Identifying Career Goals: Market Assessment

Once you have an understanding of your values, interests, skills and personality traits, you then need to see where you fit into the world of work. This is called a market assessment. Remember, though, that you are not an exact puzzle piece with only one right fit. This is an iterative process; as you learn more about the market, you understand more about what really matters in your self-assessment. As with each phase of the career development process, each individual is going to have a different approach to the market assessment process. Where are you?

- **Do you need to gain clarity on what possibilities exist for you?** – The ‘unlimited opportunities’ view can be overwhelming. Often people feel unsure of where to begin in assessing what direction to pursue. In order to begin to define a circumscribed list of possibilities, you need to explore and investigate different careers of interest. This will involve such things as conducting online research, informational interviews, office site visits, networking, and much more.

- **Do you need to “take the plunge” to further explore possibilities that you have already considered?** – Often times, individuals have an ideal career in mind but are hesitant to explore it. For example, one may fear that his/her expectations may be unrealistic, or that it may require additional schooling which he/she is uninterested in obtaining. Whatever the reason for hesitation, it needs to be explored and defined.

- **Do you need to “work out the kinks” in the direction that you are currently pursuing?** – Another level in the market assessment phase could be that you have an area of interest – but, you don’t have a direct fit. For instance, many TC students are interested in working in “International Affairs,” but aren’t exactly sure what role they want to play. The ‘industry’ is set, but, the job function is unclear. This involves the same type of exploration and research as described above.

**TCCS Resources to Help You in Your Market Assessment:**

- Alumni Mentoring and Career Networking Program
- Programs and Events
- Employer Information Sessions
- Library and Resource Area (44 Horace Mann)

**Additional Suggestions:**

**Develop An Ongoing List of Resources** – It is imperative to keep abreast of up-to-date and reliable resources as you explore career opportunities. Continue to ask your contacts for referrals for good resources and be sure to read articles in your ‘career’ field.

**Vary strategies** – Be sure to go outside of your comfort zone when conducting your market assessment. The best way to avoid a future ‘rut’ is to consider all possibilities – not just the ones that are safe and/or expected of you. Brainstorm new areas to investigate and generate new ideas about how to get there.