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Guide to Career Planning, part 0: Introduction

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Part 0: Introduction

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In real life -- as opposed to blogging -- one of my least favorite things to do is give career planning advice. Most people who say they want career planning advice aren't actually looking for advice -- they just want validation of the path they have already chosen. Because of that, giving someone career planning advice is one of the surest ways to end up feeling like an a******.

However, as with so many other things, career planning is a topic about which I have plenty of opinions. And since I started this blog, I've received a lot of questions from people who are looking for career planning advice. So, this series of posts will present my opinions on career planning in today's world.

Disclaimers:

- These posts are aimed at high-potential people who want to excel throughout their careers and make a significant impact on their fields and the world. These posts are *not* appropriate for people for whom work/life balance is a high priority or for whom lifestyle is particularly important -- if that's you, there are plenty of existing career planning resources for you already!
- My background is biased towards high-tech companies and Silicon Valley, and my advice will be most relevant to people entering either my industry or other industries that are like my industry -- fast moving, rapidly changing, and characterized by lots of new companies and lots of opportunity for new people. Some of this advice may be applicable to people entering other kinds of fields -- but I wouldn't know and I won't guarantee it.
- I'll use a lot of words like "ambition" and "promotion" and "gaining more responsibility". It may seem like I'm talking about moving up through the management ranks and managing more and more people, but my intention is for all of this advice to be equally relevant to people in purely technical careers, such as software programming. If you aren't interesting in managing people, then when I talk about promotion and advancement, just think about getting broader latitude to work on or lead more complex technical projects, assuming more technical seniority within a company, and the like.
- Everything that follows is purely personal opinion -- specifically, these are the things I would want to know if I were entering college today. I'm sure there are many equally valid counterpoints to each of my points, and I look forward to reading them on other people's blogs!