

McKinsey Career Network

Explore

Career Exploration Workbook



June 2024

Explore: The Power of Introspection

Take time during search to understand what it is that drives you.

Welcome to the MCS Exploration Workbook. This program is intended to be the first steps in your career transition journey. Through the exercises in this workbook, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your unique talents, experiences and interests. This workbook is designed to help you navigate your professional transition with a better understanding of yourself.

Over the next few weeks you will build your Career Compass, a collection of your core competencies, interests, talents and values. You will iterate on the compass as you think about the roles you have played in your life through the “Who Am I?” exercise and “Loves and Loathes”. You will explore industries and functions based on your experience and interests. By the end of the program, you will have had the opportunity to build your North Start Matrix. A tool you can come back to over and over again as you evaluate different career opportunities.

The process is meant to be iterative. You are welcome, and encouraged, to come back throughout your search to center yourself on your intentions or iterate. Each person's journey through this process is meant to be their own.



Previous



Contents



Next

Explore: The Power of Introspection

Take time during search to understand what it is that drives you.

There are many factors that influence your career

The goal of these exercises are not only to help you land your role, but ensure it aligns with your values, goals, passions and priorities.

Explore: Activities

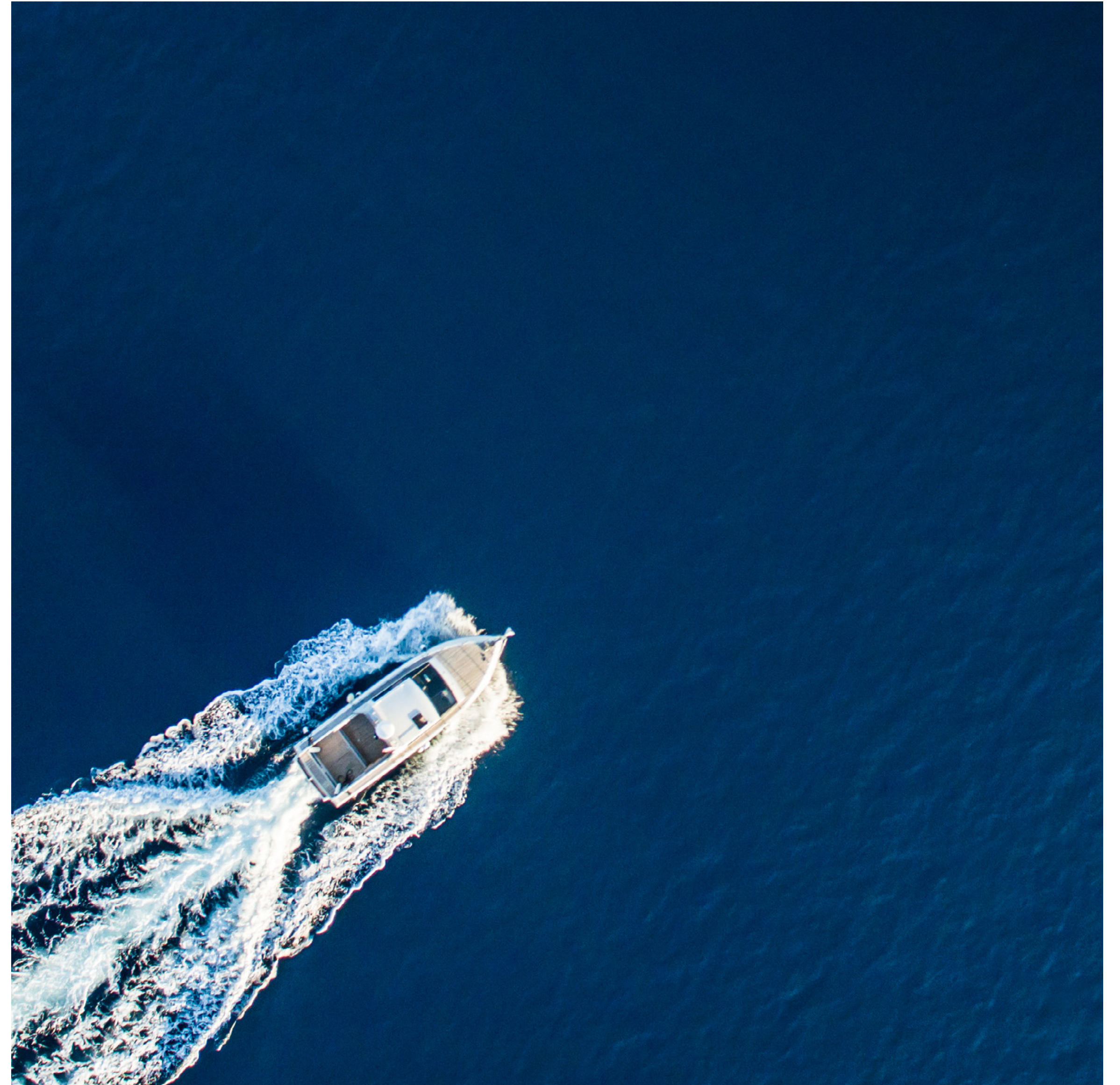
Career Compass

Who Am I?

Loves and Loathes

Narrowing Industry and Function

North Star Matrix



Career Compass Exercise

The foundation of the explore exercises to help individuals better understand their strengths and motivations

- 1

Skills with people/data, ideas/things

Feedback/strengths finder

These can be unrelated and are transferable

“What things are easy for you?”/“Where are you positioned?”

2nd chair (“How would ... describe you?”)

Articulate in verb form (develop, plan, organize, instruct)

These aren’t character traits
- 2

Noun, good to be broad

What are you doing when you feel in “flow”?

What skill or talent do you look forward to demonstrating, discussing, studying?

Knowledge from previous jobs? Aside from the job?

Hobbies?
- 3

Where would you like to live and/or work?
- 4

Be concrete and be prepared to do some research if needed
- 5

“What social environment helps me work most efficiently?”

“Which type(s) of people do I want to work with?”

