

© Herrmann + Starke, 2015. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - No Derivatives 4.0 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>. Simply put, you may share this information but you may not change it or sell it. You must also distribute our copyright notice (the first 2 sentences of this paragraph) with the materials and cite 2goodthings.com as the source of the information. We appreciate your understanding of the effort required to produce this intellectual property and our need to protect it.

The “Dream Job” Analysis:

Note: If you haven't already completed a [Values Analysis](#), do that first as what you learn about your values could impact how you define your dream career.

Step 1: Imagine yourself 10 or 20 years in the future having built the career of your dreams. Now, describe what living that career would be like. Flesh this vision out as fully as you can. Be sure to answer all of the questions below but don't limit yourself to just those questions. As you describe this career and lifestyle, think about what's really important to you in terms of issues like creative control, prestige, free time, wealth, etc.

As you work on this exercise, keep the realities of your industry in mind. You want to describe your dream career within the context of the real world - a career that's actually achievable, not something that's pure fantasy.

That being said, don't let your perception of your own limitations stop you from aiming for things you really want. A lack of financial resources, experience or training can be overcome. Plus, you can partner with or hire people to do things you're not good at or don't feel comfortable doing yourself.

Feel free to include details about your personal life if that would be helpful - what your living space will be like, what kind of car you'll drive, how often you'll eat out and the kinds of restaurants you'll go to, etc.

Questions to Consider:

- What kinds of income generating activities are you involved in?
- Who is providing you with most of your income (be as specific as you can about your target demographics)
- Are you doing business locally, regionally, nationally or internationally?
- What is the process of working with your clients/customers really like?
- What kind of name recognition do you or your company have? Local? Regional? National? Answer this for peers (e.g. your competitors), your industry, your customer base, and the general public.
- How much are you willing to sacrifice to achieve that kind of name recognition?
- How many hours are you working?
- Do you have employees? If so, how many? What do they do?
- How much time are you spending away from home?
- How many hours are you working per week? How many are during the week? How many on weekends? How many during the daytime and how many at night?

- How are you actually spending the hours that you're working?
- Are you working from your home or an off-site space? Is your working space yours alone or shared? Do you own or rent?
- What else does your dream career include?

Step 2: For each aspect of your dream career that you've visualized and described, assess how important it is to you. Which will leave you feeling like a failure if you don't achieve them? Which would be nice to achieve but aren't do or die?

Try to figure out why these things are important to you. What needs are these accomplishments fulfilling? How do they fit in with your values? What else could you do that would fulfill these ambitions?

Understanding why you want what you want is one of the most powerful and eye-opening activities you can do. Use that understanding to do some creative brainstorming about all the things you could do that would help you meet those needs. This may be the most critical step towards building a business you'll love.

Step 3: Now that you've prioritized the aspects of your dream job that are most important to you and have a better understanding of what's motivating you to achieve them, assess what you need to accomplish within the next 1-3 years to be on the right trajectory.

Recognizing that you have limited amounts of money and time, how much are you willing or able to invest into moving your business forward in the next 3 years? With that in mind, what goals can you set for the next 1 - 3 years that are realistic, achievable and will start you moving in the direction you want to go?

The Point:

Most of us won't achieve everything that we've mapped out through this exercise. In fact, most of us will change our minds about what our dreams really are before we're even close to that 10 - 20 year time-frame. But, if you complete this exercise honestly and with as much self-awareness as you can muster, the goals you set based on this exercise will help you build a solid foundation that will serve you well even if your long-term goals or dreams change.