

CAREER PATHS

People take many paths in life -- often characteristically so. This instrument will help you see more clearly your likely career path. Complete the short exercise below and then we'll explain what this might mean for you.

Data Generation

For each of the questions below, rank order the words *in each ROW* below where 4 is high and 1 is low *in terms of their importance* to you.

A. Promotion () →	Learning () →	Expertise () →	Escaping () →
B. Variety ()	Adventure ()	Power ()	Craftsmanship ()
C. Recreation ()	Moving Up ()	Skill ()	New Challenges ()
D. Artisan ()	Executive ()	Vagabond ()	Researcher ()
E. Wandering ()	Controlling ()	Studying ()	Perfecting ()
F. Knowledge ()	Rapid Change ()	Talent Recognition ()	Advancement ()

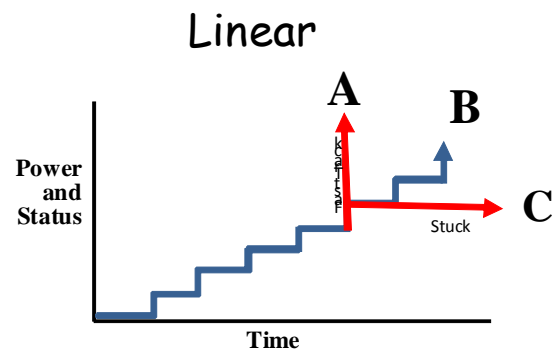
Please double check that you ranked the ROW items above. Each row should have one word ranked 1, 2, 3, or 4. 4 is high, 1 is low. Once you've confirmed your answers, turn the page to learn what your responses might mean.

Theory

Society defines success, typically, in terms of wealth and power. We read about the rich and famous in the newspapers and biographies, and see them in the news and in films. It turns out though, that left to their own devices, people will choose a variety of career paths, only one of which really leads ever upward. Professors Michael Driver¹ and Ken Brousseau of the University of Southern California have identified alternative patterns that people seem to choose. Before we say more, though, take the simple exercise below. If you want the benefit of years of research, go to the website for Decision Dynamics, Driver's and Brousseau's company, to take the original instrument. For now, though, answer the questions below and then after you've done that we'll explain more about Driver and Brousseau's theory. (Driver, 1979)

Driver and Brousseau's insight with regard to careers and success is that they recognized that not everyone is motivated by power and wealth. Further, not everyone is suited to navigating careers oriented toward power and wealth. I've asked for example, executives all over the world if they've ever seen a technical expert ruined by promotion to management—and virtually every hand in the room went up. So, if a person is not suited for management, does that mean they're a failure? Not necessarily. Driver and Brousseau found at least four alternative "career concepts"—ways that people think, sometimes subconsciously, about their careers.

Let's begin with a simple two-dimensional grid with "power and status" on the vertical axis and time on the horizontal axis. The commonly accepted societal definition of success is the "linear" one in which the primary motivation is to increase one's power and status. This pattern is shown in Figure 1. For Linear types, gaining power and status is a good thing—and the faster the better. The worst

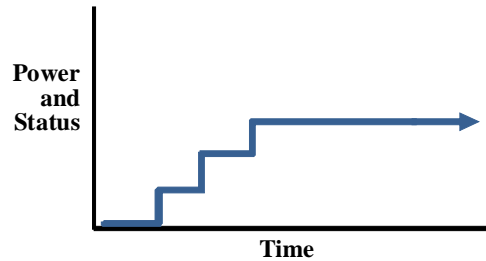


¹ Unfortunately, Professor Driver passed away in 2006. He was a stimulating colleague and forward thinker and we miss him.

fate for a Linear type is to be stuck as shown by position C in Figure 1.

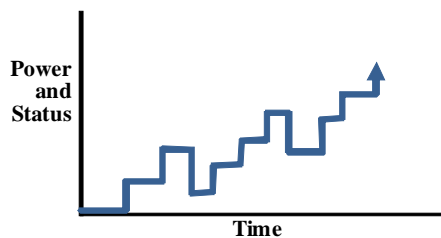
Steady State Experts are not motivated by promotion, rather they find their satisfaction in increasing their skill and craftsmanship. They enjoy becoming increasingly expert at what they do. Most managers have seen Steady State Experts ruined by promotion into Linear management positions. It's not good for either the individual or the company. One of the challenges is that people who move from the Independent Contributor career stage to the Manager career stage must learn to become at peace with being held accountable for *other* people's work. Steady State Experts have trouble doing that. They prefer underlying assumptions like, "if you want it done right, do it yourself."

Steady State Experts



Steady State Experts (SSEs) will accept Linear positions for a variety of reasons. They may want more money and upward promotion may be the only way to get it. In the late 1950's, some aerospace companies developed dual career ladders to address this problem. They created a second career path for engineers and scientists so that one could be promoted to "senior engineer" or "super senior engineer" and so on and get a raise. Over the years though, many executives on the other rail of the dual career ladder continued to believe that their contributions were more valuable and the dual career ladder became very skewed. It's a persistent problem for how to recognize increasingly talented technical people.