“What do I want from leadership/management?”
- 6

Specific setup of the workplace

Working hours

Environment

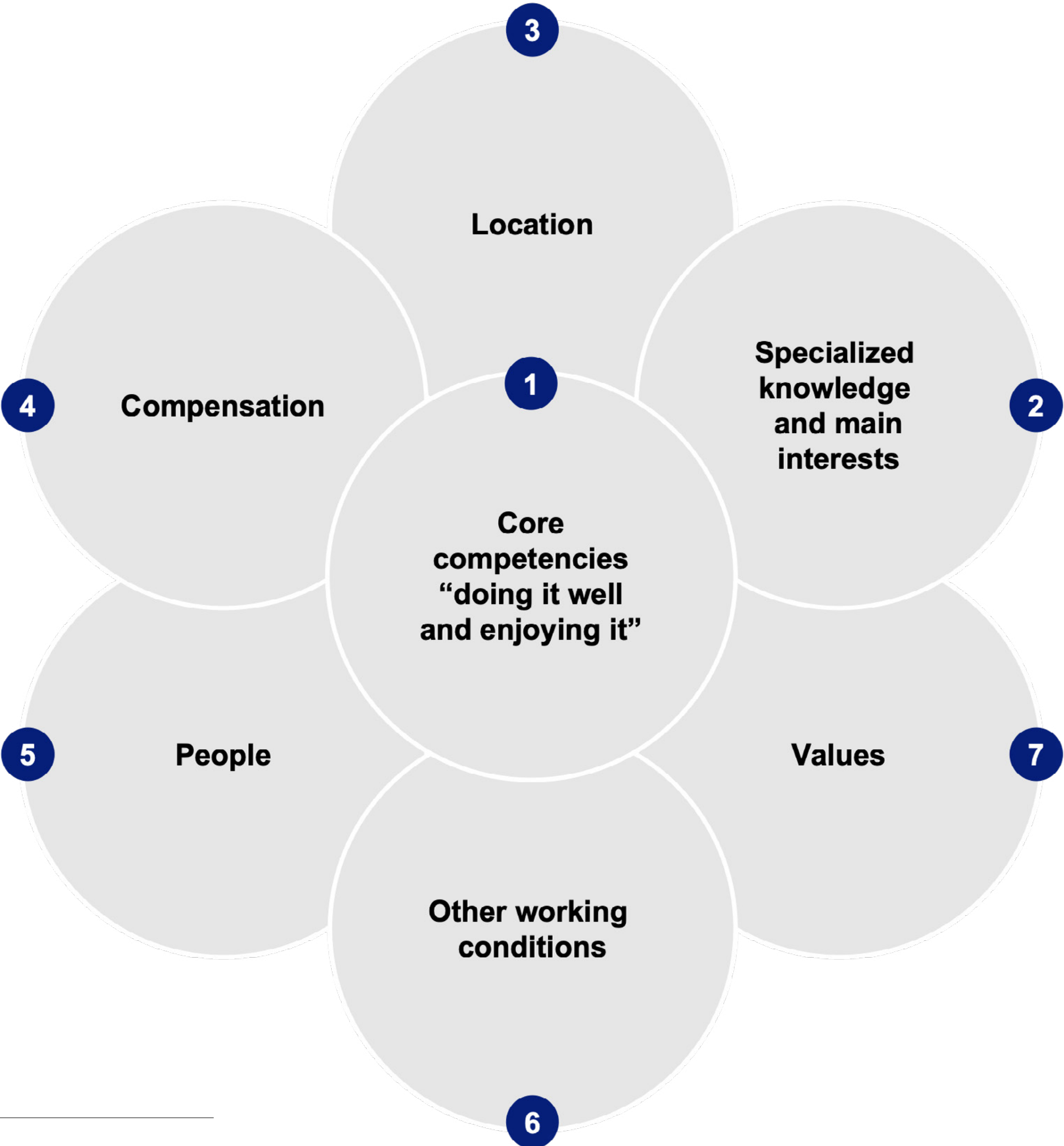
Company size

Travel

Development perspective
- 7

“Hierarchy of values

What’s most important to you



Source: Career Coaching; Bolles, 2022

Career Compass Exercise

Complete the Career Compass to better understand your strengths, interests and motivations.

