Unit 308: Career awareness in building services engineering

Handout 2: Goal setting

**Learning outcome**

The learner will:

1. Understand how to plan for careers in building services engineering.

**Assessment criteria**

The learner can:

1.3 Describe **documents** to support career development.

1.4 Explain the **principles** of goal setting.

1.5 Describe how to set **goals**.

**Range**

**Documents**: Curriculum vitae (CV), personal statement, portfolio, cover letter, references, business plans.

**Principles**: SMART targets, SWOT analysis.

**Goals**: Short, medium, long.

# Goal setting

There are a number of documents that will prove beneficial in supporting your career development and guidance.

## Curriculum vitae (CV)

This is commonly shortened to CV. Preparing your personal CV comprehensively is very important: it is your selling tool to a company, offering an overview of yourself, your experience and your qualifications.

It is commonly the first item that a potential employer looks at regarding a prospective employee, and a lot of critical judgment is made at this early stage. For help with your CV go to the following website: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/cvs/Pages/default.aspx>

## CV advice

Follow the guidelines below to make sure you have included all the important information an employer may need.

**Your personal details**: You should include your name, address and contact details.

**Your personal profile**: Your personal profile is your mini advert and should summarise:

* **Employment history and work experience**: If you have been working for a while, you could put your employment history first.
* **Education and training**: Start with your most recent qualifications and work back to the ones you achieved at school.
* **Interests and achievements**: You can include hobbies, interests and achievements that are relevant to the job.
* **Additional information**: You can include this section if you need to add anything else that is relevant.
* **References**: At least one referee should be work related. Or, if you haven't worked for a while, you could use another responsible person who has known you for some time.

## Personal statement

On many application forms you have to complete a section at the end called ‘additional information’ or ‘personal statement’. After you have filled in the sections on personal details, education and employment, this large, empty box is your chance to really impress a future employer.

## What is the purpose of this section?

The form should include instructions and this is usually something like: ‘please use this section to explain why you feel you are suited to this job and what you can bring to it’, or ‘please include any further information relevant to the person specification, such as which skills, knowledge and experience you have’.

The employer will have seen your qualifications and work experience in the previous sections on the form, so the purpose of this section is for you to show you are motivated to do the job and that you have carefully considered why you feel you would be good at it.

## How should I fill in this section?

You should provide answers for each of the points in the person specification. You might like to present them one by one with a heading, so the person reading it can clearly see which point you are referring to.

## Why do I need to include examples?

It is really important to give examples because they provide clear evidence that you have a skill and know how to apply it to real situations.

## What did you learn from your experience?

After providing an example, reflecting on the example shows that you can learn from your experiences and are always trying to improve.

## Using similar examples and ‘what if’ situations

Even if you haven’t got the experience to show you have a particular skill, you could say how similar experiences and skills would help you approach this area. In addition to showing how you meet the person specification, you also need to show your enthusiasm for the job and what attracted you to the organisation. Try to use positive language and describe what you could bring to the company.

Employers will also be impressed if you show some knowledge of the company, such as what it does, what its strengths are, and any recent development that might have been in the news.

## Portfolio

Career portfolios are used to plan, organise and document education, work samples and skills. People use career portfolios to apply for jobs, apply to college or training programs, get a higher salary, show transferable skills, and to track personal development. They are more in-depth than a CV, which is used to summarise the above in one or two pages.

Career portfolios serve as proof of one's skills, abilities, and potential in the future. Career portfolios are becoming common in high schools, college, and workforce development. Many school programs will ask students to create, update and use a career portfolio before moving on to the next level in life.

Career portfolios help with a job or acceptance into higher education institutes. A portfolio should be personal and contain critical information. Items that should be included – but not limited to – are personal information, evaluations, sample work and awards and acknowledgments.

Career portfolios are often kept in a simple ring binder or online as an electronic portfolio and are frequently updated. A career portfolio is used as a marketing tool in selling oneself for personal advancement. In some industries, employers or admission offices commonly request a career portfolio, so it is a wise idea to have an updated one to hand.

