

Your Career, Your E-resume, Your Assignment

Career Planning and Your E-Resume

Most of you have heard the Chief say, “You Need to Plan Your Career” but many of us don’t know how to do that or what it really means. Hopefully, this article will clearly outline exactly how you should plan your career and how that planning will affect your life. The way you plan your career has a much greater impact on your whole life much more so than you probably realize. As an assignment officer I feel obligated to ensure everyone knows what that means and provide you with knowledge of how to manage your career. I hope that you all read this document carefully to plan your career before you write your e-resume!

Your career planning starts with you and your decisions. Career Planning should also consider your life goals. What are your goals in life? What do you want to do? Do you plan to stay in the Coast Guard or not? Do you want to start a family? What do you want to accomplish? All of these questions should be part of your career planning and each job you do in the Coast Guard should be moving you in the direction of accomplishing your goals. Each job you do in the Coast Guard should bring you a step closer to your long term goals.

Your e-resume should be a part of the process of accomplishing your Coast Guard career goals and your life goals. Your e-resume is the primary communication tool to engage with your assignment officer and what you write in your e-resume really matters. Hopefully, you have been thinking about what you would like to do and what you’re going to ask to do in your e-resume before you begin writing it. Hopefully, you have been thinking about your next assignment and your career from the start.

We strongly suggest you base your e-resume on your long term goals and use your e-resume to communicate with your assignment officer so we can help you have a successful career and more. We also suggest that you do not base your life decisions on your next assignment because even if you earn your dream assignment you will likely move after that whether you remain in the Coast Guard or not. The better you plan your career and long term goals the better off you will be in the end so here are a few recommendations.

What to Consider Before You Write Your E-resume

There are a few things you should do before you start writing your e-resume. The first thing you should do is to decide what you are trying to accomplish in the Coast Guard and what steps you need to take to get there. Again, your overall life goals should be part of this process. If you want to make the Coast Guard a career then you need to begin with the end in mind. You should know whether or not you need sea duty to advance. All OS’s are required to go to sea to advance to E7 and we hope you are planning on advancing. Are you hoping to start a family? If you need sea time you may want to

include that factor in your planning. This is a personal decision but if you plan ahead this almost always works better for you. Are you at sea now and hoping to come ashore? Are you married to another member in the Coast Guard? Are you hoping to win your dream assignment or learn SAR at a Sector or District command center? There are ways to accomplish all of these especially if you plan ahead, be realistic about your options, and keep an open mind.

As we mentioned earlier, your e-resume is the primary communication tool with your assignment officer. Your e-resume is a “Resume” and is not a “Dream Sheet.” You are competing for each assignment and the assignment officers use your e-resume to help determine where you will be assigned. That means we highly suggest using every part of the e-resume to help your own career and to help us. We have a saying that goes, “Help Us, Help You.” This article should help you accomplish that and hopefully show you how to manage a successful career and write your e-resume.

You may have thought about many of these things and you are trying to earn your dream assignment but you are a priority five. It may be time to volunteer to take an assignment that is overseas or a position that will earn you a higher assignment priority. As many of you know, OS assignments are based primarily on the priority system, sea duty requirements, and your performance. *If you want to earn a job in a highly desirable area you may have to ask for an assignment overseas in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, or possibly PATFORSWA.* These types of assignments pay dividends in many ways. First, your assignment priority is better after a successful tour following a higher priority position. It is also in your record that you willingly served and that you were world wide assignable. A higher priority assignment will normally give you far more experience than other less arduous assignments and almost certainly help you advance in your career.

We also suggest that you consider asking for jobs that will provide you a well-rounded career path especially if you’re looking to advance and be a leader in the OS rate. If you have not been assigned to a command center we recommend you consider asking for command center jobs. If you have not had much experience with communications it may be a good idea to ask for a job at one of the communication centers. Likewise, if you haven’t been afloat it’s probably a good idea to ask to compete for an afloat assignment. These are the assignments that will likely move you towards accomplishing your career and life goals and the more varied your career path the more likely you will have a successful Coast Guard career. We always recommend that you don’t base your life decisions on your next assignment because you’re almost certainly going to move again anyway even if you get out of the Coast Guard. We suggest that you base your e-resume on a successful and diversified career because in the end that will likely help you advance and result in a much better life for you. Keep an open mind and enjoy the adventure of each new job and challenge!

