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Explore Career Options, or Finish or Further Education*



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One in Three U.S. Adults Have Career Goals for 2013

Nine in Ten Agree That It is Never Too Late to Start a New Career, Explore Career Options, or Finish or Further Education

New York, NY – According to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Strayer University, over nine in ten (93%) U.S. adults have some type of goal that they would like to achieve in 2013. Over half of adults (54%) have health-related goals, such as being more active, eating more healthily, or getting more sleep, while nearly four in ten (37%) have a socially-oriented goal, such as spending more time with family or friends, getting involved more in their community, meeting new people, broadening their circle of friends, or joining a club or organization. Nearly as many (34%) have a leisure-related goal, such as travelling more or taking up a hobby.

For a significant one-third (33%) of respondents, these goals are career-related, such as looking for a better job, obtaining job-related training, or actively taking steps towards a promotion. One-third (33%) also have learning-related goals, such as learning a new skill or taking courses towards a degree. Fewer than one in ten are either not sure (4%), do not have any of these goals (2%), or do not know (1%).

Among those who have career- and/or learning-related goals, four in ten (41%) specify learning a new skill as one of the three types of goals they hope to achieve, while nearly one-third (31%) say earning a college degree or an advanced degree, and about one in seven (14%) say taking a course toward a degree. Over one-third (36%) have a specific goal of advancing in their current position, while slightly fewer (32%) are aiming to obtain a pay increase; the same proportion (32%) specify finding a job, or finding a better job as their goal. Two in ten adults (21%) have a goal of starting a business, while just under one in ten (8%) are seeking to switch careers and/or industries. About one in five adults (6%) do not choose any of these options, and just 2% do not know.

- Over half (51%) of those with some college education have a goal of earning a college degree or an advanced degree, compared to about one-quarter (26%) of those with a high school degree or less, and slightly fewer (23%) of those with at least a college degree.
- Younger adults are more likely to specify that their learning- or career-related goals are of finding a job or a better job (41% vs. 25% of those aged 35-54 and 21% of those 55 and over), and of earning a college degree or an advanced degree (47% vs. 20% of those aged 35-54, and 9% of those 55 and over).
- Those most likely to have career-related goals include parents (46% vs. 26% of those without children), adults under the age of 35 (55% vs. 33% of those aged 35-54, and 11% of those aged 55 and over), and adults with any form of post-secondary education (36% of those with some college and 44% of those with at least a college degree vs. 24% of those with high school or less).
- Adults under the age of 35, are also more likely to have learning goals (50% vs. 31% of those 35-54 and 18% of those 55 and over), as are parents (42% vs. 28% of those without children).

It's Never Too Late...

Nine in ten adults (90%) believe that it is never too late to start a new career or to explore new career options, with two-thirds (67%) strongly agreeing with this statement. An even greater proportion (93%) agree that it is never too late to finish or further their education, with over three-quarters (76%) strongly agreeing with that statement.

- Those with at least a college degree are more likely to *strongly agree* that it is never too late to finish or further their education (83% vs. 73% of those with some college or less).

Over eight in ten adults (84%) also believe that having a college degree makes a difference in people's levels of personal and professional fulfillment, with only about one in eight (13%) disagreeing with this statement.

- College graduates are also more likely to *strongly agree* that having a degree makes a difference in terms of personal and professional fulfillment (68% vs. 51% of those with some college or less).

Achieving Career-Related Goals ...

Those specifically with career-related goals view a change in their personal working habits as potentially helpful to their achievement of these goals. Nearly half (48%) choose working more efficiently as one of the top three aspects that would most help them to achieve their career-related goals in 2013, while about one in five (19%) choose working more or longer hours. Professional relationships are also viewed as potentially beneficial, with nearly four in ten (37%) saying that a stronger professional network would be most helpful, while one in five (22%) say that it would be a strong relationship with a mentor. Learning and training activities were also viewed as helpful, with earning a college degree or an advanced degree being selected by two in five (39%) respondents, and additional job-related training being chosen by nearly as many (36%). Fewer than one in ten respondents either do not choose any of these options (7%), are not sure (2%), or do not know (1%).

- Over half (56%) of those with some college education say that earning a college degree or an advanced degree would best help them achieve their career-related goals, compared to just four in ten (41%) of those without any college education, and only one-quarter (25%) of those with at least a college degree.
- Fewer than one in ten (8%) adults with a college degree say that working more or longer hours would best help them achieve their career-related goals, compared to one-quarter (25%) of those with less education.
- Half of older adults (50%) say a strong relationship with a mentor would be most helpful, compared to only one-quarter (25%) of those aged 35-54, and 15% of those aged 18-34.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Public Affairs poll conducted November 1- 4, 2012. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 1,000 randomly-selected adults aged 18 and over residing in the U.S. was interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of adults in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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