

Career Transition Report

by Allen L. Hammer, Ph.D., and David Donnay, Ph.D.

Report prepared for

JOE SAMPLE

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The purpose of this report is to help you make an informed decision about your career transition by identifying the kinds of tasks that you would be most interested in performing in a new job or career field. This information, combined with information about opportunities in the job market, may enable you to find a position, project, or organization that will provide a good fit with your interests.

People undergoing a forced career change are likely to experience high levels of frustration and anxiety. Economic pressures often lead people to look for the quickest path to a job that is similar to the one they are leaving. However, a career transition can also be a very real opportunity to find work that is more congruent with your values and interests. There are three general kinds of career transitions or paths you can choose to take at this point. You can seek:

- A similar job in another organization
- Self-employment
- A new career field

Unlike other reports, this one is not based on occupational titles. Jobs are changing so fast that some such titles are out-of-date almost before you learn about them. This report, instead, is based on actual day-to-day tasks that you might find interesting. These tasks are organized into functions that are found in most organizations today.

As a result of using this report to help you make your career transition, you will gain a better sense of your interests and how those interests may lead you to work that is more fulfilling and satisfying.



ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS

This report is organized around ten functions that are typically found in organizations today. These functions are:

- Administration
- Customer Service
- Finance & Accounting
- General Management
- Human Resources
- Information Systems
- Manufacturing & Production
- Marketing
- Research & Development
- Sales

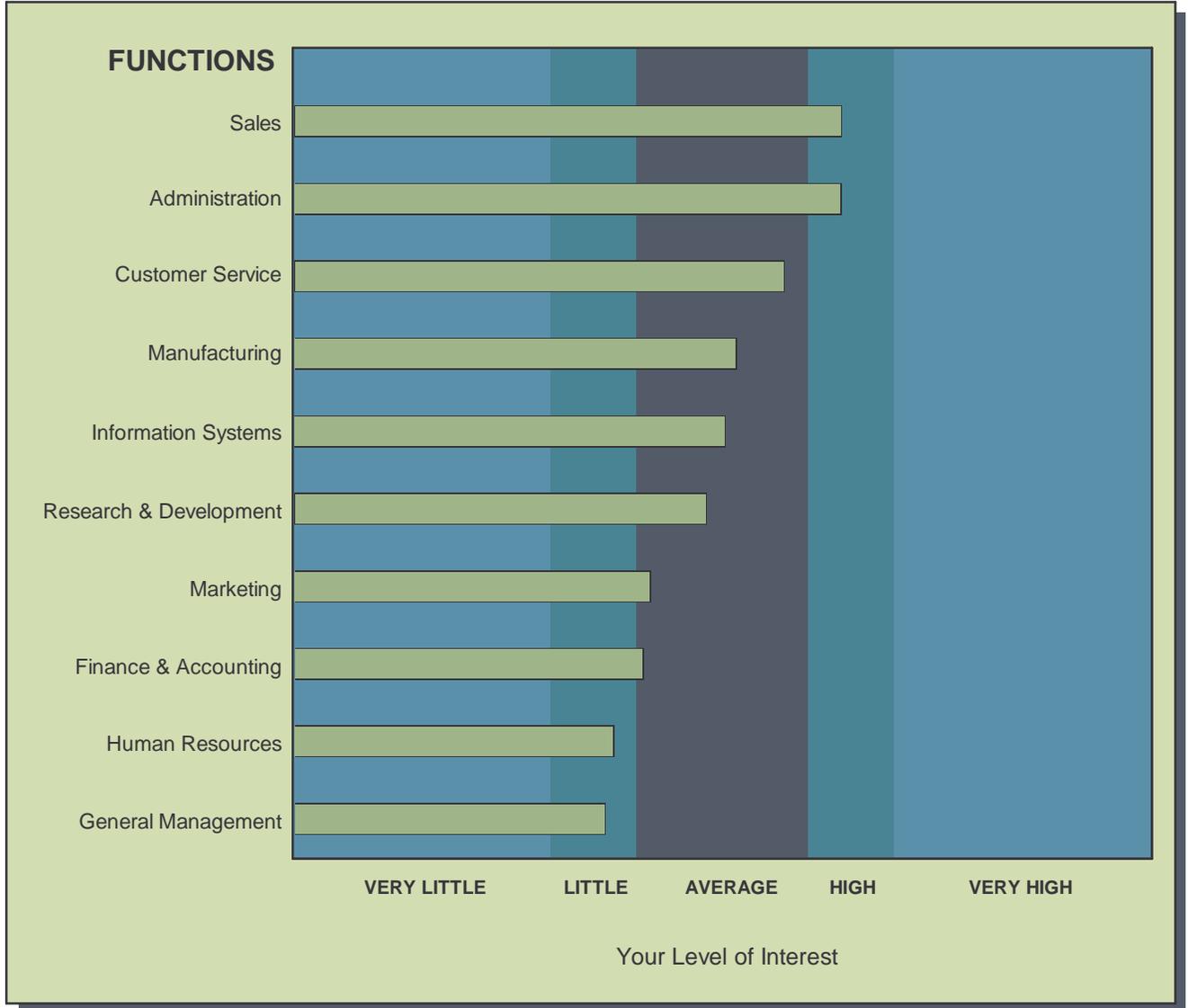
This list of functions is based on a survey of human resource professionals in a variety of organizations. No such list, however, can contain all of the functions found in all organizations. In some companies, certain functions are combined (e.g., sales and marketing). In other organizations, certain functions may not exist at all (e.g., a service company may have no manufacturing function). The goal of this report is to help you identify the functions that are most likely to fit your interests so that you can begin to focus your job search on organizations with opportunities in these same areas.

