of frustration, uncertainty, and confusion in the belief that you will come out with more awareness and a good sense of the next steps to take along your career path. We invite you to participate in an adventure and endeavor that are every bit as exciting and rewarding as preparing for the Olympics. You are identifying your own mountain peaks and are setting out to climb them. Among your resources is this career-planning textbook, which incorporates the insights and experience of the authors and other successful career planners over several decades. Most of all, the important attributes of your own spirit, vitality, and intuition, together with the desire to improve yourself, will serve you well throughout your search. This career fitness program will help you master the inevitable changes that occur within yourself and are associated with your evolving career choices and the work world around you. It will help you identify options that are consistent with who you are. It will enable you to be the champion of your own career.

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