

Supersize Me: **Ideas For Growing Your** **Employees Through Career** **Planning & Talent Management**



Karen S. Sieczka
Growing Great Ideas.com
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Supersize Me: Ideas for growing your employees through career planning and talent management

Is it your job as a human resources professional to worry about assisting employees in planning and succeeding in their careers? No?! What about job satisfaction or goal fulfillment?

Why do you think departments that used to be called personnel or the employment office are now known as human resources?

Employees are a resource just as machinery or equipment are a resource. So why should you care? When employees feel like an organization doesn't care about them, their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations, they DON'T care about the organization! Without employees who care, the organization may not survive.

Question: What can happen when we don't care?

If we don't care, they don't care. This can result in:

- Minimal/shoddy work
- Retention issues
- Not my job attitude
- Organization's loss of potential ideas, innovation & creativity
- Organization's loss of customers/clients
- Stress
- Drudge atmosphere
- Alienation
- Conflict
- Clock puncher mentality
- Loss of talent
- Loss of continuity

What can we do to tap into this human potential? We can provide the tools and resources for success of our employees through assisting with career planning, goal setting and talent management. Think of it like this: just like a talent agent looks for opportunities and challenges that are a good fit and will help a client go from an unknown into a superstar, we have the same opportunity with our employees. The right combination of training, motivation, and investment in an employee can reap exponential rewards for the employee and the organization.

How do we accomplish this??? We can prepare and plan ways for employees to be enriched and enhanced and make them more valuable to the organization. We can **SUPERSIZE** our employees. Consider this a starting point.

Question: how do we begin the process of supersizing our employees?

We can supersize our employees by:

- Starting early
- Investing in training
- Planning for the future

Supersized employees = win for the organization and win for the employees

Start early

We have to start the process early to be successful and reap the payoff later. First start by matching people to the organizational culture when hiring. You can't change personalities or attitudes but you can work with potential if the personality fit is right. Without a good fit, there is a likely chance that this person will not be with the organization for the long haul and it may even cause disruptions.

Is your organization laid back or ultra authoritative? Do people work flexible hours or rigid set times? Is there a hierarchical way of doing things or can you go straight to the top with ideas? How much supervision is there? Are there opportunities to advance or is the organization downsizing? Do you manufacture products or create services?

Do an interest inventory. What interests, skills, working style does this person have? Do they match?

Assess

Now you have to find out just what you need to do to take this potential and mold it into greatness. Assessment is a great way to get to know many things an interview won't reveal. There are many assessment tools available that can be purchased or created internally.



You want to assess items such as: What are likes and dislikes? Strengths and weaknesses? Long and short term goals, personal and professional? Personality type?

Many interest and personality inventories break activities down into these or similar categories:

Realistic people are doers and like working with tangible objects and physical activities. They are often good at mechanical or athletic jobs. They like to work with things like machines, tools or plants and they like to work with their hands. They are often practical and good at solving problems.

Investigative people are thinkers, and enjoy analytical and intellectual activities. They like to watch, learn, analyze and solve problems. They often like to work independently, tend to be good at math and science and enjoy analyzing data.

Artistic people are creative and expressive. They like to work in unstructured situations where they can use their creativity and come up with new ideas. They enjoy performing (theater or music) and visual arts.

Social people are helpers and like to assist others . They like to work directly with people rather than things. They enjoy training, instructing, counseling or curing others. They are often good public speakers with helpful, empathetic personalities.

Enterprising people are persuaders and leaders. They like to work with other people; they particularly enjoy influencing, persuading and performing. They like to lead and tend to be assertive and enthusiastic.

Conventional people are organizers and like their activities well-defined and structured . They are very detail-oriented and like to work with data. They have good organizational and numerical abilities and are good at following instructions. Conventional people also like working in structured situations. ¹

Which category does the potential employee fit into? Most people overlap into more than one category. These indicators give a starting point for realizing potential and later for customizing the training experience for planned growth.

Try this sample [interest inventory](#) and then add the number answered for each letter.

Set up clear expectations such as: What is organization’s focus/mission? What are organizational goals? What does it mean exactly when you refer to “other” duties? Does this person seem to match these expectations?

Hiring the right people with the right fit to begin with is good for the bottom line.

Investing in training Career planning

This is where the longer-term process begins. We need to ascertain: What do employees want? What keeps them with an organization over the long term?



