



## The Balanced Careerist

### How Diverse Career Motivations Affect Career Decisions

Deep down, we all approach our work in different ways, depending on our history, personality type and the many decisions that we have made during our lives. Our behaviors at work might look very much like those of others, but only we know the reasons why we perform the tasks and responsibilities of our jobs. And these reasons affect our work satisfaction most deeply, causing us to draw energy from our work or—if our motivations are not being met—to find disappointment at work.

The FutureWork Institute has researched and developed a series of categories to help explain these deep-seated motivations. We call them “career archetypes,” because research shows they are constant among many individuals.

**There are five career archetypes and, it seems, one is almost always dominant in individuals, possibly from an early age:**

- **The Fast Tracker** — a person who values individual contributions above all else
- **The Experimenter** — a person whose deepest motivation is to build a portfolio of skills to enable that person to discover the job or company that “fits.”
- **The Fast Tracker** — a person who sees tangible career success as a gauge of personal success in life
- **The Company-dedicated Careerist** — a person comfortable in his or her job and company because it enables that person to “dig in” and understand how “this place really works”
- **The Balanced Careerist** — a person who values life outside work as much as time spent on the job.

Each archetype is “normal,” a valid way of approaching work and career, but each is very different. Read more now to discover what motivates the Balanced Careerist.



### What Balanced Careerists Are All About

Balanced Careerists are people who actually have a life outside work. That life might be their family, but it just as well might be a hobby they are passionate about or simply a desire to live life more fully.

Balanced Careerists’ concept of time fits in directly with their archetype: they believe that time should be balanced between work and life obligations. Consequently, Balanced Careerists often manage their time very well, setting a clear line between what belongs to their company and what does not belong. They will work long hours if a project demands it, but they expect their manager to “make up” time lost to unforeseen work obligations by permitting them greater flexibility.

Balanced Careerists believe that every activity in life has its own place. Despite stereotypes, Balanced Careerists usually take their work obligations seriously, just as they take seriously the many activities they hold in balance. Their objection is not the work itself, but the way work today tends to take up more and more time.

Balanced Careerists are dedicated workers, but their personal desire for a fulfilling life outside work sometimes makes them seem to others to be slackers. The biggest problem Balanced Careerists have is their belief that many managers do not take their careers as seriously as that of archetypes who show more apparent dedication to the company.

## Managing the Balanced Careerist

Balanced Careerists need to know that their time is protected. They are willing to make sacrifices for the company, but resist the continual sacrifices they see Fast Trackers make. For them, advancement is not as important as a fulfilling life in which they meet all their obligations. Managers can make the mistake of devaluing their contribution, especially in those companies whose profile of success has many elements of the Fast Track embedded in it.

Balanced Careerists are very often those who can work with minimal supervision, and be trusted to accomplish tasks on their own. After all, they have had a great deal of practice with the balancing act of life and usually find the best and quickest way to get jobs done effectively.

## Working on Teams with Balanced Careerists

Balanced Careerists are good team players, as long as team involvement does not eat into time earmarked for other things in life. They like preset limits to team involvement and usually ask (either others or themselves), before starting a new project: "How much of a time commitment will this require of me?"

Because balance is all-important to these workers, they tend to use work time efficiently so as to have sufficient time for other of life's involvements. They have an unerring sense of how much they can accomplish in a given day, working at top speed, and resent having to upset their personal balance with more work than they can reasonably handle.

Don't call a Balanced Careerist at home unless it's an emergency. They are living out the rest of their lives.