

## ***TEN STEPS TO A CAREER IN THE ARTS***

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## ***TEN STEPS TO A CAREER IN THE ARTS***

### 1. Knowing what's right for you

- Career considerations
  - a. Structure vs. free-style
  - b. How much time, energy, and money are you willing to devote to prepare yourself for a career in the arts?
  - c. Can you handle disappointments and rejections – they can be a part of pursuing a career in the arts. Learn to turn these negatives into positive aspects of growth.
  - d. How motivated and enthusiastic are you?
  - e. Are you willing to start at an entry level? Can your lifestyle and expenses handle sporadic income streams? Or are you dependent on long-term job security?
  - f. Are you willing to work long hours?
  - g. Are you persistent?
  - h. How well do you work under pressure? Can you handle stress?
  - i. Are you willing to travel as part of your work? Would you be willing to move to find work?

2. The self-assessment process - Be totally honest with yourself about your skills, interests, values, and personality.

a. Skills

What do you do best?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What skills do you want to use on the job?

What skills might you still need to acquire?

b. Interests (*See Appendix A*)

What are some of your interests?

What tasks, jobs, academic courses, and other activities have you enjoyed the most?

What kinds of people would you like to work with?

What kinds of job settings would you enjoy?

Do you have a marketable hobby?

c. Values (*See Appendix B*)

What satisfaction do you seek from a career?

In what ways must you be challenged and rewarded on the job?

In what types of work environments would you be happiest?

What do you value most? (*See Appendix B*)

d. Personality

What personal qualities do you possess that will help on the job?

(e.g., patience, compassion, competitiveness)

What personal qualities do you possess that might cause problems?

(e.g., shyness, impatience, disorganization)

e. Getting additional guidance on self-evaluation (*See Appendix C*)

3. Identifying and researching your options and designing a course of action
  - a. Read books by professionals in your chosen field to learn; read biographies about people in those careers. (Example: For Visual Artists, *Living the Artist's Way* by Paul Dorrell – a practical and realistic resource for artists, designers, writers, and others who believe in the value of their vision – it is a guide to growing, persevering, and succeeding in the art world)
  - b. Seek out several people with careers that interest you. Network! (Example: The Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi conducts craft demonstrations throughout the year. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the art form, as well as talk to the artist about how they earn their living. ([www.ms craftsmensguild.org](http://www.ms craftsmensguild.org)))
  - c. Explore local community programs through youth organizations, parks and recreation departments, community college classes, adult enrichment courses.
  - d. Investigate internships, apprenticeship opportunities, and job shadowing.
  - e. Apply for a part-time job or volunteer for an organization that works in the field that you are interested in to see if a career in this area is right for you. Summer art camps offer great learning experiences in the arts. (check with local arts councils)
  - f. Explore the Internet. It can make a tremendous impact on an artist's work. (***See Appendix D for Career Opportunities***)
    - Career opportunities in the Literary Arts
    - Career opportunities in the Performing Arts
    - Career opportunities for Visual Artists
    - Career opportunities in Arts Services



#### 4. Getting more education and professional experience (*See Appendix E*)

- Competitions and contests
- Finding a professional mentor (and what to expect from a mentor)
- Internships, apprenticeships and other informal training
- Vocational and rehabilitation services
- Choose an appropriate college or university program (college and university arts programs; performing and visual arts college fairs)



#### 5. Getting financial aid for education

- Loans
- Scholarships
- Resources for finding financial aid and scholarships
- Assistance for individuals with disabilities

## 6. Making a good first impression (*See Appendix F*)

- Interview basics
- Marketing yourself and your talent
- Resume' basics for performing, visual and literary artists
- For people with disabilities: Know your rights as an interviewee

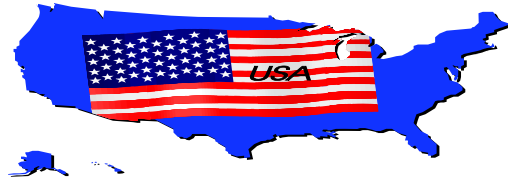


## 7. Job search basics

- Places to begin your job search
- One-stop career centers
- The art of networking
- Creating a one-of-a-kind position: The employer proposal
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## 8. The self-employment option (*See Appendix G*)

- Possible barriers to self-employment
- Resources for self-employed people and entrepreneurs
- Steps towards self-employment
- Tips for preparing a business plan (*see Appendix H*)



## 9. Mapping the road to success

- Launching a successful career in Literary, Performing or Visual Arts
- Talent agents, managers, auditions, portfolios, demo video/audiotapes, websites, headshots, postcards and flyers, e-mail address, professional membership organizations, artists' statement, bio (vitae)
- Bookkeeping, appointment books, taxes
- Trade papers and talent directories
- Network and talk to other artists
- Pricing your work
- Working with galleries
- Juried exhibitions, artist registries, fellowships, residencies, grants, competitions and contests

## 10. Internship, apprenticeship and mentor opportunities in the arts:

Contact arts organizations, arts councils and community groups to find out about opportunities to train and learn from professionals.



Finally, don't be afraid to pick up the paint brush of your life and write a new page in the performance of your life.



