

DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES

There are a number of strategies that you can employ to improve your decision making.

CLARIFY DECISION DIFFICULTIES. List the things that make your decision a difficult one. Once you clearly define the problems, the solutions are often easier to see.

LIST HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN SUPPORT. Don't underestimate the help available from friends, relatives, advisors, counselors, and others. Although the decision must ultimately be yours, you don't have to go through the decision making process alone.

CONSIDER WHETHER A DEEPER ISSUE MAY BE COMPLICATING THINGS. For example, parental pressure, lack of confidence, or motivational problems that may be clouding your decision.

CONSIDER A FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES. There could be alternatives that you may not see at first glance. Talking to others is one of the best methods to explore such alternatives.

SPEND TIME CLARIFYING YOUR GOALS. Decisions should be put within a larger context. If you do not have clear goals, you will find it difficult to make wise choices. Once your goals are clear, the best choice between alternatives often becomes more evident.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A REALISTIC VIEW OF THE CONSEQUENCES. It is common to overestimate the negative consequences of a decision. Keep things in perspective.

SEEK ADDITIONAL HELP. If you typically have difficulty making any decision of importance, schedule an appointment with a career advisor to explore your decision-making style.

USE A STEP-BY-STEP DECISION MAKING PROCESS

STEP 1: Clarify the decision. What needs to be decided?

STEP 2: Identify your options. Narrow down your list of options to those you consider most viable.

STEP 3: Consider pros and cons. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?

STEP 4: Choose among the options. This is the point in the process where you must assume the most responsibility; a choice must be made and you are the only one who can make it.

STEP 5: Take some action. How are you going to implement the decision?

STEP 6: Review your decision. Continue to gather information after a decision is made and revise your decision as necessary.

Adapted from Gary Lynn Harr's book, *Career Guide: Road Maps to Meaning in the World of Work*, 1995

PLANNING FOR CAREER SUCCESS

FRESHMAN YEAR (0 - 25 CREDIT HOURS)

- Demonstrate excellent academic performance; make the best grades you can every semester.
 - Strengthen your written communication skills in English classes and writing labs.
 - Discover CMU resources provided by Career Services!
 - Explore majors and careers at Career Services:
 - Browse the Career Center
 - Explore the web page
 - Take the Strong Interest Inventory or FOCUS
 - Enroll in CED 101 (1) Career and Self-Exploration or FYE 101 (First Year Experience).
 - Talk with a Career Advisor.
- Participate in campus co-curricular activities.

SOPHOMORE YEAR (26 - 55 CREDIT HOURS)

- Talk to professionals in career fields you are considering
- Get to know faculty in a major of interest. They can talk about career options and provide a letter of reference when you apply for a job or to graduate school.
- Start identifying part-time and summer employment, volunteer work or internships in your areas of interest.
- Develop a professional quality cover letter resume by utilizing help from a Career Advisor through Career Services.
- Enhance your computer skills. Take courses offered by the Computer Science Program such as CPS 100 (3) Computers and Society or CPS 180 (3) Principles of Computer Programming.

JUNIOR YEAR (56 - 85 CREDIT HOURS)

- Obtain work experience in your field through reality testing. Find part-time employment, an internship, practicum, field work or volunteer experiences.
- Seek leadership positions in co-curricular activities (committee chairs and elected positions).
- Join career-related student professional associations.
- Begin to plan for job search or graduate school. Set deadlines for required steps.
- Update resume in Career Services
- Attend career fairs sponsored by Career Services.
- Register and become familiar with eRecruiting (<http://www.careers.cmich.edu/>)

SENIOR YEAR (86 - 124 CREDIT HOURS)

- Utilize eRecruiting! (<http://www.careers.cmich.edu/>)
- Register for on-campus interviewing through Career Services.
- Participate in Career Services job fairs.
- Attend Career Services workshops.
- Research companies or graduate schools of interest.
- Meet required deadlines for graduate school or job search.
- Conduct a thorough job search campaign in addition to on-campus interviews.