

## **Career by Design Tool 3: Career Statements**

### **3a: Career Development Statement & 3b: Career Contribution Statement**

The **Career Statement** is a super useful tool. It is the 1-3 minutes speech you give to:

get the next job, or job interview  
have a meaningful conversation with your boss or a prospective manager,  
introduce yourself to new clients (or prospective clients if you are an entrepreneur),  
or explain who you are and what you do at cocktail parties and networking events.

The **Career Statement** summarizes the conclusions you have reached about your career direction. In it you state your areas of experience and past value to your organization, and you put forth what you believe could be your future contribution. Such a statement is helpful for you to be able to succinctly summarize your value to your current employer, a prospective employer, or to introduce you to people who may be significant in your career development network.

Neither **Career Statement** is a resume, nor is it a biography or recitation of your past. The Career Statement is focused, sets the tone and direction of actions you intend to take to support you career now and in the future. When it is done and refined, it should fit on one page.

The **Career Development Statement** focuses more on you and the direction you would like your career to take. It is appropriate for initial job interviews, and at the early stages of your career before you have a strong track record for making a contribution to any particular organization. The **Career Development Statement** could also be the basic format you would use in conversations with a recruiter or a cover letter if you were searching for a job.

The **Career Contribution Statement** focuses more on your contribution to your company. It has a more executive tone as you make it clear through your communication that you are a committed contributor to your existing organization or industry. It would also be an appropriate way to introduce your self to executive recruiters, potential mentors, or for significant leadership-project management roles. The **Career Development Statement** is about your contribution to organizations using your skills – the focus is on the organizational contribution, not on what you learned that helped you grow and develop. This statement demonstrates your ability and willingness to work to achieve your company's goals. It is not about you as an individual.

The content of the **Career Statement** should communicate to the listener:

Who you are. (Long term employee, prospective project manager-leader, employee, intern, etc.)

Data to support your assertion or examples of situations to illustrate how you used your skills and made a contribution. (What have you done for your existing company, past companies, clubs, and volunteer activities?)

What you want. Give potential areas where you can help the listener or they can help you. If your **Career Statement** is to a mentor, coach, or supporter, sometimes they may help by giving your feedback, asking you clarifying questions, or suggesting the next person you should meet. If you are an entrepreneur, you may be asking a prospective client to try out your services or products.

While there is no single “correct” format for an effective Career Statement, experienced career researchers and counselors suggest four major areas to address:

- A statement of (continuing) interest in the organization (and why)
- A concise summary of past contributions (to that organization, clubs, or industry)
- Potential areas where you can and wish to provide value to the organization.
- A suggestion about ways members of the organization can support your activities and career direction (particularly relevant if this is a statement to a future employer, mentor, coach, or supporter).

This statement works best if it is specific and concise, factual and practical. While it is appropriate to include information about your priorities, work philosophy, and motivation, these should be addressed in the context of experience, skills, and abilities you wish to apply to specific activities within the organization.

Remember too, that the **Career Statement** is intended as a basis for discussion, not as a personal sales presentation. This statement, when written, should not be longer than one double-spaced typed page. You should then practice speaking the statement since it is what you would say during a short conversation with someone at a cocktail party, company event, or during a shared taxi ride. After sharing this statement, you want to leave that person believing that you have valuable skills they could use. They should also have 2 or 3 positive adjectives that come to mind when they think of you, based on what you said and how you said it. And finally, they should know what to do to hire you, use your skills, or help you.

Here is a sample Career Statement:

## Career Contribution Statement - Example

(Statement of continuing interest in your company)

*I've been with Sempra fifteen years in engineering and project management positions. I really enjoy the work I do here and I look forward to the kinds of projects and opportunities I am likely to work on in the future.*

(Summary of strengths and past contributions)

*I started as a Field Service Engineer and progressed to Project Engineer and then to Project Manager. I have been told that I have a strong ability to assess complex situations, set priorities, and translate them into practical and cost-effective action plans. In the last two years alone my projects have come in 5% under budget and are generating 13% growth in my division's revenues. I am also recognized for attention to detail, good supervisory and team building skills, and the ability to coordinate complex, technical, organizational, political, and personal factors.*

(Potential areas for future contributions)

*Given my skills and experience, two potential productive directions interest me here at Sempra. The first would be a senior strategic planning and business analysis role in determining major project opportunities, priorities and sites. The second would be a broad management role that would involve responsibilities for and overall control of ongoing projects, perhaps focusing particularly on those outside the United States. Global exposure, I believe, would represent both a greater potential contribution to this organization and a closer match with my own interests and aptitudes than moving into a senior-level staff position.*

(Suggest framework for future)

*I know you've had some global experience, and you know a lot about our current strategic issues. I would like to have a meeting to hear more about what you learned in those positions and hear your thoughts on what direction I might take. I also know you're plugged into HR, and maybe you could help me think about how to approach them to learn more about present staffing levels and requirements and perhaps exploring the possibility of configuring a new position if that makes sense. I really love working here. I'm proud of what I've contributed so far. And I think with your guidance, I can position myself to make an even greater contribution in the future.*

Now let's work on your Career Statement. Complete the worksheet on the next page before you start crafting your Career Contribution Statement. The instructions for the worksheet are on the page following the worksheet. And then there's space to craft your draft statement.

**CAREER BY DESIGN TOOL #3: CAREER STATEMENT WORKSHEET**

	JOB 1	JOB 2	JOB 3
Position / Title			
Accomplishment(s)			
Contribution - words			
Contribution - numbers			
Skills Used In Job			
1			
2			
3			
4			

**Career Statement Step 1:** What 3 important jobs have you had since you started working (or volunteer positions and roles in clubs or organizations)? List those jobs/position titles under Jobs 1, 2 and 3 respectively in the **Career Worksheet**.

**Career Statement Step 2:** What accomplishments did you value most highly in each job? What were you most proud of? How does this accomplishment demonstrate a **Best Work Skill**? List your answers to those questions in the accomplishments row for each job respectively.

**Career Statement Step 3:** What contribution did you make in each job? Use words and put them in the Contribution–words row of your worksheet.

**Career Statement Step 4:** What contributions did you make in each job that you can quantify? Use numbers and put those in the Contribution–numbers row for each job in your worksheet.

**Career Statement Step 5:** What skills did you use to make those contributions? List them on the bottom of the worksheet. Ideally you will be demonstrating that you have made organizational contributions through the intentional use of your skills. You definitely want to include some of your **Best Work Skills** from the **Career Matrix**.

**Career Statement Step 6:** Draft a statement of interest in the company. Mention the number of years with that organization and if you intend to stay and are looking to move within the company. Mention the number of years in your industry/profession if you are trying to get a job with a different company. Mention what attracts you to that company if you are trying to get your first job.

**Career Statement Step 7:** Craft a summary of your strengths, **Best Work Skills**, and past contributions. Be specific. Use numbers; back up your contributions from the worksheet.

**Career Statement Step 8:** Write a statement addressing potential areas where you might make a contribution to this organization in the future. What areas, projects, and positions are you interested in? You might want to consider and mention **Best Work Skills** and **High Potential Skills** from your **Career Matrix** in this paragraph.

**Career Statement Step 9:** Suggest a framework for the future. How can this person help you? When you are done with your mini speech, what three adjectives do you want the listener to say when they think of you?"

Your Career Contribution Statement – First Draft

(Statement of interest in the company. Mention number of years with that organization.)

(Summary of strengths, (best work) skills and past contributions. Be specific. Use numbers back up your contributions from the worksheet).

(Potential areas for future contributions. What areas / projects, positions are you interested in?)

(Suggest framework for future. How can this person help you?)