

Ideal Work Environment

The average worker spends 40+ hours per week at work. Therefore, it is important to be satisfied with your work environment. The following exercises use elements from your past work experiences to help you clarify your ideal work environment. The resulting list can be used to assess your current work environment, or for use in a future job search.

Elements of Your Work Environment

The elements of your work environment can be influenced by 1) the organization you work for, 2) the culture of that organization, and 3) your position/role in that organization. Use the following categories to help you identify the work conditions that are important to you.

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

Exercise 1: Identify Negatives to Generate Ideal Conditions

In the left-hand column below, brainstorm negative aspects of your current and former work environments. Use the “Elements of your Work Environment” list to jog your memory. Then, based on these results, create a list that represents your “ideal” work conditions in the right-hand column. *

Example:

Negative Condition	Ideal Condition
<i>Work in a cube with no natural lighting</i>	<i>Private office with windows</i>

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Exercise 2: Identify Positives to Generate Ideal Conditions

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

Example: *Worked in a highly collaborative and non-hierarchical environment where everyone's ideas were valued.*

Exercise 3: The Ideal Environment

Review exercises 1 and 2 above and make a comprehensive list of conditions that would form your ideal environment. You can rank the conditions in order of importance or group them into categories. Make note of which elements are ideal, which are necessary, and what could be sacrificed.*

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