



Australians will have up to three careers over their working life and Generation Y will have up to five. That means a great many people will be trying to "break into" a new career at any given time.

For many others, the real struggle is choosing a career path in the first place.

Whichever group you fall into, solid research will help you on your way. Use the ideas, tips and links here to explore your options.

Finding what you're suited to

Answering this question is often the hardest part of your career research. Start by making lists of:

- Things you are great at and love doing
- Things you are good at but hate doing
- Things you love doing but are not that great at
- Things you are not good at and hate doing

Are you an extravert who loves meeting people or an introvert who prefers working behind the scenes? Do you like working with numbers or words, animals, children or adults? Ask friends and family for their input.

Your list should identify as many of your skills and attributes as possible. Skills are things like written and verbal communication, book keeping, analytical skills, computer skills, dress making, being good at fixing electronics or cars, typing and so on.

Getting career ideas

After taking a really good look at who you are and what you enjoy doing most, use books, websites, career expos, newspapers and contacts to gather information on career options.

What to read

The book ***What color is your parachute?*** by Richard Bolles (note the American spelling of color/colour) is still considered the "bible" of career choice. However, browse the "business" or "personal development" aisle of your local bookstore for other titles. Mr Bolles is American but we have many good home grown authors right here. For example, Warren Frehse's ***Manage your own career*** published by Pearson Prentice Hall is full of good ideas. Another good source is Bill Lang's DVD ***Winning the career you deserve*** (available from the website - <http://www.billlang.org/public/index.asp>).

Also check the Wednesday and Saturday employment sections of newspapers and clip any career profile that interests you.

Libraries

Make use of the State Library or regional reference library nearest to you. Australian libraries have an obligation to keep all periodicals, yearbooks, magazines, books and newspapers published in Australia. For example, if you were interested in media then the State Library is the place to go to view an otherwise costly tome like the B&T Yearbook, which lists all the advertising agencies and media organisations in Australia but there are heaps of others. Trade magazines are also a great source of information on people, companies and trends in a given industry sector.

You can also search for newspaper articles online using the News Text service. To read more about the Newstext service, [click here](#).

Career shows

Use the Career Diary section of careerone.com.au to check out the dates for career shows in your state. When you visit a Career Expo, make sure you quiz exhibitors about the job roles and career paths they offer; entry level positions; training and development opportunities and the roles they anticipate will be most in demand in their industry. You will find a link to Career Diary in the left hand navigation column.

Graduates

Recruiting season for grads is getting earlier every year but March to May is peak career show season for grads. Don't wait until your final year to start attending shows and grilling employers on the career paths they offer and what they want grads to offer in return.

People you meet

When you meet people doing interesting jobs, don't be shy about asking questions. Most people love talking about themselves and what they do.

Key questions would be:

- What's involved in your job?
- What sort of qualifications and personality traits do you need to succeed at the job?
- How did you get your job?

Useful websites

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Jet

Jet is a not-for-profit organisation that hooks up young people with apprenticeships and traineeships - www.jet.org.au

New Apprenticeship Centres

Federal Government website for all ages. The website can be found at <http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au/>
Or phone the New Apprenticeships Hotline on 1800 639 629.

More cool sites

This Commonwealth Government website - www.jobjuice.gov.au - is predominately aimed at young people. Sections include "Choose a direction" section; how to start a business; and where to find resources.

Parents can download a special advice guide for helping your child make career decisions by visiting - www.jobguide.dest.gov.au.

Finally, [Job Explorer](#) is a really cool A-Z search. You can search jobs to find out the training needed to get the job and details of what is involved in doing the job or you can search industries to see what jobs they offer.

Study options

The TAFE handbook can be found at most newsagencies or use the web or use a search engine to find the TAFE website in your state.

For example,

TAFE NSW - www.tafensw.edu.au

TAFE Tasmania - www.tafe.tas.edu.au

TAFE Queensland - www.tafe.qld.gov.au

My Future is another useful website. Found at <http://www.myfuture.edu.au> - My Future, is a good research tool that covers courses offered at universities, TAFE colleges and even community colleges.

A joint initiative of the Commonwealth and State Governments, the website offers a way to search a job role and then check the qualifications you need for that job. It also provides info on where to look for financial support for study and it lists key support services.

A word of caution: when considering study options, check out how likely you are to find a job. Many people do an expensive course and only after finishing do they start to research their career options. Before you plonk down your cash ask the course providers questions such as the percentage of their students who find work. Also find out what career services the college or university offers; whether or not the course provider holds an industry night where potential employers are invited to meet grads. Lastly, ask about the strength of the lecturer's own contact list. For example, do employers phone him or her when looking for new recruits. Try and test the demand for the skills you will acquire through study. There is no good doing a course to become qualified in a skillset nobody needs.

Using Professional Associations

Again, use a search engine to find industry and professional associations. Many have useful "career" sections detailing entry-level requirements and training options. I have included several examples based on the categories I get asked about most often:

Australian Institute of Marketing

<http://www.ami.org.au>

Australian Human Resources Institute

<http://www.ahri.com.au>

Housing Industry Association

<http://www.buildingonline.com.au>

Engineers Australia

<http://www.ieaust.org.au>

Some industry associations will need to be searched on a state basis such as hairdressing for example:

NSW

<http://professionalhair.com.au/pages/index.php>

Victoria

<http://www.hbia.com.au/portal/default.pl>

And, some professional sectors have a number of associations for example, accounting:

Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia

<http://www.icaa.org.au>

CPA Australia

<http://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/cps/rde/xchg>

National Institute of Accountants

<http://www.nia.org.au>

Using a professional

Australian Association of Career Counsellors

<http://www.aacc.org.au>

Australian Psychological Society

www.psychology.org.au

1800 333 497 (this is a free call referral line - not a counselling line - tell them what you are after - career coach - and where eg Melbourne)

I think these guys can be really useful but they are not miracle workers so it helps if you do as much research as you can before using a professional. Even just figuring out what you enjoy doing, what you hate doing and listing any life or career goals would help.

Make sure you quiz potential coaches on the phone to ensure they will deliver what you require and don't be shy about asking the fees involved and what services will be provided.

For example, some coaches and organisational psychologists would be able to administer a psychometric test to help you work out what you are suited to. You can take a sample test for free by going to the Career Expert area of careerone.com.au (use link on the left hand side of this page) and look for the Chandler Macleod logo and heading Psychometric Assessments? Also take a look at Myprofile in the Career Expert area. The company do cater to job seekers as well as companies.

Narelle Milligan of the AACC said some of the government-run Career Centres also offer this service so type Career Centres into a search engine to find the one nearest you.

Also, career coaches are not miracle workers; you will still need to do the bulk of the work. Discuss the possible outcomes of the service so you don't build up unrealistic expectations.

The guide above gives you plenty of research options so now all you need to do is get cracking.

If you come across something really useful that is not listed above, please let me know so I can add it to the list - editor@careerone.com.au.

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