

VIRTUAL JOB EXERCISE

Here's a way of discovering what your ideal job looks like.

People find it difficult to describe their ideal job because it requires too big a commitment: a job title, a field of work, a potential decision. An easier way in is to use the virtual job technique.

Think of it as a 'jigsaw' job. You buy a jigsaw from a charity shop, but this is a jigsaw puzzle that comes in a plastic bag. You have no box, no picture, no title. You have no idea whether you have a picture of a cottage, a seascape or a kitten. So, in order to make the jigsaw you have to use other rules. You'll probably begin with the edges and the corners, but in the early stages of assembly you have to let go of the question 'what is this a picture of?'

Defining your 'jigsaw' job is like making a jigsaw without a box or the picture. You begin by making edges, corners and recognizable shapes. The analogy in career terms is that you forget about job titles and fields, and build the job up from the inside. Imagine you are in a really fulfilling job, but forget about what it says on your business card or on your door. Build the picture up from the edges, just thinking about each element in turn.

Look at the example below.

OPENING	<i>Imagine you're in a different role, and you've been in it for more than 6 months.. You look forward to work on a Sunday night. Work gives you a 'buzz' a great deal of the time. Forget about what your job title is, just focus on the feeling that comes from being in a job which is a good match for your skills and talents. Now answer some questions about it....</i>
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	<i>Does it matter to you what kind of building you are in? What you look at inside, and out of the windows? How much does it matter to you where you work, and how long it takes you to get there?</i>
PEOPLE I WORK WITH	<i>What kind of people are around you most days at work?</i>
TEAM MEMBERS	<i>What are the people like who work with you closely?</i>
WHAT I ADD TO THE MIX	<i>If other team members were here, what would they say about your contribution to the team?</i>
MY BOSS	<i>What is your boss like in this new role?</i>
SKILLS	<i>Imagine someone was following you round with a video camera recording your activity. What would they see you do – bearing in mind that you are enjoying the role? Think about the full range of skills you would use.</i>
LEARNING	<i>What would be interesting in terms of the learning opportunities offered by the role?</i>

CULTURE & VALUES OF ORGANISATION	<i>What are they?</i>
PERSONAL VALUES EXPRESSED THROUGH WORK	<i>How closely are the culture and values of the organisation matched to your own personal values?</i>
CONTACT WITH OTHER SECTORS	<i>Perhaps this role is exciting because it gives you access to other fields of work, even if they are only vague connections. What fields/ sectors would you find interesting?</i>
OVERALL	<i>Anything else about your virtual job that you would like to record?</i>
WORK ALLOWS ME TO	<i>Sometimes people say that work is good because of what it allows you to do outside work. If the income, the time, the energy left after work are right, what activities would a close friend see you doing that you are not currently?</i>