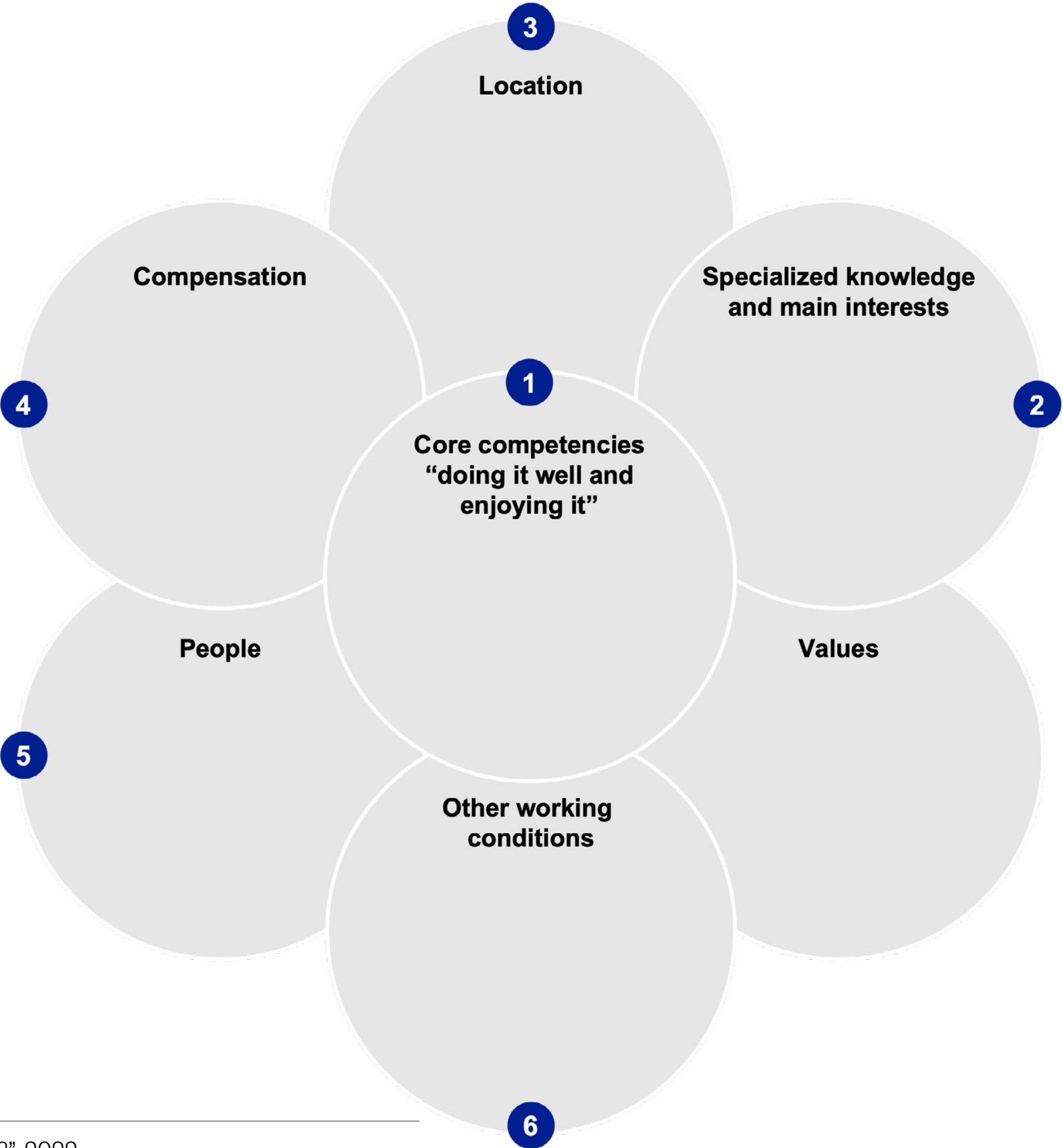


You may start this exercise and come back to it after you had a chance to complete some of the other exercises.

- 1

There are examples of core competencies on the next page if you are stuck.
- 7

Use the “Who am I?” exercise to help you identify your values



Source: Career Coaching; Bolles, “What Colour is your Parachute?”, 2022

Core Competencies

Accelerating/optimizing processes
Acting as a link
Analysis
Applying mechanical skills
Assessing, deciding on risks
Budgeting
Conceptualizing
Conducting interviews for informational purposes
Conducting online research
Consulting
Convincing
Coordinating
Creating concepts
Dealing with ambiguity
Dealing with emotions
Delegating
Designing
Developing employees
Developing strategies
Disseminating knowledge, training

Estimating
Evaluating
Familiarity with IT
Generating ideas
Grasping information by reading
Grasping something intuitively
Implementation
Improvising
Informing
Initiating changes
Innovating, inventing
Instructing/training
Intercultural competency
Making contact, communicating
Making decisions
Mediating
Mentoring
Monitoring
Motivating
Multi-tasking

Negotiating
Observing
Planning, organizing
Presenting/performing
Proofreading, editing
Providing direction
Satisfying customer needs
Selling
Structuring
Supervising
Synthesizing
Testing
Thinking in networks
Updating information/data
Using time efficiently
Visualizing
Working in a team
Working with images
Working with numbers
Writing