## **Appendix A - Example of Interests**

Helping others solve problems  
Leading or organizing others  
Doing structured activities  
Solving difficult problems  
Managing events

Working with your mind  
Working with your hands  
Working by yourself  
Working in teams  
Working with numbers

## **Appendix B – Values**

Beauty  
Being Loved  
Civic Duty  
Commitment  
Creativity  
Excellence

Fame  
Family  
Freedom  
Friendship  
Happiness  
Health

Helping Others  
Integrity  
Learning  
Love  
Personal Growth  
Power

Recreation  
Status  
Success  
Wealth  
Wisdom/Intelligence  
Work



## Appendix C – Getting Additional Guidance on Self-Assessment

The following places can provide counseling and advice, as well as administer vocational tests, to help you further clarify your career options:

- High school counselor's office
- College or university career counseling department
- Local vocational rehabilitation office
- Professional career or vocational rehabilitation counselor's office
- The U.S. Department of Labor "One Stop Shops,"  
(<http://www.dol.gov/dol/accomplishments/ms.htm>)

**One Stop Career Centers:** One Stop Career Centers are the focal point of America's workforce investment system, supporting the employment needs of job seekers and the human resource needs of business. At One Stop Centers, workers, job seekers, and other participants can receive training and education, build their skills, and access federal assistance programs, while employers use One Stop Centers to help recruit workers they need for their businesses.

Self-Assessment and career exploration resources:

### Books

What Color is Your Parachute? 2000  
By Richard Nelson Bolles  
Ten Speed Press, 1999

### Website

<http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/>

The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success  
By Nicholas Lore, Fireside, 1999

## Appendix D – Careers in the Arts

### Career Opportunities in the Literary Arts

- Advertising (Advertising Copywriter)
- Creative Writing (Author, Greeting Card Writer, Playwright, Poet, Screenwriter)
- Journalism (Critic, Journalist/Reporter, Editorial Writer, Feature Writer, Public Relations Officer)
- Editing (Book Publisher Editor, Copy Editor, Newspaper Editor, Proofreader)
- Library Work (Librarian)
- Business (Corporate Communications Manager, Literary Agent, Technical Writer, Technology Documentation Specialist, Translator)
- Other Careers in Literary Arts (Abstracter, Fact Checker, Indexer, Website Text Developer)

### Career Opportunities in the Performing Arts

The Performing Arts include Theatre, Film, Television, Music and other recording arts, and dance. People interested in the performing arts can work in a variety of settings, including ballet companies, churches, circuses, dance companies, film companies, law firms, opera companies, orchestras, radio stations, recording studios, schools, social service organizations, symphony orchestras, television studios, and theatre. They can also freelance.

#### Performance

Actor  
Back-up Musician  
Comedian  
Dancer  
Disc Jockey  
Game Show Host

#### Business

Booking Manager  
Business Manager  
Theater Membership or Visitor Services  
Theater Store Retailer/Buyer  
Theater Agent

Singer  
Talk Show Host  
Television/Host Broadcaster  
Voiceover Artist

Production and Direction

Arranger  
Artistic Director  
Casting Director  
Choral Director or Conductor  
Choreographer  
Cinematographer  
Director  
Orchestral Music Librarian  
Producer  
Production Manager  
Recording Engineer  
Record Producer  
Running Crew: Stage, Rigging  
Stage or Production Manager  
Technical Director

Development and Creation

Composer  
Songwriter

Design

Theatre Educator  
Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Makeup Artist/Designer  
Milliner  
Scene Designer/Scenographer  
Sound Designer/Operator/Engineer

Circus Work

Animal Trainer  
Clown  
Circus Performer

Miscellaneous Performing Arts

Arts and Entertainment Attorney  
Audience Development Specialists  
Audio Describer  
Children's Theater Specialist  
Company Manager  
Dance Educator or Theater Educator  
Director of New Play Development  
Dramaturge  
Sound Effects or Special Effects Artist  
House Manager (Theater)  
Juggler, Magician, Puppeteer or Puppet Maker  
Seamstress  
Performance Artist  
Set Decorator  
Stage Combat Trainer  
Stunt Artist  
Theater Access Manager, Theatre Tour Manager  
Theater Historian  
Theater Special Events Coordinator  
Theater Volunteer and/or Intern Coordinator  
Voice Dialect Coach  
Wig Master

Education and Services

Dance/Movement Therapist  
Instrument Repair  
Restoration Specialist  
Sign Language Interpreter

## Career Opportunities for Visual Artists

### Fine Arts

Cartoonist  
Ceramicist  
Illustrator  
Painter  
Photographer  
Potter  
Printmaker  
Sculptor  
Taxidermist

### Museum/Gallery Work

Appraiser  
Archivist  
Art Handler  
Collections Manager  
Conservator  
Curator  
Education Director/Assistant/Associate  
Exhibition Designer  
Gallery Director/Manager  
Librarian  
Membership or Visitor Services  
Preparator  
Retailer/Buyer