To help you focus on the most important results, this report presents in detail the three functions in which you show the most interest. For each of these three functions, a list of tasks is presented that your responses to the *Strong Interest Inventory*® instrument suggest that you will like. In addition to the lists of tasks that you will probably like, other information may also appear on this report:

- In some cases, there will be a list of tasks that you would probably dislike.
- In some cases, the list of tasks that you like in a given function may be short or, at least shorter than the list of tasks that you dislike. This is not unusual and just means that your interests in that function are very focused.
- Some of the tasks listed for a function may be activities that you would choose to do outside of your job, such as community service or leisure activities. If so, you should still explore ways to get involved in these activities since they may help to relieve the stress of your transition and may also help you to expand your network.

OVERVIEW

This chart provides an overview of your level of interest in each of the ten organizational functions. The functions are ranked according to how similar your interests are to the interests of people who work in these functions.



The following pages describe those functions in which you are most interested. Each function begins with an overview of the tasks associated with that function. Your overall results for that function are then presented. Following are the specific tasks associated with this function that you indicated that you like. In many cases, but not all, there will also be a list of tasks that you dislike.



SALES

People in sales are primarily involved in calling directly on customers. They may provide product or service information, negotiate and close sales, develop relationships with customers, identify potential customers and call on them, process sales orders, and make product presentations at conventions or trade shows. Their jobs often involve extensive travel to customer sites.

Overall, your responses suggest that you may enjoy at least some of the tasks performed by people who work in sales. Your interests are similar to those of others who are successful sales people.

Specifically, your results suggest that you may like to:

- sell directly to customers
- determine how products or services fit customer needs
- arrange conditions of sale
- handle details of transactions
- become an expert in whatever product is being sold
- negotiate and close a deal
- identify potential customers and call on them
- have a lot of direct contact with people
- sell in wholesale settings
- organize others to reach sales goals
- verbally persuade others to use a product or service
- demonstrate products at conventions, trade shows, or customer sites
- elicit and overcome customer objections
- quote prices to customers
- take orders
- follow through to make sure orders are delivered
- travel to visit customers
- call on customers to sell updates of products or services
- follow up on sales leads
- entertain clients
- motivate others to reach sales goals
- sell by having customers come to you
- supervise sales support staff
- verbally influence people's buying behavior
- make product announcements

Although overall you tend to be interested in tasks associated with this function, your results show that there are also some tasks that you may not like.

You may not like to:

- take the initiative to meet potential clients
- direct attention toward your product or service
- take charge in interpersonal situations



ADMINISTRATION

People who work in administration provide support services or perform operations functions for all departments. They organize and schedule meetings, handle logistics for everyday operations, prepare and file business documents, and process orders or requests.

Overall, your responses suggest that you may enjoy at least some of the tasks performed by people who work in administration. Your interests are similar to those of others who are successful in administration.

Specifically, your results suggest that you may like to:

- serve as an office manager
- keep records of financial transactions
- schedule appointments
- give information to callers
- arrange meetings
- organize files and information
- check accuracy of numbers
- proofread and correct errors in printed material
- work in a setting where you have a lot of direct contact with people
- act as a receptionist to greet and help direct people
- perform an ordered sequence of tasks leading to a specific outcome
- operate office machines
- use computers for word processing, data entry, scheduling, or e-mail
- verify and post transactions from invoices or receipts
- reconcile and balance accounts
- prepare correspondence
- compile reports and documents for meetings
- serve as an administrative or executive assistant
- act as a librarian
- research legal issues
- help others accomplish their tasks
- perform clerical tasks such as filing, record keeping, order processing, or word processing.
- improve the efficiency of a business process or department
- use computers to prepare charts, tables, or newsletters
- use computers to increase efficiency



CUSTOMER SERVICE

People in customer service continually interact with customers, primarily via the telephone. They may take orders, provide information on products and services, and handle customer complaints or questions.

