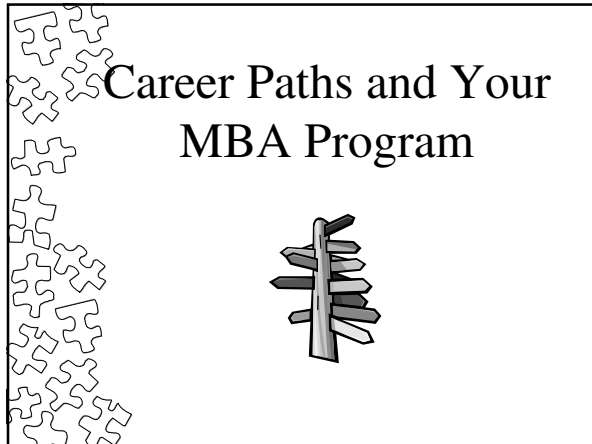


# Career Paths and Your MBA Program




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In a stable society, composing a life is somewhat like throwing a pot or building a house in a traditional form: the materials are known, the hands move skillfully in tasks familiar from thousands of performances, the fit of the completed whole in the common life is understood. ...

Today, the materials and skills from which a life is composed are no longer clear. It is no longer possible to follow the paths of previous generations. Fluidity and discontinuity are central to the reality in which we live."



Mary Catherine Bateson, 1989

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# Career Paths and Trajectories

- > **Linear career**
  - Traditional upward movement through the ranks, generally in one organization or industry.
- > **Steady state**
  - Vocational stability where career choices are rarely re-examined.
- > **Spiral**
  - Career change made every 5-10 years.
- > **Transitory**
  - More frequent career changes made due to a need for variety or stimulation.

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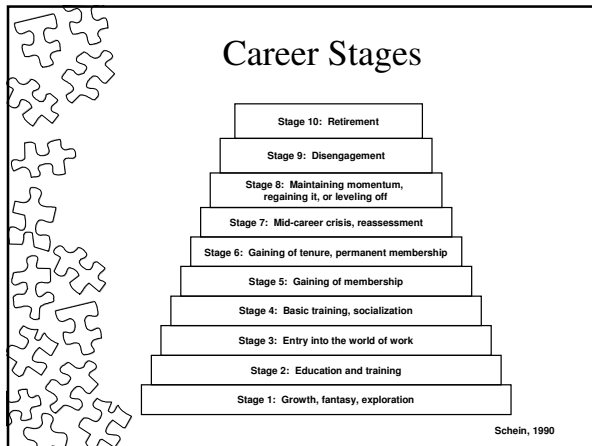
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## Career Anchors

Dr. Schein outlines eight main career anchors:

- Technical/Functional Competence
- General Management Competence
- Autonomy/Independence
- Security/Stability
- Entrepreneurial Creativity
- Service/Dedication to a Cause
- Pure Challenge
- Lifestyle



**Career Anchors Online**

**Amazon – Book link**

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## Managerial Careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Competencies necessary for career success are changing
- Most important competencies now:
  - Communication skills
  - Collaborative leadership
  - Self-management
  - Personal traits of flexibility, integrity, and trustworthiness
- Also important:
  - A knowledge-based technical specialty
  - Cross-functional and international experience

Allred, Snow & Miles, 1996

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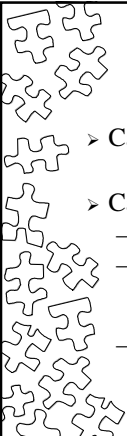
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## Career Roadblocks

- Career Plateau
- Career Entrenchment
  - More likely with high sunk costs.
  - When you like frequent career change (i.e. spiral or transitory trajectories), higher likelihood you will feel entrapped.
  - When vocational fit is poor, you are more likely to feel entrapped.

Carson & Carson, 1997

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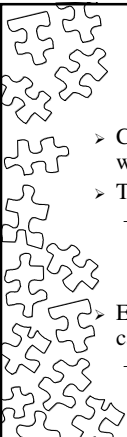
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## Enacting a Career

- Career: “the unfolding sequence of a person’s work experiences over time.” (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999)
- The enactment of a career is a process...
  - that creates, but also constantly modifies, the structures of institutions and individual lives through our career competencies and career capital.
- Enacting a career means we create our own career narratives or stories
  - Career “improvising” vs. career planning

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## Improvising a Life – and Career

- “Life is an improvisatory art, about the ways we combine familiar and unfamiliar components in response to new situations, following an underlying grammar and evolving aesthetic.”

Mary Catherine Bateson



How much of your life is planned, and how much is due to improvisation or chance?

- What opportunities did you take?
  - Which ones do you wish you would have taken?

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## Dilbert's Perspective



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## Your MBA Is An Opportunity For:

- Developing professional skills
- Developing a love of learning and passion for continuous improvement
- Taking some risks
  - A safe place to make mistakes without life-altering consequences
- Developing a solid network of people who...
  - Know you
  - Support you
  - Provide current and future "social capital"

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