### Environmental and Product Designer

Architect  
Landscape Architect  
Interior Designer

### Design

Fashion Designer  
Fiber Arts and Textile Designer  
Floral Designer  
Framer  
Graphic Designer  
Jewelry Designer  
Merchandiser/Retail Display Designer  
Multimedia Designer  
Web Site Designer

### Advertising

Advertising Manager

### Business

Art Consultant  
Business Manager

### Education and Services

Art Educator  
Art Therapist

### Film

Animator

### **Other Careers in Visual Arts**

Aerial Photographer  
Airbrush Artist  
Architectural Model Builder  
Architectural Renderer  
Art Director  
Art Historian  
Arts & Entertainment Attorney  
Audience Development Specialist  
Billboard Artist  
Book Designer  
Book Illustrator  
Business Form Designer  
Calligrapher  
Cartographer  
Catalog Illustrator  
Courtroom Artist  
Direct Mail Designer  
Display Designer  
Display Painter  
Drafter

Engraver  
Environmental Designer  
Etcher  
Fashion Illustrator  
Furniture Designer  
Glass Blower  
Greeting Card Artist  
Industrial Designer  
Kitchenware Designer  
Label Designer  
Letterer  
Lithographer  
Magazine Designer  
Mannequin Decorator  
Medical Illustrator  
Model Maker  
Mosaic Tile Artist  
Mural Artist  
Museum Administrator  
Museum Exhibit Coordinator

Museum or Gallery Access  
Museum Special Events Coordinator  
Museum Tour Manager  
Museum Volunteer/Intern Coordinator  
Newspaper Illustrator  
Presenter  
Printer  
Quick Sketch Artist  
Record Album Designer  
Scientific Illustrator  
Sign Maker  
Silhouette Artist  
Silkscreen Artist  
Stained Glass Artist  
Stencil Cutter  
Toy Designer  
Trademark Designer  
Urban Designer  
Video Game Designer

### **Career Opportunities in Arts Services**

Fundraiser  
Grants Manager/Grant Writer  
Nonprofit Arts Consultant  
Public Relations Specialist  
Researcher/Research Assistant  
Local Arts Council  
    Administrative Assistant  
    Arts Administrator  
    Program Manager

## **Appendix E – Vocational/Rehabilitation Services**

Financial assistance  
Guidance counseling  
Job search and placement services  
Supported employment  
Testing and assessment, training, including on the job training

## **Appendix F – Jumpstarting Your Career**

Be prepared  
Present yourself well  
Stand out from the crowd  
Know your audience  
Resumes (Note the difference in visual arts, performing arts, and a literary artist resume)  
Portfolios  
Promotional materials

*Individuals with disabilities: Know your rights!*

## **Appendix G – Self-Employment**

### Advantages

Being in charge of your own destiny

Using creativity to do work you enjoy while earning money

Having the freedom to set your own goals and limits

Having the potential for unlimited income and profit

Being free to set your own schedule and work hours

Being able to constantly challenge yourself

Belief that you have something unique to offer because of the personal touch you offer

### Disadvantages

Unorganized

Lack of direction/focus/goals

No strategic plan, no benchmarks on what you present

Looking at life from a competitive perspective

### Avenues of Successful

Be a self-starter

Develop your people skills

Be accountable to clients and customers

Learn your responsibility as a taxpayer

Learn to be decisive: How good are you at making decisions quickly?

How much can you count on the support of your family?

Do you have a friend or associate that can honestly evaluate your artistic presentation?

## Appendix H – Preparing a Business Plan

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the final step before developing your business plan is to go through a pre-business checklist. You should answer these questions:

- What kind of business are you interested in starting?
- What services or products will you sell?
- Where will your business be located?
- What skills and experience do you bring to the business?
- What will be your legal structure (e.g., sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation)?
- What will you name your business?
- What insurance coverage will be needed? Liability, theft, life and health?
- What financing will you need?
- What are your resources (e.g., financial resources, human resources)?
- How will you compensate yourself?

The following outline is a guide for developing your business plan. While some components may not pertain to your field, most business plans contain most of these elements?

1. Cover sheet
2. Statement of purpose
3. Table of contents
  - I. The Business
    - A. Description of business
    - B. Marketing
    - C. Competition
    - D. Operation procedures



- E. Personnel
- F. Business insurance
- G. Financial data
- II. Financial Data
  - A. Loan applications
  - B. Capital equipment and supply list
  - C. Balance sheet
  - D. Breakeven analysis
  - E. Pro forma income projections (profit and loss statements)
    - Three-year summary
    - Detail by months, first year
    - Detail by quarters, second and third years
    - Assumptions upon which projections were based
  - F. Pro forma cash flow
- III. Supporting Documents
  - A. Tax returns of principals for last three years
  - B. Personal financial statement (all banks have these forms)
  - C. In the case of a franchise business, a copy of the franchise contract and all supporting documents provided by the franchiser
    - Copy of proposed lease or purchase agreement for building space
    - Copies of licenses and other legal documents
    - Copies of resumes of all principals
    - Copies of Letters of Intent from suppliers and others

For more information, please refer to the SBA Website ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov))

This information has been adapted from another resource. For a complete review on this topic, please refer to Putting Creativity to Work – Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities, Published by National Social Security Administration and VSA arts.