Overall, your responses suggest that you may enjoy at least some of the tasks performed by people who work in customer service. Your interests are similar to those of others who perform successfully in customer service.

Specifically, your results suggest that you may like to:

- respond to customer needs
- explain use of a product
- handle returns and complaints
- take or arrange for payment from customers
- work with people rather than with things or ideas
- answer customer questions
- provide customer service in a structured setting
- attend music or art events
- watch or participate in performances
- provide medical information
- help with the organization's charitable activities
- inform customers of available services
- work around constraints in order to help customers
- send customers written information about products or services
- take and verify orders
- prepare reports on customer behavior or transactions
- take an interest in clothing and fashion design
- represent the organization to customers
- help customers select the right product or service
- try to make shopping a pleasant experience for customers
- display merchandise in a store
- teach drama or music
- provide direct service to ill people
- have direct patient contact
- help others solve problems related to a product or service
- develop creative ways to help solve customer problems
- decorate your work space with art

Although overall you tend to be interested in tasks associated with this function, your results show that there are also some tasks that you may not like.

You may not like to:

- act as a host at business functions or company events
- entertain clients
- plan social functions

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS

You did not show as much interest in the remaining functions as you did in the three listed previously. However, the seven remaining functions are listed below in order of your interest, along with a brief description of the associated tasks. If any of these appeal to you, you should explore in more depth the tasks that are related to these functions.

Manufacturing & Production



Develop procedures to manufacture products; analyze production systems to increase efficiency; purchase raw materials or equipment; develop and monitor production schedules

Information Systems



Develop, manage, and analyze computerized information systems and databases; program computers; use technology to further organizational goals

Research & Development



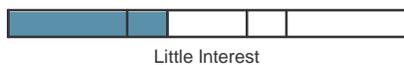
Conduct scientific research; develop products; analyze statistical or scientific data; design products

Marketing



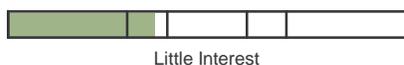
Identify markets for products or services; identify customer needs; develop advertising campaigns and promotional materials

Finance & Accounting



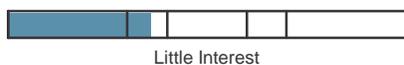
Prepare balance sheets, cash flow statements, and other financial documents; develop accounts payable and receivable procedures; conduct financial planning; handle investments

Human Resources



Identify staffing needs; interview potential employees; maintain benefits; oversee training and development; create employment practices in accord with federal laws

General Management



Manage and supervise people; plan and organize work; set priorities and budgets; monitor work and expenses



NEXT STEPS

Step 1: Learn more about careers and positions in the functional areas that interest you the most. To accomplish this, consider the following suggestions:

- Talk to a career counselor or job coach about the types of jobs that fit your interests. (Career counselors have a number of standard sources of information like the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*.)
- Conduct informational interviews with people in different functional areas to determine the day-to-day tasks that they perform.
- Find individuals you can shadow to learn how they do their jobs.

Step 2: Once you have learned more about the different functional areas and the tasks associated with each area, you may want to perform a personal skills analysis. One way to do this is to prepare a functional resume and review it with a career counselor or job coach. The purpose is to help you identify skills that you already have or may need to develop in order to work in your area of interest. If, as a result, you determine that you need to develop additional skills, you may want to consider the following recommendations:

- Sign up for any relevant training workshops or certification programs that focus on the area in which you are interested.
- Take courses at a local college or over the Internet.
- Work with a mentor or coach to develop needed skills.

Step 3: When you are ready to begin your job search, consider these resources:

- **Internet:** There are many Web sites that can help you in your job search - far too many to list here. Use a meta search engine to point you to these sites. Through these Web sites, you can gather information on your functional areas of interest and on targeted industries or professions. You will also find current job listings. Many sites allow you to post your resume, and some will allow you to sign up for a personal job scout. Most organizations now have their own Web sites with job postings.
- **Job Fairs:** Check the Internet or the employment section of your local newspaper for job fairs. Job fairs provide a valuable opportunity to meet company representatives face-to-face and to learn more about current job openings.
- **Print Media:** Respond to job postings targeted to your functional areas of interest in newspapers and trade publications.

MANAGING YOUR TRANSITION

Your responses to the *Strong Interest Inventory*® instrument suggest that you like a variety of activities balanced between working alone and being with others. You probably enjoy moving between tasks and people. You are likely to find value in first consulting career resources and reading about career opportunities and then confirming your findings through talking with others. You may prefer to start with only a carefully selected network of contacts and collect just enough facts to make a decision.



RESOURCES

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800-624-1765



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