There are common threads in what employees find most desirable in the work environment. This is where those of us who work in human resources and employee training have the opportunity to help shape the environment and satisfy some of these “wants”. Putting time, money, and effort into training with an eye toward career planning gives us tools to provide some of these.

Question: What do employees really want? What do people look for in a job and an organization? What keeps them?

The following list is representative of employee preferences in a number of surveys.

1. **Type of work:** the kind of work that makes the best use of one's abilities and gives one a feeling of accomplishment.
2. **Security:** having a job that provides a steady employment.
3. **Company:** working for a company that has a good reputation, that one can be proud of working for.
4. **Advancement:** being able to progress in one's job or career, having the chance to advance in the company.
5. **Coworkers:** having coworkers who are competent and congenial. ²

Notice that pay isn't even in the top five? On some surveys it doesn't even rank in the top ten. High pay might get people in the door but it won't keep them retain them or keep them motivated. If you don't know what's important to your employees, ASK them!

Continue to assess: Do employees have basic business success skills?

Question: What skills are crucial to success in the work environment? What skills or traits do you think an employer wants or looks for in employees? Why?

- Punctual
- Enthusiastic/upbeat
- Dressed professionally
- Reliable/ dependable
- Honest/ethical
- Willing to learn/improve
- Good communicator/good communication skills
- Follows organizational rules/policies & procedures
- Gets along with others
- Able to solve problems/offer solutions
- Comes to work prepared to work
- Does job correctly the first time
- Meticulous/attention to detail
- Can work independently or as a team
- Can meet or exceed goals required by job ³



When hiring, hopefully we did some assessment of potential employees but assessment shouldn't stop there. The process should continue at certain intervals throughout employment.

Again, we often are working with potential and need to assure that employees have the skills to poise them for success. Many of these skills can be improved with training sessions. Think about: What are their career goals? What short term goals (training) will help them to reach this goal?

Types of skills training

Communications

- Email
- Written
- Spoken
- Listening

Professionalism

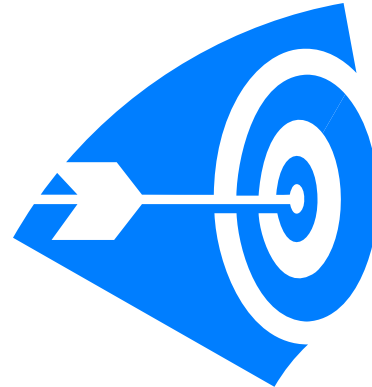
- Image
- Employability skills/traits
- Initiative
- High standards
- Dependability/Follow through

Interpersonal skills

- Working well with and respect for others

Business-related

- Analysis/summarize
- Networking
- Selling
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Conducting Meetings
- Goal setting
- Decision-making strategies



Question: What other business skills can you think of?

Remember to revisit and review career plans at certain intervals to keep it current, relevant, and interesting. Is the training having an impact? Make sure the employee has what they need to accomplish the goals and focus on the work.

Refer to the plan: are they moving ahead or are adjustments needed? Is a different strategy called for? Are there patterns emerging? Please note there are no right or wrong set of answers, only feedback to help consider where your employee is on his/her career journey. Is there need for a drastic change, a minor correction or a pat on your back because he is moving along well toward short and long-term goals?

Talent management

We've hired a good match and have brought he/she into the organization. We provided basic training opportunities to put them into a position of success.

Question: how do we motivate our people and keep them interested throughout their careers?

Most of us know Maslow's hierarchy of needs or Herzberg's theory of motivation. Every individual has different motivators but as humans we all start with the same basic needs—survival, safety, security, and stability. This is the basis of Maslow's Hierarchy. Once these lower needs have been met, interest in fulfilling higher needs becomes a central focus. Herzberg called factors leading to job satisfaction motivating factors, such as achievement, recognition, and growth.

This is the point where challenges and opportunities for growth, increased responsibility, and creativity in the workplace become a determining factor in whether someone is just showing up to get a paycheck or is truly inspired to give beyond the basic expectations of the job. At this point, an employee thrives on making contributions, having ownership of projects, and being solicited for input and ideas. We have to go beyond the basics to continue motivation.