Listing of values

Accomplishment	Compassion	Fitness	Influence	Power	Spirituality
Activity	Competence	Foresight	Insight	Pragmatism	Splendor
Adventure	Comprehensiveness	Freedom	Integrity	Precision	Spontaneity
Aesthetics	Conscientiousness	Fun	Intelligence	Professionalism	Stamina
Altruism	Convenience	Generosity	Interaction	Proximity	Strength
Assertiveness	Conviction	Goal orientation	Justice	Punctuality	Success
Authority	Cooperation	Good humor	Lawfulness	Recognition	Superior lifestyle
Autonomy	Courage	Growth	Learning	Reliability	Superiority
Background	Courtesy	Happiness	Learning ability	Respect	Taste
Balance	Creativity	Harmony	Leisure	Responsibility	Teaching
Braveness	Dignity	Health	Love	Risk appetite	Team orientation
Calm	Drive	Honesty	Loyalty	Security	Thriftiness
Capability	Education	Humanitarianism	Movement	Self confidence	Timeliness
Casualness	Eloquence	Humor	Objectivity	Self esteem	Tolerance
Challenge	Enjoyment	Idealism	Offspring	Self realization	Trust
Change	Enthusiasm	Identity	Openness	Shift/switch	Truth
Cleanliness	Environmental protection	Imagination	Order	Simplicity	Unity
Commitment	Fairness	Impartiality	Ownership	Sincerity	Vitality
Common sense	Faith	Independence	Passion	Social engagement	Wealth
Commonality	Fame	Individualism	Personal	Sociability	Wisdom
Community	Family	Indulgence	Personality	Solidity	Zest for life

Explore: Activities

Career Compass

Who Am I?

Loves and Loathes

Narrowing Industry and Function

North Star Matrix



Exercise: Who Am I?

Exploring what matters to you most (to be completed over a few session with time in between to reflect)

- 1

Answer the question “**Who am I?**” in as many ways possible. You can use nouns (Ex. Trail runner, numbers gal) or adjectives (Caring, Funny). Add this word to the top of the column in the workbook sheet.
- 2

Go back to each column and ask “**Why did I answer the way I did?**”. Your answers can build on each other or be distinct. Identify at least five reasons for “why”.
- 3

Look for common themes words or ideas
- 4

Ask yourself:
 - Based on my values, passions and parameters what do I want to integrate when considering new opportunities?
 - What passions/interests to I want to explore professionally?
 - What is most important to me and is it important enough to impact my search
 - What do these values/passions/priorities tell me about my immediate and long-term goals?

“Who Am I?” Worksheet

Who Am I?

Husband and Father

Convener

Why?

- Brings me joy to raise a family
- Have Good memories of family
- Great diversity of experiences together- adventures and learning

- Bringing diverse ideas, people and experiences together
- Believe creates an environment for newness, creativity, innovation

Exercise: Who Am I?

Exploring what matters to you most (to be completed over a few session with time in between to reflect)



Previous



Contents



Next

Who Am I?
(choose a description
or title)

Why?

