



## Ideal Work Environment Exercise

The average worker spends 40-60 hours per week in a work environment. To be fulfilled and productive, it is important to clarify the conditions that allow you to perform your best. In this exercise, you will evaluate current and former work experiences to help you clarify the ideal work environment. This list will help you assess potential companies and cultures that align with your preferences.

The work environment is characterized by the following categories of elements:

- The specific organization you work for
- The culture of that organization
- Your position/role in that organization.

A list of the elements found in each work environment category is provided below.

Elements of the Work Environment		
Organization	Culture	Position/Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophy and practices</li> <li>• Products and services</li> <li>• Profit versus non-profit</li> <li>• Size and location</li> <li>• Physical surroundings</li> <li>• Ranking and prestige in the industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management style</li> <li>• Personalities of co-workers</li> <li>• Team dynamics</li> <li>• Attrition/growth</li> <li>• Predictability vs. change</li> <li>• Level of diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical working hours</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities</li> <li>• Commute time and distance</li> <li>• Amount of domestic and/or international travel</li> <li>• Salary and benefits</li> </ul>

In this exercise you will use these elements to help you identify the work conditions that are important to you. Use this table to jog your memory of past and current work environments as you complete the three exercise steps on the following pages.

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## Step 1: Identify Negatives to Generate Ideal Conditions

In the left-hand column below, brainstorm negative aspects of your current and former work environments. Then identify the corresponding work environment element using the drop down fields in the middle column. Then, based on these results, create a list that represents your “ideal” work conditions in the right-hand column.

Negative Condition	Environmental Element	Ideal Condition
<i>Example: Work in a cube with no natural lighting</i>	<i>Physical Surroundings</i>	<i>Private office with windows</i>

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## Step 2: Identify Positives to Generate Ideal Conditions

Next, create a list of conditions from your current and former work experiences that were satisfying and ideal for you. After completing this list, put a checkmark next to those elements which are important to you now and in the near future.

Positive Condition	Environmental Element	Important to Me
<i>Example: Worked in a highly collaborative and non-hierarchical environment where everyone's ideas were valued.</i>	<i>Team dynamics</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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### Step 3: The Ideal Environment

A list of the conditions that you defined in steps 1 and 2 is provided below. Together these conditions form your ideal work environment. Rank the conditions in order of importance. Consider which aspects are necessary and others that are secondary and may be sacrificed.

Ideal Work Environment Conditions	Rank

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