Let's face it, its not always about making more money. Sure, more money can motivate people but only to a point. Think of it like this, if you hate your job and you get a hefty raise, does that extra money make you suddenly start loving the job? ⁴

Planning for increasingly responsible role

Keep things interesting

- Training in higher skills
- Identify and develop specialties/talents
- Express ideas/creativity
- Training in technical and specialized skills
- Cross train

Adding responsibility/scope

Part of managing organizational talent is to add to the scope and responsibility on the job. Two ways of accomplishing this is through job enlargement, a horizontal expansion of a position, and job enrichment, a vertical expansion of duties.

Job enlargement

Job enlargement adds a variety of related tasks and duties to the job so that it is not as monotonous and increases the number of different tasks that an employee performs resulting in greater workforce flexibility. This can also be accomplished by job rotation. Job enlargement is sometimes viewed by employees as a

requirement to perform more work for the same amount of pay and care needs to be taken when adding duties to a position.

Job enrichment

Job Enrichment is the addition to a job of tasks that increase the amount of employee control or responsibility. In job enrichment, the attempt is to build in to jobs a higher sense of challenge and achievement. The accumulation of achievement must lead to a feeling of personal growth accompanied by a sense of responsibility.

How to enrich a job

A job may be enriched by :

1. Giving employee more latitude in deciding about such things as work method, sequences and pace or by letting them make decisions about accepting or rejecting materials.
2. Giving employee a feeling of personal responsibility for their tasks.
3. Taking steps to make sure that people can see how their tasks contribute to a finished products and the welfare of the organization.
4. Giving people feedback on their job performance.
5. Involving workers in analysis and change of physical aspects of the organizational environment such as lay out of office or plant, temperature, lighting and cleanliness or in process and procedural changes. ⁵

Programs for job enlargement and enrichment should not be a one-time proposition as they may have long-term effects on employee attitude. People need challenges and opportunities for growth—they may grumble about these experiences because they take you away from your comfort zone by without these opportunities, your employees will not live up to their career potential and won't do their best job over the long run.

Think about it: Are your folks just there getting a paycheck or are you tapping into their motivational needs and using their potential to its fullest?

Time for reflection

It is important during the process for an employee to take time to reflect on experiences and absorb growth and learning. Encourage discussion of the work accomplishments and learning process and review the objectives and goals. This provides a valuable work record as well as assists with future goal planning.



What will you do differently as a result of this experience? What does this tell you about who you are now and where you need to go in the future? For example: Do you still feel like you are growing and advancing? Do you feel you are on the right team in the right organization? More [reflection questions](#) are in the resources section at the end of this report.

Don't forget to use coaching and feedback to keep the process moving, along with appreciation and recognition that is appropriate for the employee and to keep motivation level high.

Plan for the Future

Groom for succession

Question: why do we need to groom people to move up in our organizations?

The baby boomers are beginning to retire and will be retiring in droves taking years of experience and knowledge out the door with them. Kelly Greene, in her article *Bye-Bye Boomers* in the Wall Street Journal warns us to expect a shortage of five million skilled workers between 2010 and 2012 with the impending exodus of baby boomers, the 76 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964.

More than 40% of the U.S. labor force will reach the traditional retirement age by the end of this decade and In the next several years, the number of U.S. workers between ages 55 and 64 will grow 51% to 25 million, meaning the fastest-growing portion of the work force is the one at most risk of retiring soon. At the same time, the number of workers between ages 35 and 44 is expected to shrink by 7%.⁶

Not only do we need to worry about key people retiring but if our employees feel like there is “nowhere” for them to go as they develop in their careers, they will move to other organizations that will provide advancement opportunities.

How do we cope? Customers and clients want consistency so what happens when a top manager, key person or department head leaves whether retiring or just going to another firm? Interruption and disruption are often the result due to poor or non-planning for succession.

What is succession planning? It is the long term development of managers and leaders for future positions, including activities of a more immediate nature such as training, education, and experience. The process includes first identifying and cultivating new leaders, giving opportunities for growth through new assignments, and professional development. So how do you engage in the process?