## Covering letter

The covering letter and CV is the total package: your golden opportunity to sell yourself to employers. They will read your covering letter before your CV so it is important that it makes an impact. Covering letters that create a good first impression are well constructed, don’t contain any spelling mistakes or bad grammar, and support what you are saying in your CV.

A good letter makes an employer sit up, take notice and want to read your CV. It will have more of an impact if it shows the employer that you have done your research. This means showing you know what the job involves and what they are looking for in an employee. Your letter will need to convince an employer that you want the job and that you are the best person for it.

Now read the step-by-step guide to writing a better letter:

1. General points: the purpose of a covering letter.
2. The start: grab the reader's attention.
3. The middle: why you are the best person for the job.
4. Signing off: pulling it all together and arranging what is happening next.

## References

Do not list your references on your CV or résumé. Include a separate page with a list of three references (or whatever number the company asks for) and their contact information.

Your list of references should include professional connections who can attest to your qualifications for the job. Your references don't have to be people who work at your current job, in fact, you shouldn't use them if the company isn't aware you are job searching.

## Business plans

A business plan is a formal statement of a set of business goals, the reasons they are believed attainable, and the plan for reaching those goals. It may also contain background information about the organisation or team attempting to reach those goals.

Business plans may also target changes in perception and branding by the customer, client, taxpayer, or larger community. When the existing business is to assume a major change, or when planning a new venture, a three to five-year business plan is required, since investors will look for their annual return in that timeframe.

## Goal setting

Once you have written down your career aspirations, the next step is to identify your goals. Your goals are the stepping-stones you will use to reach your desired destination. Keep in mind that the quality of the goals you set will determine their effectiveness.

You need to set out a realistic and achievable career path that includes short, medium and long-term goals.

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| --- |
| Short term (within 1 year) |
|  |
| Medium term (within 5 years) |
|  |
| Long term (within 10 years) |

One technique to use when creating goals is the S.M.A.R.T. technique, which stands for:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S = Specific** | Goals need to be explicit and detailed. |
| **M = Measurable** | Goals should have a specific outcome against which you can measure your progress. |
| **A = Attainable** | Goals must allow you to stretch yourself, but still be reasonable. |
| **R = Relevant** | Each goal must have meaning for you. |
| **T = Time-bound** | Goals must clearly define a beginning and an ending. |

Countless businesses and individuals throughout the world use this technique. Many variations have been created over the years, but S.M.A.R.T. continues to embody sound principles for the process of creating goals.

Here is an example of a poorly defined goal and then that same goal translated using the S.M.A.R.T. technique:

**Poorly defined goal**: I will work to improve myself in business.

**S.M.A.R.T. goal**: I will identify one area of weakness and, during the next six months, complete one class and read at least two books to improve my expertise in that business topic.

## SWOT analysis

Another useful tool is a SWOT analysis: a structured planning method used to evaluate your personal **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats**.

Identification of SWOTs is important, as they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective. It helps you be honest about yourself and your aspirations, allowing you to outline your characteristics and their suitability.

## Example SWOT

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SWOT analysis** | **Date undertaken** | |
| **Strengths**  Focussed  Highly motivated  Organised/plans ahead  Enthusiastic  Qualifications Level 1, 2 and 3 | **Weaknesses**  Need to update some IT areas  Health – had hernia and back trouble  Numeracy and literacy qualification – not a comfort zone of mine  Some qualifications need updating | |
| **Opportunities**  Numeracy and literacy brush-up classes  Computer training  College development sessions  IT update training  Subject qualification updates | **Threats**  Time – never enough  Family responsibilities may increase  Finance/security  Lack of work in electrical installation  Health | |
| **Development identified through SWOT** | **Source** | **When** |
| Computer training  Literacy qualification  CSCS card  Child protection/safeguarding  Numeracy qualification  Practice maths | At home in evening  College  JIB  Online  College  At home with dad | Ongoing  By March  By June  By November  Ongoing  Ongoing |