Spiral



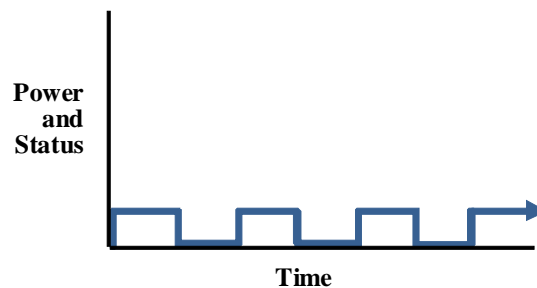
Sometimes SSEs will take Linear jobs because they aren't very self aware and they

simply accept the common, societal Linear definition of success. SSEs who do this are probably living too much “outside-in,” that is, they allow others’ expectations to dominate their thinking. There’s a distinction here. The first case is a lack of self awareness perhaps because of a lack of awareness of the concepts introduced by Driver and Brousseau. The second case is being aware of it and not having enough “inside-outness” to assert their own purpose *even* when it affects one’s own future.

Spiral types are not motivated by power but by learning. When they get eighty percent of the way to the top, they get bored and are willing to give up power and status for the sake of getting back on the steep part of the learning curve. Linears, on the other hand, when they are eighty percent of the way to the top are rejuvenated. They tend to redouble their efforts to get to the top. But Spirals will go back to school, change industries, change careers, and move on because they need to be learning, growing, and expanding their knowledge.

The motivation for Transitories is not work. They’ll work as long as they have to get enough money to go off and do what it is that they’d really rather be doing. On the negative side, this may be alcohol, drugs, or gambling. On the positive side, it may be world travel, mountain climbing, kayaking, or some other exotic hobby. Transitories are willing to work for a while and then are eager to get back to the fun stuff. Recent news accounts, for example, described a young American woman who got her degree in nursing and was traveling the world with her backpack. She’d work for six months (nurses can get jobs anywhere), and then hike/bike/travel to her next “must see” location...and get another short term job.

Transitory



Value Added. All four of these Career Concepts have value to add to an organization. Linears bring drive, ambition, vision, and assertiveness. Steady State Experts bring expertise, competence, the daily productivity of the organization. You could say that the Linears build their careers on the backs of the SSEs. Spirals bring new ideas, fresh thinking, the latest

education, and innovation. Transitories help companies manage their business cycles because they don't want to be long-term employees.

Scoring

The short exercise above simply asked you to rank order some words that relate to each of these four Career Concepts. Most people in my experience don't even need the exercise; once they understand the four alternatives, they can easily identify their own predilections. Some are ecstatic that there is a "name" and research that supports things they've felt for a long time. That said, we'll make the scoring behind the short assessment apparent and then invite you to draw some inferences about how your natural Career Concept might affect your future career choices. Remember, this simple exercise is just an attempt to give you a quick view of these concepts. We encourage you to go to Decision Dynamics at <http://www.decdynamics.com/>, to get the full instrument and to learn about the differences between what you want and what you do when you make career decisions.

Use the scoring grid below to calculate your answers to the exercise at the beginning. **Write the rank you wrote** in the space for each word in the column associated with the letter in the space here where L = Linear, SSE = Steady State Experts, S = Spiral, T = Transitory.

A. Promotion (L)	Learning (S)	Expertise (SSE)	Escaping (T)
B. Variety (S)	Adventure (T)	Power (L)	Craftsmanship (SSE)
C. Not-Work (T)	Moving Up (L)	Skill (SSE)	New Challenges (S)
D. Artisan (SSE)	Executive (L)	Vagabond (T)	Researcher (S)
E. Wandering (T)	Controlling (L)	Studying (S)	Perfecting (SSE)
F. Knowledge (S)	Rapid Change (T)	Talent Recognition (SSE)	Advancement (L)

Transpose your data into the proper column and sum.

Row	LINEAR	STEADY STATE EXPERT	SPIRAL	TRANSITORY
A.				
B.				
C.				
D.				
E.				
F.				
Total =				

Interpreting Your Scores

Remembering that this is only a rough cut at measuring your career concept, review your total scores. Your highest score may be your dominant career concept. You are probably not only one concept, but will have a mixture of scores. If your scores are fairly even, you may not have a dominant career concept. Consider your highest score and the concept it represents. What are the implications of this concept for your future career decision making? What kinds of questions should you ask yourself when making career decisions given your scores here? How could a person with your dominant career concept get into career difficulty? How could one avoid those potential challenges? What are the developmental implications for a person with your profile? How could you improve your career options given your profile?

Reporting Your Scores

Please go to this website and report your scores above. We are developing a new database of comparative data, so your data will remain anonymous but be added to our collective comparative statistics. Thanks very much.

<http://faculty.darden.virginia.edu/clawsonj/>

Conclusion

The Career Concepts developed by Mike Driver and Ken Brousseau have been a very powerful set of ideas for individuals and corporations for thirty years. Most managers seem to live their careers oblivious of these distinctions in career success and make personal or managerial decisions that hurt the people and the company they work for. When made aware of these distinctions, many feel energized that they have new information that can help them make better personal decisions and be better coaches to others. Our belief is that unless managers are aware of these differences in orientation to career and success, they will be susceptible to making poor decisions for themselves and for making hiring and promotion decisions for their organizations.

Action Planning

Given your Career Concepts profile, make a few notes about how you can use this information to make better decisions and to manage your own career development and that of others.