Explore: Activities

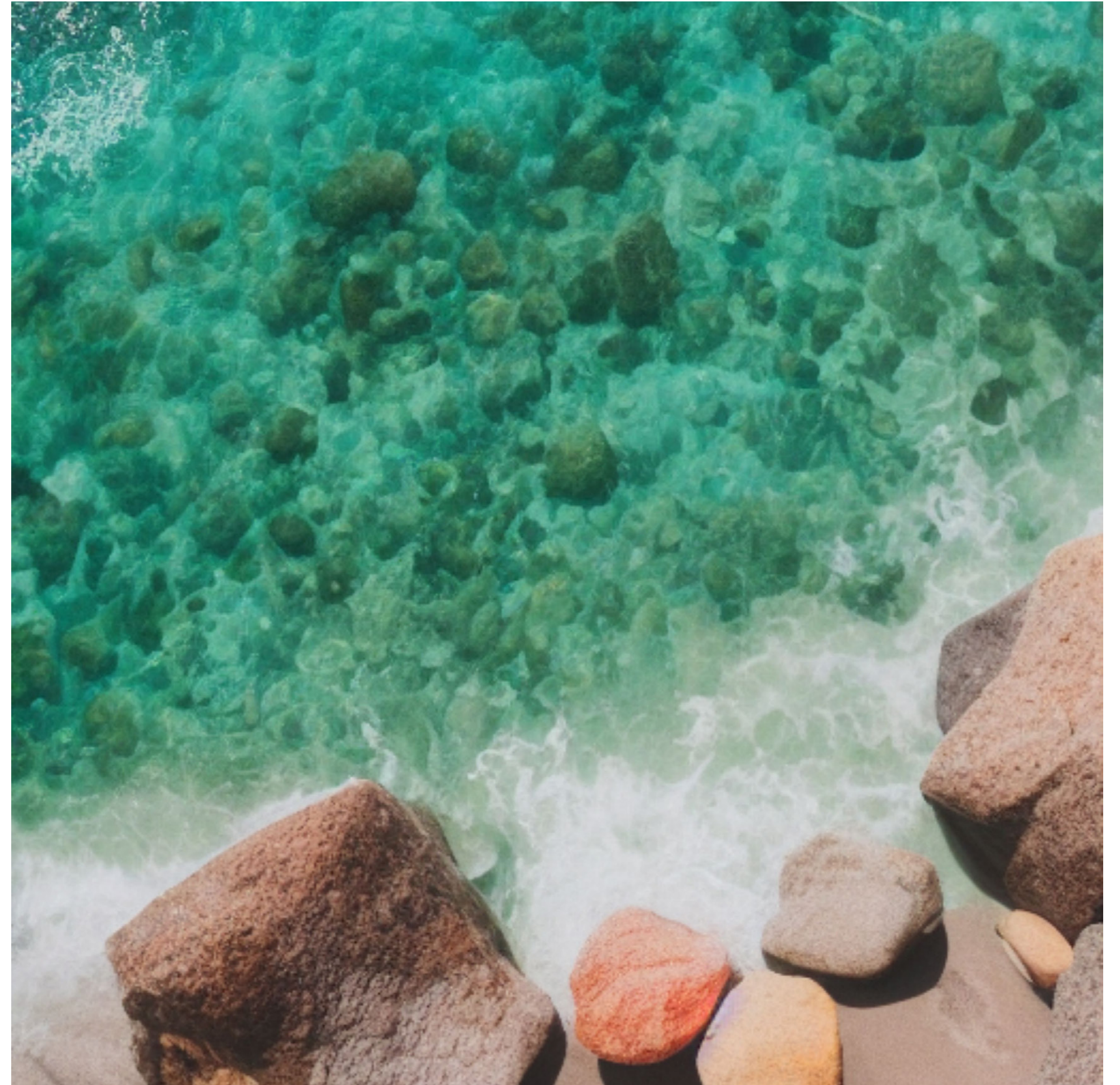
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Mining your ‘love and loathe’ experiences

- 1

Reflect on your experiences (whether professionally or personally) where you have felt your best
- 2

In each column, identify contextual factors. This may include what the workplace or community ‘felt’ like. Or the content of the work. Or all about the people. Be expansive when considering the factors, then synthesize.
- 3

Below contextual factors, reflect on what you think the combination of success and factors indicate to you. Again, you may want to do this over a series of reflections.
- 4

Finally, review the page for indicators of strengths, passions, and interests. Highlight them or capture them on a separate page. Do they feel right? Do they resonate with what you know about yourself already? How do they connect with your experience at McKinsey and previous professional experiences? What does this list trigger for you, in terms of your path forward now? How does this list and new awareness track align?

Love Experience Worksheet

What?

Experience

Client Engineer: Growth Strategy

Contextual Factors

- Strong team and united purpose
- Exploring new materials and boundaries- creativity

What this tells me about me

- Really like freedom and opportunity to create/explore
- Appreciate excellence and credibility
- Team effort is energizing

Follow the same structure, but instead identify common factors, patterns, or unique circumstances where you did not feel strong or ‘in the groove.’ While leveraging strengths is a smart path, you want to ensure awareness of gaps or ‘watch outs’ so that you can avoid circumstances and contexts that challenged or overshadowed you.

