

Design Your Own Private Sector Career

Use this five-step system to turn uncertainty into an actionable plan!

The career path to become a professor is very well defined. Career paths in the private sector are not so well defined. Sometimes it can seem very hard to know where to start. I can't give you a recipe to follow, but there are steps you can pursue that will help you design your own unique path.

In my own career, I use a very useful method that has five critical elements:



1. **Determine your Strengths:** Know what you are good at (and what you aren't good at!) This is much more than 'I'm good at math.' What activities come naturally to you, and would allow you to get in a state of flow?



2. **Define your Target:** What you want to do and where you want to do it? It's tempting to say "I'll do anything! I just want a job!", but that's a recipe for a bad job search. Employers in industry want to hire people who know what they want and know how to get it. Be one of these people.



3. **Tell Great Stories:** Develop engaging stories that show you are the person they need in their company. Don't focus on what you know, tell them what you've accomplished in a way that helps them see you as the problem solver they need!



4. **Build your Network:** A solid network is essential to a great career. There are good and bad ways to network. Make genuine connections with people in your target industries around shared interests. If it feels sleazy, you're doing it wrong!



5. **Dream Big:** A technical education gives you more options than you may realize. Don't be limited by the few career paths you were shown in university. Dream big and go after what you really want. Some people will tell you "That's not how it's done." Don't listen. They followed the paint-by-numbers instructions.