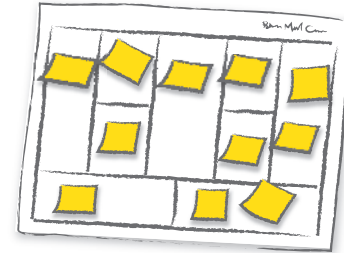




Diagram

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CHAPTER 1



The Key to Workplace Satisfaction and the Cure for Workplace Suffering

A Bigger View of Work

Do you dream about a different way of working? Even a new career? We all do. But most of us lack a proven, structured way to make fundamental changes in how we work.

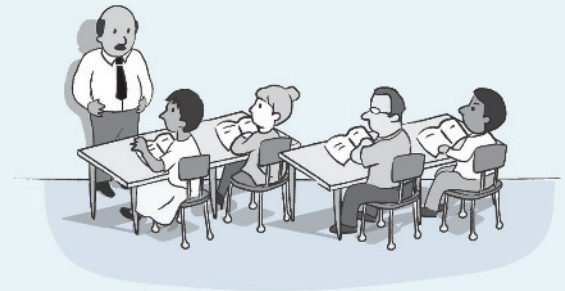
Instead, we remain unsatisfied, unfulfilled—maybe even suffering at work—until the pain of staying in place grows stronger than the fear of changing our situation.

This illustrates an uncomfortable truth: most of us take on a more-or-less haphazard series of jobs that, over time and with luck, converge around a general theme. Our careers develop by default rather than by design.

We call this hands-off approach to professional progress “spending your career getting one-job-in-a-row.” But rather than getting one-job-in-a-row, most of us would prefer to progress intentionally toward more satisfying work in line with our interests and strengths.

This book shows you exactly how to do that.

You will start by gaining a bigger view of work, using simple, one-page diagrams that visually depict 1) your workplace or customers, and 2) how your personal work benefits them. Seeing diagrams that depict the critical interrelationships between your work and the environment in which you perform it—rather than merely using words to describe work as a collection of tasks—is the heart of our method. This bigger view will widen your influence, wherever or however you work.



Be confident that mastering our method will serve you for a lifetime, because it is based on timeless human principles that remain unchanged regardless of the latest economic ups and downs, technology crazes, socio-political upheavals, or labor market shifts. It will give you a lasting key to workplace satisfaction—and a lifelong cure for workplace suffering.

The following chapters explain everything step-by-step using examples and cases. The book concludes with clear three-step instructions that provide a lifelong navigation tool for negotiating the twists and turns of your professional life. Work through it and you—like hundreds of thousands of worldwide readers of the first edition of *Business Model You*—will discover the tremendous power of modeling. You are now part of a global phenomenon: *Business Model You* has been published in 20 different languages!

Why Business Models?

No doubt you’ve heard the term “business model” before. What is it, exactly?

At the most basic level, a business model is **the logic by which an organization sustains itself financially.**

As the term suggests, it ordinarily describes businesses. Our approach, though, asks you to consider yourself a one-person enterprise, whether you work in business or a non-commercial field such as government, healthcare, or education. Then, it helps you define and modify your “work model”—including the logic by which you earn your living and how you engage your interests and strengths to grow personally and professionally while delivering benefits to colleagues or clients.

As it turns out, a business model is a potent framework by which to regularly describe, analyze, and change how you work. Think of our method as a perpetually renewable resource for astutely positioning yourself in the world of work throughout your life.

Changing Times, Changing Models

Most of us work by taking jobs with organizations. And the market for those jobs is affected by factors beyond our personal control: new technology, economic booms and busts, sweeping social or demographic trends, intensifying global competition, environmental issues, and so forth.

You saw how the climate change crisis, combined with dramatic improvements in battery and other technologies, accelerated the shift to electric vehicles and power sources, creating entirely new industry sectors and jobs while disrupting corporations and careers too tightly tied to traditional gasoline engines or fossil fuel production.

You witnessed how war and the global COVID pandemic disrupted social and civic life and upended industries, workplaces, and careers. And you’ve seen for yourself how the highly visible murders of Black Americans forced a social awakening and compelled organizations to take diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) seriously in their hiring and promotion practices.