Succession planning Growth opportunities

MetLife's CIO Steve Sheinheit suggested these methods to get the ball rolling in an interview on CIO.com:

1. **Mentoring Relationships**—essential to developing leaders in a company, whether the relationships are formal or informal. The people who grow in any organization and aspire to higher positions generally have had mentoring relationships throughout their careers.
2. **Cross-Organizational Assignments**—experiences that go on outside of a person's specific job role. IT staffers need to appreciate the importance of networking with people across and outside IT, because you never know what the next assignment will be.
3. **Outside Associations**—with any number of organizations, whether industry-related, research groups or educational associations. What's important is that employees are getting an appreciation of the outside world.
4. **Enterprise View**—broadening employees' perspectives as they go up the ranks. Incentives for establishing an enterprise view are important for job effectiveness.
5. **Committee or Governance Board**—participation broadens IT staffers' enterprise views and shows them the dynamics of governance and how things get done inside a company.
6. **Job Rotation**—crucial because an employee in a job for a long time tends not to develop as effectively as someone who moves across different roles and responsibilities.⁷

Leadership opportunities

In their article, *Twenty-two Ways to Develop Leadership in Staff Managers* By Robert W. Eichinger and Michael M. Lombardo, suggest some ways to increase the leadership factor. Among them:

Challenging jobs



Challenging jobs—starting up something or fixing troubled operations, expanding large operations, working on time-limited projects from crises to systems installation—teach about the subtleties of leadership. These developmental challenges represent what leaders actually have to do. Such jobs teach how to cope with pressure, learn quickly, or deal with balky subordinates. In absolute terms, challenging assignments are the best teacher. They provide both the greatest variety and number of lessons requisite for executive leadership.

Stark leaps in scope and scale

Large leaps in responsibility—switching to new businesses or facing large increases in the number of people, dollars, or functions that must be managed—put the manager in the position of having responsibilities that can no longer be handled alone. A lesson here is that guiding, prodding, and structuring are needed when one can't get intimately involved in every problem or project. Managers must learn to delegate and build team ownership and many ultimately see such job shifts as transitions—from doing things themselves to seeing that things get done, from controlling to guiding, from setting objectives to developing subordinates so they could learn to set priorities for themselves.

Projects and task forces

Projects and task forces—and other temporary assignments (such as plant closings, acquisitions, negotiations, dealing with the board, and troubleshooting)—are normally carried out with tight deadlines and require managers to work with unfamiliar people and subject matter. Taking the time to hole up and study is not an option. Instead the manager must learn to ask questions, rely on the expertise of others, find a tutor, and understand the values and perspectives of others. Learning on the fly is required to be successful.⁸

Reaping the Benefits of Supersized Employees:

- Career vs. just a job
- More ideas and innovation
- Customers/clients happy
- Higher employee retention
- Less stress
- Succession ready/continuity



**Supersized
employees = a win
for the organization
and a win for the
employees!**

About the author

Karen S. Sieczka is a training consultant and founder of [Growing Great Ideas.com](http://GrowingGreatIdeas.com). In the past, she researched and created curriculum for two highly-successful community education programs, teaching health-related, technology, literacy, and communications skills to over 500 members of the community. It was through this program she discovered her great enthusiasm for training.



In 2007, Karen trained almost 600 participants in a variety of programs including technology, supervisory skills, and several customized training workshops as a consultant and adjunct instructor at Gulf Coast Community College, Okaloosa-Walton College, and Troy University.

Recent custom training projects Karen has created include:

- Employability skills, professional image, and interview techniques for hospital employees
- Professional image, communications skills, and job expectations for school district employees
- Basic computer training session for GED seekers to improve using computer, internet, and email at local community college
- Simple web design and internet use for summer youth program at Okaloosa-Walton College
- Computer skills for the workplace covering computer-related matters which often challenge professionals and business owners at Gulf Coast Community College
- Customer service and county historical information for Franklin County Florida tourist development council business members

Karen is all too familiar with the struggle many of us encounter when we become entrenched in the 9 to 5 world and lose sight of what really makes us tick. Her own endeavors became the inspiration for her creativity training program ***Growing Great Ideas: Unleashing Creativity at Work***. The program gives participants new ways to generate ideas, enthusiasm, and build teamwork and can be customized to address particular organizational issues or challenges.

She is also writing a companion book ***Growing Great Ideas: Unleashing Creativity at Work***. The book will be out in print in September 2008.

Her background includes work in education, state and local government, small business, and the non-profit sector. Karen is a graduate of Nova Southeastern University with a Bachelor of Science in Management. Currently, she is pursuing a master's degree in public administration/public affairs at the American Military University and will graduate in August 2009.

