

The Outline of Five Year Career Goals and What You Need to Do to Achieve Those Goals

by Audra Bianca, Demand Media

  

There are different ways to approach your career. One way is to be swept along like a "cork bobbing in a stream," according to Forbes contributor Lisa Quast. Another way is to write out goals and aspirations. According to Quast, this secondary approach gives you a degree of control over your career. While some people are okay with being swept along, others need a sense of direction, and five-year goals help you focus both short-term and long-term efforts.

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The End Matters

Goal setting for a five-year period can be very helpful for people who believe that one should begin with the end in mind. Don't write an outline of five-year goals without giving it careful thought. Think about what kind of job you would like to be in or what kinds of job duties, compensation and working conditions you would like to have in five years.

Address Uncertainty

People just starting out in a new job or at the beginning of their careers may feel much uncertainty about where they will be in five years. If that's you, Quast recommends setting a goal of becoming an expert in your job in five years' time. Other people may feel they should have a different career in five years. If you want a career change, create a plan for how you will get the experience and education needed to make the switch.

Set Goals

One approach to goal setting Quast and many others have written about is writing SMART goals. A goal should be Specific, a clear indication of what you must achieve, as well as being Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed. Don't write a goal that is so unrealistic or immeasurable that you are setting yourself up for failure. If you want to be a manager in your company, write something like this: "In five years, I will be in a management level position supervising at least five people and earning at least \$60,000 per year."

Challenge Yourself

Give yourself a level of challenge that will keep you motivated. Five years is a long time to work towards a goal. Some deal with this by creating smaller goals. For example, to be a manager making \$60,000 in five years, you could write these goals. After the first year, get an above-average performance rating. After the second year, get accepted into the management training program. After the third year, take on projects with more authority and win recognition from senior management. After the fourth year, secure a management position. After the fifth year, get a raise and earn at least \$60,000.