These external factors are beyond the control of both individuals and enterprises—and they profoundly affect how enterprises operate.

Because they can't change the environments in which they operate, enterprises must change their *business models* (and sometimes create new ones) to remain competitive—or even to survive.

As it turns out, these new models themselves disrupt and cause change. In turn, that creates new opportunities for some workers and unemployment for others. New business models continue to alter workplaces and workstyles everywhere, in commercial and non-profit sectors alike.

People Must Change, Too

We're hardly claiming that people are the same as organizations. But here's an important parallel: You, like organizations, are affected by environmental and economic factors beyond your control.

Since you can't control these factors, how can you maintain success and satisfaction? You must identify how you operate, then adapt your approach to fit changing environments.

Just as important as environmental changes are the lifestage changes we all experience as we grow older. People in their early 20s just starting their careers usually have very different life concerns compared to people in their 30s who may be getting married and having children. Similarly, those in their 30s differ from older people who are babysitting grandchildren, getting ready to retire, dealing with death or illness, or embarking on so-called "encore" careers.

Rest assured that the skills you'll learn from *Business Model You* will give you the power to deal artfully with both environmental and lifestage changes.

Personal Work Models for Everyone, Including Healthcare, Education, and Government Workers

One thing we've learned since the first edition of *Business Model You* was released is that the method has proven exactly as useful to non-businesspeople as to businesspeople. That's why we developed service models for use by professionals working in largely non-commercial fields such as government, healthcare, education, and nonprofit or social ventures. While many business and self-help books over-focus on employees of earnings-driven enterprises, our intention is to serve all professionals, whether they are striving for social impact, personal expression, or earnings.

An Ecology of Work

As you get ready to make changes in where, how, or why you work, it can be helpful to step back and take a “macro” view to see work as an ecosystem.

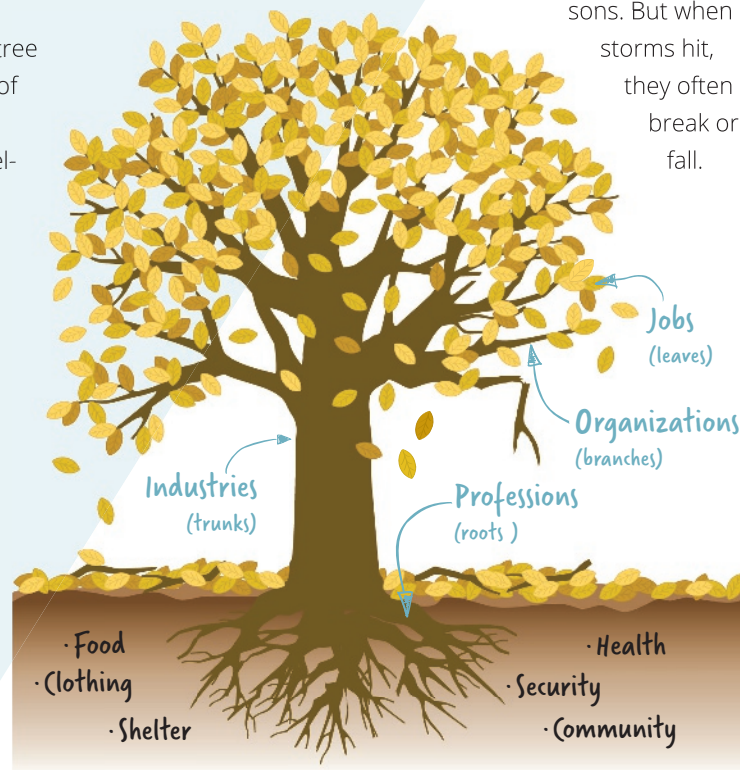
Think of work as a tree: a tree that grows in the rich soil of unchanging human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health, community, and security. Work, like a tree, has roots, trunk, branches, and leaves.¹

Leaves are the least durable elements of the tree. When wind blows, leaves scatter and fall. When seasons change, leaves shrivel and die.

Leaves are like **jobs**: the least durable form of

work. Each day thousands of old jobs disappear, and thousands of new ones appear.