For more information, visit www.GrowingGreatIdeas.com

Supersize Me Resources

Getting the most from meetings

Meetings are often a necessary part of any occupation—project meetings, evaluations, disseminating information, policy changes, marketing... They also can create a situation where too much time is wasted on meetings. Does this sound familiar in your organization?

The problem doesn't lie with the meeting so much as they are not set up correctly for the maximum impact and usefulness. Meetings without a clear purpose or those which last too long lose the intended effect and cost the organization money both in time and loss of productivity. These meeting can also cause staff frustration and resentment for employees already under pressure to get more done in less time.

Creating and adhering to specific meeting guidelines goes a long way toward easing the burden that can be caused by excessive and inefficient meetings.

For example, Intel Corporation is an organization that takes its meetings very seriously. Walk into any conference room at any Intel factory or office anywhere in the world and you will see a poster on the wall asking simple questions about the meetings that take place there:

- **Do you know the purpose of this meeting?**
- **Do you have an agenda?**
- **Do you know your role?**

All employees, from the most junior production worker to the highest ranking executive, is required to take the company's course on effective meetings. This attitude comes from the CEO and on down the line. It is mostly about discipline and clarity.

"In our training program, we talk a lot about meeting discipline," says Michael Fors, corporate training manager at Intel University. "It isn't complicated. It's doing the basics well: structured agendas, clear goals, paths that you're going to follow. These things make a huge difference."

Question: How does your organization's meeting "culture" stack up?

Common meeting "blunders"

- Meetings may not have focus
- Wrong/inappropriate people invited
- Companies have too many meetings
- Attendees may be unprepared
- Most meeting time is wasted
- No agenda

- No agreement on course of action/action items
- No follow-up on action items
- This is the way we've always done it so why change?
- Too long

What other meeting blunders can you think of?

So what's wrong with meetings??? Not much, just....

- meetings are longer, less efficient and generate fewer results
- more meetings are needed to accomplish objectives
- with so much time spent in ineffective meetings, employees have less time to get their own work done
- ineffective meetings create frustration at all staff levels
- information generated in unproductive meetings usually isn't managed properly
- inefficient meetings cost organizations billions of dollars each year in otherwise productive employee work time.⁹

Decision-making strategies

Making decisions can be an important part of employability skills arsenal. In its simplest form it is the process of choosing what to do by considering the possible consequences of different choices. It is also part of the "taking initiative" process. Why is it so important? Is it only for supervisors? We all make decisions in one form or another throughout the day. We choose which route to take to work. We choose the clothes we wear and what we have for lunch.

Tips for decision making:

- Study the options
- Brainstorm alternatives
- Don't wait until the last minute to make decisions
- List pros and cons-can help clarify
- Gather the information needed to make a decision
- What are the consequences of the options available?
- Define the problem-what is the heart of the matter?
- Not making a decision is a decision—a decision not to take actions
- Remember when you come right down to it, decision making is just choosing between available alternatives with the information you have.
- If others will be affected, get them involved, if possible, on the decision making process.
- Objectives- what objectives do you want to attain by your decision.
- Alternatives available? Assess
- Risks of alternatives—assess¹⁰

Some Tips for Goal Setting

Be SMART about setting goals:

Specific: you need to be clear about what your goal is. For example, “I want to lose 30 pounds.” not “I need to lose some weight.”

Measurable: there should be a way to measure your achievement or improvement, such as through dollars and cents or numbers or frequency.

Achievable: if you set yourself up with a goal that is impossible or too large for your circumstances, you may be setting yourself up to fail.

Relevant: why would you set a goal that isn’t appropriate to your life or situation? When you are thinking about a goal, ask yourself, is this something I really need to do or does it just sound good?

Time sensitive: give yourself a specific amount of time to complete the goal.



Other Tips:

- Break larger goals into smaller pieces. Achieving smaller goals give confidence to attain larger ones.
- Keep your priorities in mind to concentrate your efforts on them.
- Make a list of benefits you will receive by reaching your goal.
- Visualize goals or put up pictures that represent your goal.
- Say no to requests that take you away from goals when appropriate
- Write your goals down on paper
- Goals are not chiseled in stone. Plans and aspirations can change.
- Review goals regularly. Are they still relevant to you?