How to Write Your E-resume

Do not write your e-resume like a “Dream Sheet” because it’s a “Resume.” You need to carefully consider what you put in your e-resume! Once you finally sit down to write

your e-resume there are three primary sections that you should strongly consider using wisely. The obvious first section is your job choices. We suggest you list a lot of choices because we do not start at the bottom of your list. **The more jobs you list the better!** We start at the top of your e-resume and work down through each one of your choices to see if you earn that assignment. We start at the top of your job selections and slate you for a job as soon as we get to a job that you earn. If you write only eight job choices on your e-resume and we get to the end and haven't found a job for you then we will have to come back to your name later. We will likely have to assign you to a position after everyone else's assignments is made. That means, **"The more choices the better"** so you don't have to be in the position of going to the bottom of the list and getting the last choice of everyone. If you are a sea duty candidate we believe the best option is for you to list most of the cutters, if not all of them, so you have a better chance at earning an afloat assignment. Remember, you need sea time to advance to E7 and sea duty positions are very competitive! **The bottom-line is the more choices you list the better because simply put, "You are rank ordering the jobs and we are working from your list starting at the top of your e-resume."** You can even list jobs that you may not really desire. It's better for you to rank order your jobs than it is for the assignment officer to rank order your jobs.

The second most important section is the text block of your e-resume. We want you to tell us what you are trying to accomplish in your career and your life. **There is a saying in writing that goes, "Write So That Anyone Can Understand It." We suggest you "Don't do that!" Write so that "No One Can Mis-Understand Your E-resume."** If you write in your e-resume that you want any assignment on the west coast and we offer you a cutter in Alaska and your response is that you would rather go to any job on the east coast over Alaska then your writing is not clear enough. You should have written, "I would like a job anywhere on the west coast except in D17 and that you would prefer the east coast over D17." You should also be listing some east coast jobs on your e-resume just so we know where you would want to go if we can't keep you on the west coast. **Your comments should align with the jobs you listed on your e-resume.** If you want to be co-located with your spouse who is also an active duty member then write that in your comments. We suggest that you ask for many different larger units that allow us to co-locate you on both coasts. Be crystal clear in your e-resume what your career goals are, what your life goals are, and what you are trying accomplish. If your e-resume doesn't make sense to someone else it might not make sense to the assignment officer and we suggest you don't take that risk. Make your e-resume clear, realistic, and in alignment with your long term goals.

The other important section of the e-resume is your **Command Endorsement.** **If you are asking to go overseas then your command endorsement should state that you should screen to go overseas IAW Chapter 4H of the PERSMAN.** These comments should align with the text portion of your e-resume. You should be specific in this section especially if you are trying to go overseas. **Also, certain jobs such as Instructor Duty Positions require a command endorsement.** If you are missing that endorsement it can affect your assignment. If you need an endorsement please make sure you get the endorsement prior to the e-resume deadline. **This means you shouldn't forward your e-**

resume up your chain of command for an endorsement two days prior to the e-resume deadline. Submit your e-resume to allow your chain of command plenty of time to write the appropriate endorsement on your e-resume. A positive endorsement will never hurt you and no endorsement can hurt you especially if it's required.

Remember this is your career and your e-resume is your primary communication tool with your assignment officer. Take your time writing your e-resume and update your contact phone numbers so we don't have to struggle to communicate with you because if we can't find you we may have to move on without you. Have someone else proof read your e-resume for you. Ask your Chief for career counseling and seek input from your chain of command. Ask your Chief if they understand your e-resume. **The more research you do and the more work you put into your e-resume the better off you will be in the future.**

Finally, Your Next Assignment

After you have submitted your e-resume it's time to wait. If you are thinking you may advance to a higher pay grade you do not need to call us. We will contact you if we need to. We know waiting is difficult and although you may not know where you are going right away you need to be positive about it. We will let you know what job you earned as soon as we can.

I can assure you the phrase, "Nothing in the World is Free" is a true statement. You may not get your dream billet and you have to go to a cutter or go overseas. This may be your best assignment to help you advance in your career. These types of jobs **are what will likely help you advance.** I assure you the retirement pay at E9 or CWO4 is much better than the retirement pay at E6 or E7. What you do each day of your career and which jobs you choose will make a difference when it's time to leave the Coast Guard. Take a look at the retirement tables pasted here:

<http://militarypay.defense.gov/retirement/calc/index.html> If you stay in the Coast Guard for a career you should definitely try to advance. It's easier to do that if you stay flexible, mobile, and accept jobs that will help you advance. Your advancements will come if you look at each assignment as an adventure that will get you to a better place.

Remember why you joined the Coast Guard in the first place. Most people joined the Coast Guard for career opportunities, adventure, and education. Don't lose sight of why you came in the Coast Guard and **plan your career around your long term goals.**

I assure you that all of the assignment officers want you to have a good career so "Help Us, Help You, and use your e-resume wisely to communicate with us." Have a great Coast Guard day and I wish all of you the best of luck in your career and in your life.

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