Love Experience Worksheet

	Experience
What	Healthcare Finance Project
Contextual Factors	Changing team, disengaged client leadership, intense data mining
What this tells me about me	Don't enjoy data heavy role. Team is critical, strong leadership desired.

Mining your ‘Love and Loathe’ Experiences

Identify and describe moments of love and loathe in your personal and professional life

	Experience				
What?					
Contextual Factors					
What this tells me about me					

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Preferences: Industry

A critical early step in every job search is determining your target industry(ies), function(s).

Use the questions on this page and the next to help you think through the target industry(ies), function(s) that would suit you best. Think about which aspects of your prior experiences you're willing to continue to leverage and what you want to change.

Ask yourself what areas are non-negotiable and where do you have flexibility?

- 1

What are you passionate about?
- 2

What news and topics are you naturally drawn to?
- 3

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

- 4

In which industries do you have experience? This could be through formal education, previous work and client work during your time at McKinsey.
- 5

Within a broader industry (e.g., technology), what specific niches are you drawn to (e.g. fintech)?

Preferences: Function

1

What functional areas have you worked in the past? Consider your time across your career including McKinsey and the functional areas with your client work.

2

What news and topics are you naturally drawn to? Do you prefer to think inwardly about an organization or are you interested in thinking about an organization and its relationship with its clients and/or competition?

3

Looking back, which classes intrigued you most during undergrad or graduate school? Which subjects did you gravitate towards? (e.g. marketing, operations, strategy)?

Explore: Activities

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North Star Matrix

The ‘sweet spot’ at the intersection of your strengths, expertise and interests

Based on factors that are important to you from the different exploration exercises, add the most important criteria to your first column (Potential Factors). Then score each factor, 1-10, on the level of importance to you (10 being critically important).

With your matrix you can:

- Rank order the criteria based on the importance score and ask about these factors when interviewing or considering roles
- Use this and your compass as a reminder of what is important for you during your search.
- Use this to evaluate different job opportunities. See the next page as an example

North Star Matrix Worksheet

Potential Factors	Importance (1-10)
Role Specific	
Education and training opportunities	6
Management and supervision	8
Colleagues	7
Title	5
Company	
Reputation of employer	6
Executive leadership	7
Lifestyle	
Job flexibility- remote	9
Work life balance	9
Travel	6
Compensation	
Salary	10
Bonus/Stock option/Equity	5

North Star Matrix

The ‘sweet spot’ at the intersection of your strengths, expertise and interests

The level is lower than I would like.

I wanted to travel less and this would require a week a month.

Potential Factors	Importance (1-10)	Director of Finance, Square Co.		VP of Operations, Circle Co.	
		Role 1 Score (1-10)	Role 1 Score x Importance	Role 2 Score (1-10)	Role 2 Score x Importance
Role Specific					
Education and training opportunities	6	5	30	8	48
Management and supervision	8	7	56	9	72
Colleagues	7	8	56	8	56
Title	5	5	25	9	45
Role Specific Total			167		221
Company					
Reputation of employer	6	10	60	7	42
Executive leadership	7	7	49	8	56
Company Specific Total			109		98
Lifestyle					
Job flexibility- remote	9	10	90	10	90
Work life balance	9	8	72	8	72
Travel	6	2	12	9	54
Lifestyle Specific Total			174		216
Compensation					
Salary	10	5	50	9	90
Bonus/Stock option/Equity	5	8	40	8	30
Compensation Specific Total			90		120
Grand Total			540		655

The hiring manager told me about the many opportunities to take classes and this would be a new skillset for me

The company is well known in its sector but isn't one my friends and family would recognize.

North Star Matrix

The ‘sweet spot’ at the intersection of your strengths, expertise and interests.

North Star Matrix Worksheet

Potential Factors

Role Specific

Company

Lifestyle

Compensation

Importance (1-10)



Previous



Contents



Next