Studies show those who write down their goals are more likely to achieve them.¹¹

Sample Interest Inventory

I Like To:		
	Check if this activity interests you	Category
...do puzzles		I
...work on cars		R
...work independently		I
...work in teams		S
...organize things like files, offices or activities		C
...set goals for myself		E
...build things		R
...have clear instructions to follow		C
...influence or persuade people		E
...do experiments		I
...teach or train people		S
...help people solve their problems		S
...have my day structured		C
...sell things		E
...do creative writing		A
...work on science projects		I
...take on new responsibilities		E
...figure out how things work		I
...put things together or assemble models		R
...be creative		A
...pay attention to details		C
...do filing or typing		C
...learn about other cultures		S
...analyze things like problems, situations or trends		I
...play instruments or sing		A
...act in plays		A
...think things through before making decisions		R
...work with numbers or charts		I
...keep records of my work		C
...be a leader		E
...work outdoors		R
...work in an office		C
...work on math problems		I
...help people		S

R = Realistic Total: _____
I = Investigative Total: _____
A = Artistic Total: _____
S = Social Total: _____
E = Enterprising Total: _____
C = Conventional Total: _____

Reflection Questions: ¹²	Yes	No
Do you know how you contribute to the overall success of the organization? This applies equally to the profit and non-profit sectors.		
Are you receiving cross-training or rotational assignments to add to your career development? Are you contributing to team building, conflict resolution, the training of others, and to the total systems approach to improvement?		
Do you still feel like you are growing and advancing? Do you feel you are on the right team in the right organization?		
Are your daily tasks and assignments challenging you? Are you putting forth your share of solutions or creative answers?		
Do you receive encouragement to continue your learning activities? Do you receive training, financial reimbursement, etc.?		
Have you established a relationship with a mentor, or mentors, inside or outside of your workplace? Alternatively, are you ready to be a mentor to someone who could learn from your experience and achievements?		
Have you undertaken more responsibility or greater amounts of work and feel that you are being adequately remunerated for it?		
Are you working in the field and in the work environment that is satisfying and takes you closer to your long-term goals?		
Does your chosen work fit in with your lifestyle preferences? Are you able to balance your work requirements with your personal health and habits, as well as your relationship with family and friends?		

Endnotes

¹ Adapted from http://www.iseek.org/mncareers/do_life/pdf/2008assess_4-7.pdf

² From ***The 10 Job Expectations Most Wanted***,

http://www.careerkey.org/asp/career_options/top_ten_expectations.asp

The rest of the list:

6. **Pay:** being paid at least enough to meet one's needs, and being paid fairly in comparison to others.
7. **Supervision:** having an immediate supervisor who is competent, considerate, and fair.
8. **Hours:** having working hours that allow one enough time with family and/or time to pursue other strong interests and live one's preferred lifestyle.
9. **Benefits:** having benefits that meet one's needs and compare well with those of others.
10. **Working Conditions:** having physical working conditions that are safe, not injurious to health, not stressful, and even comfortable

³ Excerpted from Employability Skills training program by Karen S. Sieczka, www.growinggreatideas.com

⁴ Excerpted from Growing Great Ideas Blog, <http://growinggreatideas.blogspot.com/>

⁵ Excerpted from *Facilitating Job Enrichment & Enlargement in Human Resources Management*, <http://www.management-hub.com/hr-enrichment.html>

⁶ Excerpted from *Bye-Bye Boomers? Companies May Face Exodus As Workers Hit Retiring Age; Some Bosses Are Afraid to Ask*,

<http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB112718141602545779,00-search.html?KEYWORDS=%22Carnegie%2BMellon%22&COLLECTION=wsjie/archive>

⁷ From *6 Ways to Develop Highly Successful People*,

http://www.cio.com/article/8801/_Ways_to_Develop_Highly_Successful_People

⁸ Excerpted from *Twenty-two Ways to Develop Leadership in Staff Managers*,

<http://www.govleaders.org/22ways.htm>

⁹ Excerpted from Time Challenged: More Effective Meetings training program by Karen S. Sieczka, www.growinggreatideas.com

¹⁰ Excerpted from Employability Skills training program by Karen S. Sieczka, www.growinggreatideas.com

¹¹ Excerpted from Employability Skills training program by Karen S. Sieczka, www.growinggreatideas.com

¹² Excerpted from *Career Development eManual*, <http://www.cdm.uwaterloo.ca/index2.asp>

For more information, visit www.growinggreatideas.com