



Plan for Success: Kick off 2026 with a Career Review

This is the time of year to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. As you rang in 2026, did you make a resolution? Research shows that nearly half of all Americans made at least one. Many of these pledges focused on living a healthier lifestyle. Perhaps you vowed to exercise more, lose weight, or quit smoking. Maybe you even scheduled your annual physical exam — a good starting point as you prepared to set realistic and achievable goals for a happy and healthy year ahead.

Did you make any resolutions regarding your career goals for 2026? No doubt they're important too! After all, job satisfaction has a big impact on overall life satisfaction and health. So, whether you're a young professional, a mid-careerist, or contemplating retirement, an annual career check-up is a really smart way to kick off the New Year.

Looking Back

How satisfied are you with your career direction? What about your work performance? How happy is your employer with your contributions in the workplace? Is there anything you want to change? These are all important questions. However, before you can answer them, you need to conduct an annual career review. Take a candid look at your accomplishments as well as opportunity areas.

Here's a list of questions to ask yourself as you reflect upon your career trajectory over the last year. The queries are categorized into four key focus areas: *job satisfaction*, *career goals*, *work performance*, and *professional development*. Your answers to these questions can bring clarity as you establish your goals for 2025 and develop your action plans to achieve them. Modify this list based on your specific needs.

ANNUAL CAREER REVIEW

Job Satisfaction

- Overall, how happy am I with my job? My work environment? (Take the [Career Vision Job Satisfaction Survey](#).)



ANNUAL CAREER REVIEW

Job Satisfaction

- How well does my job / work environment match my talents, skills, interests, personality preferences, and work values? (Take the [Career Vision Work Values Survey](#).)
- Have I identified the root causals of any dissatisfaction with my job?
- What types of tasks and work environments should I look for? Avoid?
- Am I satisfied with my work-life integration?

Career Goals

- Do I set career goals for myself every year?
- Did I achieve last year's career goals as planned? If not, where did I fall short? What will I do differently this year?
- Are my career goals still realistic? Relevant? If not, which goals need to be modified? What new goals should I set for 2026?
- What changes, if any, do I want to make in my career (e.g., get a new job, find a new employer, get a promotion, make a career or industry change, etc.)?
- Are there any new responsibilities, roles, projects, or initiatives I want to take on? How can I demonstrate that I'm ready?
- Do I have at least two colleagues / career advisors who can provide candid counsel as to whether my career goals are realistic?

Work Performance

- Did I achieve my work key performance indicators? What did I do well? What were my biggest accomplishments? What am I most proud of? Where do I need to improve? What do I need to start doing? Stop doing? Keep doing?
- How valuable are my current position, tasks, and responsibilities to my organization's success? In what direction is my organization or department headed? In what ways can I contribute to the achievement of departmental and company goals?



ANNUAL CAREER REVIEW

Work Performance

- Are my relationships with managers, co-workers, direct reports, customers, and vendors positive? Collaborative? How would they describe my work performance? Work ethic? Professionalism?
- Do I listen and communicate effectively? How have I managed remote work if needed?
- Am I able to accurately perceive, understand, and manage my emotions and behaviors? Am I aware of the impact of my emotions and behaviors on others? Do I accurately perceive and understand the emotions and behaviors of others?
- Do I have at least two colleagues / career advisors who give me candid feedback about my performance? My blind spots?

Professional Development

- Do I have the requisite technical and soft skills, knowledge, and experience needed to achieve my career goals? If not, what do I need to do to acquire them (e.g., formal and informal training, further education, certification, conferences, workshops, etc.)?
- Am I engaged in continuous learning that reaches beyond what's required for my job, organization, and profession? Do I share what I've learned with my colleagues?
- Am I aware of the major trends in my profession and industry? Am I taking proactive steps to prepare for anticipated changes resulting from these trends?
- Am I growing and nurturing my professional network? Am I building a positive reputation within my field or industry?
- What professional associations / organizations do I belong to? Am I making the most of the developmental opportunities offered to me? Am I using my expertise and / or seeking out roles within these associations that enable me to expand my knowledge, develop new skills, and give back to my network?
- Does my presence on social media accurately reflect my experience, professionalism, talents, skills, and abilities?



Looking Forward

What did you learn from answering the above questions? Use this information to revise or set new career-related goals for the year ahead. And be sure to identify the specific actions necessary to achieve your goals. After all, *“A goal without a plan is just a wish!”* (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry).

Are You a Career Vision Research Members?

Kick off the New Year with a solid plan to keep your career moving in a positive trajectory. Career Vision research members are encouraged to schedule an appointment for a career review with a career consultant. Call us at 630.469.6270.