Branches are more durable than leaves. They bend in the wind and endure changing seasons. But when storms hit, they often break or fall.



Branches are like **organizations**: more durable than leaves, yet only a tiny fraction live longer than a person (statistics show the average lifespan of a company on Standard & Poor’s 500 index is just over 21 years).

Trunks are more durable than branches. They defy winds and seasons—even storms. But when fire rages or lightning strikes, they can die.

Tree trunks are like **industries**: far more durable than branches yet given enough time they too may perish. Look what’s happened to travel agencies, taxicabs, department stores, and newspapers.

Roots are the most enduring element of a tree. When leaves, branches, and trunks die, roots hold the promise of new life.

Roots are like **professions**: they are the most enduring form of work. Capable people can find other industries in which to practice their professions.

But what exactly does **profession** mean?

In twelfth-century French, the word meant “vows taken upon entering a religious order,” and in medieval Latin, “public declaration.” Later it came to mean “any solemn declaration” and “occupation one professes to be skilled in.”

Today, a profession means a specialized occupation 1) requiring a high level of skill, knowledge, and/or training, and 2) for which there are established paths along which practitioners can progress toward ever greater competency or complexity.

For example, forklift driving is not a profession because there is no path for progressing beyond competently operating a forklift. But welding is a profession because there are multiple paths for progressing to complex materials, applications, and construction environments.

Many people, of course, work outside of professions. They may derive more meaning and satisfaction from family, hobbies, religion, or other nonwork activities than they do from their jobs.² But whether people work within a profession or not, the ultimate source of work—the work ecosystem—is the same.

All work grows in the rich soil of unchanging human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health, community, and security. Work exists and evolves to satisfy one or more of these core needs.

Therefore, the more directly your work involves providing food, shelter, healthcare, or other core needs, the more stable it will be.

The farther removed your work is from addressing basic needs—such as making T-shirts for people who already have everything, or processing documents three tiers removed from finance customers—the less

stable your work will be. Here’s a good question to ask ourselves: How directly does our work serve core human needs?

People who focus on getting one **job** after another pursue the least stable form of work. People who stay in one **organization** enjoy greater stability, and those who specialize in an industry enjoy even more. But **professions**, especially those that focus on core human needs, provide the most enduring, stable form of work.

Focus on a profession if you can.



Career Planning Is Dead: Long Live Personal Work Modeling

Traditional career planning emphasized a linear “plan and execute” process starting with a personality and/or vocational assessment and proceeding smoothly to vocation selection, education, long-term employment, then retirement. But this approach has been outmoded for decades—and it is unclear whether it ever worked well for most people.

We prefer a design thinking approach to work, which emphasizes **test and pivot** over **plan and execute**. The traditional plan and execute approach to problem solving looks something like this:

1. Define the problem as quickly as you can
2. Spend lots of time developing a plan for solving the problem
3. Execute the plan
4. Clean up the mess when the plan collides with reality

In contrast, **test and pivot** looks something like this:

1. Spend lots of time defining the problem
2. Imagine many possible solutions, then select the one that arises most naturally
3. Prototype and test that solution
4. Learn from what happens when the prototype collides with reality, then either move forward or pivot (go back to Step 1, 2, or 3)

The key elements of design thinking are defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing. This sequence parallels our four-phase **DIAGRAM > REFLECT > REVISE > TEST** work reinvention process.

Work reinvention, like design thinking, is iterative, meaning you must often repeat one step in the process several times, as when you **DIAGRAM** a workplace several times until it makes complete sense.

Work reinvention also resembles design thinking in that it is recursive, meaning you may have to return to an earlier phase in the sequence. For example, when **TEST** shows that a new work model clashes with market reality, you must return to the **REVISE** phase (or even the **REFLECT** phase).

Whew, that is a lot to remember! That’s why **DIAGRAMS** are so useful: they show us information and relationships as pictures so we can avoid having to keep too many words in mind.

Now it’s time to get started diagramming your work. Use the following pages like a sketchbook: jot down notes, underline key phrases, or doodle in the margins (we pre-spilled coffee here so you won’t hesitate to scribble).

Let’s go!

