

Seeking a New Career or Advancement

- Reading: Finding your Path and Perfect Role  
10 min
- Reading: Diversity and Inclusion  
10 min
- Reading: Exploring Technical Careers  
10 min
- Reading: Creating a Career Development Plan  
10 min
- Reading: Getting Promoted  
10 min

Preparing Your Resume

Job Searching and Professional Networking

Interviewing

On the Job

# Finding your Path and Perfect Role

As you begin your career, you’ll have to navigate your way to find the perfect role for you. While there is no one way to find your ideal role, there are some things to consider to help you better understand what direction you want to take. This reading will focus on a few of the options to consider as you start to search for a job.

## Generalist vs specialist

One category to consider when attempting to find your right path is whether you want to work as a generalist or a specialist. A **generalist** is knowledgeable about many topics and has various interests, while a **specialist** is an expert in a specific field.

Generalists have broad, multifaceted roles that allow entry-level employees to gain invaluable experience in many different areas related to the field. Alternatively, specialists are focused on a singular aspect of IT. The table below provides an overview of common generalist and specialist roles.

### Common Generalist Roles

- IT Support Specialist II
- IT Consultant
- IT Manager

### Common Specialist Roles

- Automation Engineer
- Python Developer
- Software Engineer
- Cloud Engineer

Please note that the word “specialist” is often used in job titles, even for roles that include generalist-like tasks. When reviewing a job listing, be sure to read the duties and responsibilities assigned to that role so that you have a clear understanding of what you will be doing if hired.

## Choose your work environment

Choosing what type of environment works best for you is just as important as the type of role you select. Different types of environments have their own cultures and practices. As an entry-level employee, you’ll come across two types of workplaces: **agency** or **in-house**. You can also choose to work for yourself in a freelance role or even start your own business.

### Agency vs In-house teams

In the IT field, there are special agencies that offer IT services and technical personnel to other businesses on a contracted basis. These agencies can support multiple small to medium companies and often operate independently from the businesses they serve. As an entry-level employee in an IT service agency, you can expect to provide services to several clients. Short-term assignments are also common in agency contracts. Agencies may or may not offer employee benefits to their contracted technical personnel.

Alternatively, large companies and enterprises are likely to have an “in-house” team of internal employees to handle their IT needs. Although it is costly to employ an internal IT department, larger businesses prefer to have full transparency with their IT team and full control over the privacy of their users and confidential information. As an entry-level employee in an in-house IT department, you can expect to work closely with an IT team that has a variety of technical skills. It is common to build strong relationships with your team members, as you support one another on long-term projects. Internal IT department employees often hold full-time permanent positions and receive employee benefits.

### Large vs Small Companies

Having a general idea of what you’re looking for in a work environment will help you narrow down your job search and land opportunities that are a better fit for you. You may prefer to work onsite for a large company for the diverse social atmosphere and professional networking opportunities. Some large companies and enterprises offer onsite cafeterias, gyms, and childcare, in addition to comprehensive employee benefit packages and career path opportunities. Or, you may prefer to work for a smaller company where you can form closer working relationships with smaller teams. You may want to work for a company that offers flexible work schedules and options that allow you to work from home, in the office, or a hybrid between the two.

## Key takeaways

As you navigate your job search, think about what you want in a career. Establish the types of roles you want to start with and the type of company you want to work for. Over time, your experience will help you make better-informed decisions related to your career direction.

Mark as completed

