



The UISTA System for Strategic Alignment

In this reference, you'll basically build a personal narrative that will help you align your values, interests, strengths, and personality traits with your career. Ultimately, this will help you demonstrate self-awareness in interviews and also build yourself professional momentum that you can sustain over the longer term. One good way to do this is to take a blank sheet of paper and divide it into sections that connect (see the an example at the end of this resource).

Step 1: Decode Your Values

First, choose 4-5 professional values from the following list that you'd consider most important to you and write them in your values section:

Financial Reward

Social Good

Intellectual Challenge

Recognition

Adventure

Competition

Prestige

Structure

Creativity

Time Off

Technical Skill

Leading People

Geographic Location

Change and Innovation

Independence

Step 2: Decode Your Interests

For this one, reflect on the following questions and record 4-5 professional interests:

- If I was to read a newspaper, what kind of stories would I read?
- What kind of work do the people whom I respect do?
- About what subjects do I tend to investigate and ask questions?

Step 3: Decode Your Strengths

Here, look back into your past and consider where you've found it easy to be relatively successful. You'll want to write down 4-5 strengths that are either academic (think: what classes are my strongest?) or functional (think: what can I produce better than other people?)

Step 4: Decode Your Personal Traits

Reflecting on these traits will help you determine the kind of work culture that will suit you best. Specifically, record one selection from each of the following that would best describe you. It doesn't have to be perfect.

Introvert or Extravert
Sensitive or Strong-willed

Detail Oriented or Big Picture Oriented
Organized or Whimsical

Step 5: Decode Your Strategic Alignment

Now have some fun and connect the "dots." By taking connections from each section, write down what these connections might imply about your next career move. Think about how you'd describe these ideas to a professional contact or in an interview setting. See the next page for an example.

UISTA Strategic Alignment Sample

Values

Financial Reward Social Good Innovation Independence

Interests

Business Entrepreneurship People Politics Media

Strengths

Writing Networking Sales Research

Traits

Extravert Strong-willed Big Picture Organized

Alignment

- It looks like I'm going to need to work in an innovative environment in a role where I'm dealing with people.
- Here, it looks like society and "social good" is important to me. So is research. So maybe something that involves government, society, or big social challenges?
- Here, I see both "independence" and "media," so maybe approaching startup media platforms would be interesting—like blogs or online magazines. Also, you see sales here so maybe I could help them on their ad sales teams?

