Unit 9

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## Introduction

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and currently I am pursuing a bachelor’s degree in legal studies. After the completion of my high school, I was working in the capacity of a private investigator and during that time, I was introduced to the legal field. A year and a half ago, I met with an opportunity to attend college and I started my bachelor’s degree in legal studies. That degree required me to attend lectures only on weekends and the timings were also flexible. Most of the classes were scheduled in the evenings. This gave me enough time to enter the legal profession as a paralegal. This profession chiefly appealed to me as I have always been drawn to the development of a case and I take great interest in highlighting and working on the legal aspects of a case. My current job entails me to involve in a case from its beginning to its end. I am present in the initial interviews and sessions with the client and I am also present during the processes of settlement. I also perform legal tasks under the direct supervision of an experienced attorney. My assistance is central to the increase of an attorney’s productivity. During my brief tenure of this job, I have attended sessions in many types of corporations, law firms, and various government agencies.

I perceive myself as a highly dedicated and a detail-oriented paralegal. I am dedicated, fairly introverted, organized, and above all, I am creative in such a manner which is not expected of a paralegal. My dressing sense is also adequate and I always dress in suits and business casuals. A larger part of my day is spent researching and interpreting the history and proceedings of my clients’ cases in the light of different theories and legal approaches.

## Lifelong professionalism and maintenance of image

As a paralegal, I am normally regarded as the right hand of a lawyer or attorney in the setting of a court. Lifelong professionalism can be attained if I stick to my duties and responsibilities as are expected of a paralegal. Demonstrating skills for the management of the clients’ database, attention to detail, ability to organize and prioritize, strong communication and interpersonal skills will help me to sustain the requirements needed for professionalism. My image as a dedicated paralegal can be maintained if I carry out my typical duties and responsibilities. These duties primarily entail the research and synthesis of facts and statistics of the clients’ cases to attain coherence for the client’s perspective. Furthermore, my job requires me to organize files, draft and format documents, prepare for various trials and hearings, maintaining information and manuscripts, and keeping in touch with the clients and their concerned attorneys. Thorough understanding of my role and expectations, expansion of learning, developing positive relationships within my network are some things essential for the maintenance of my professional image and I will adhere to them.

## Short term Goals

### Initial goal

To become a certified paralegal by 2020.

#### Specific (What is it to be accomplished?)

Becoming a certified paralegal will enable me to prepare affidavits for other attorneys which is currently out of my authority.

#### Measurable (How will the progress be measured?)

The progress of this goal will be measured by the certification that I will receive. This certification program can be from the American Legal Association and I need to sit for the exam and pass in order to attain the certification.

#### Achievable (Skills needed to achieve this goal)

The skills needed to achieve this goal are hard work and extensive studies and research.

#### Relevant (Is this goal aligned with the overall objectives?)

This goal is directly aligned with the overall objectives of my career as it is the first step of my career ladder and it will pave the way for me to become an advanced paralegal.

#### Time-Bound (Timeline to achieve this goal)

The time required for this goal to be achieved is approximately 1 and a half year. Till hat time, I will be able to complete my degree and I will also take the bar exam.

### Initial goal

To demonstrate quality leadership and become a mentor to other paralegals.

#### Specific (What is it to be accomplished?)

As a mentor and an inherent leader, I will provide specific pieces of advice to my fellow paralegals and I will guide them correctly regarding different aspects of the case.

#### Measurable (How will the progress be measured?)

This goal can be measured by the progress and work completion of my fellow paralegals. Younger paralegals learning the system and developing as dedicated professionals with the passage of time will help me understand the efficacy of my mentorship (Flood, 2019).

#### Achievable (Skills needed to achieve this goal)

The skills needed to achieve this goal are extensive networking and I need to work on this as inherently I am an introvert. Honesty with diplomacy, inquisitiveness, compassion and genuineness are some of the skills that I need to achieve to become an effective mentor.

#### Relevant (Is this goal aligned with the overall objectives?)

This goal is also relevant for my overall career objectives as it will help me to demonstrate good leadership skills in the future and will aid me in outshining others in my legal network.

#### Time-Bound (Timeline to achieve this goal)

This goal is not bound my time as working on personal skills is a continuous process of one’s life and enhancing positive skills can be instrumental for the success of a person in every walk of his life.

### Initial goal

Utilization of my research and writing skills to publish articles in renowned legal journals.

#### Specific (What is it to be accomplished?)

In order to establish myself in the arenas of law and order, and to make myself a successful paralegal, I have to develop my skills regarding research and work extensively to publish research papers in journals which have international rankings.

#### Measurable (How will the progress be measured?)

This goal will be measured by the number of papers that are published in the legal journals and it can also be measured by the number of times I have achieved co-authorship with another paralegal or attorney.

#### Achievable (Skills needed to achieve this goal)

Good research skills are needed to achieve this goal.

#### Relevant (Is this goal aligned with the overall objectives?)

This goal is instrumental for my overall career objectives as publications and research papers increase the credibility of a paralegal and help him to advance his career.

#### Time-Bound (Timeline to achieve this goal)

This is also a life-long process and there is no limitation of time in increasing the number of publications. However, I need to publish at least two to three research papers in the next year to achieve this goal.

## Long term Goals

### Initial goal

Obtain the PACE Registered Paralegal Certification by 2025.

#### Specific (What is it to be accomplished?)

This goal pertains to the paralegal certification by taking an advanced competency exam and this is for those individuals who have a comprehensive education in the fields of law and paralegal studies and also hold years of practical and field experience.

#### Measurable (How will the progress be measured?)

This goal will be measured by the passing of this advanced competency exam and through the attainment of a good grade.

#### Achievable (Skills needed to achieve this goal)

Resilience, hard work, and a strong work ethic are required to achieve this goal.

#### Relevant (Is this goal aligned with the overall objectives?)

This goal has a central position in the holistic image of my career progress. In the pursuit of passing this exam, I will be able to administrate the legal matters of clients, and develop factual and legal research and writing skills.

#### Time-Bound (Timeline to achieve this goal)

This goal will be achieved at the end of 2025. I have ample amount of time to prepare for achieving this goal.

### Initial goal

To open my own law firm by 2026.

#### Specific (What is it to be accomplished?)

As law practice is both a profession and a business, therefore I want to open my own law firm right after I achieve my advanced competency exam (Jensen, 2019).

#### Measurable (How will the progress be measured?)

Attaining the ownership of my own firm will be an obvious measure of this goal.

#### Achievable (Skills needed to achieve this goal)

Planning ahead, ignoring people who pose barriers in the way of my goal, building of a referral network are some skills that I need to develop in the pursuit of opening my own law firm.

#### Relevant (Is this goal aligned with the overall objectives?)

This goal is my childhood aspiration and if it is achieved, it will be the epitome of my career progression.

#### Time-Bound (Timeline to achieve this goal)

I have six years to achieve this goal, but in the mean time I will be joining different organizations and I will develop a website by the end of 2020 so that I can start the process efficaciously.

## Education plan

Firstly, I will be taking professional development courses that will help me to expand my skill set in a professional manner. For this purpose, I will specifically look for online course because they are flexible in their timings and convenient in their modes of provision.

I will also frequently attend professional events and court hearings to learn about growth and development in paralegalism. These events and court proceedings will be treated by me as constructive opportunities of brainstorming and networking and I will be able to share these experiences with my colleagues which will provide me with fresh insights and various perspectives regarding my profession.

Lastly, I will work and read beyond the competency which is required of me during the bachelor’s degree. Internet will be used by me as a primary source and I will routinely check new developments in my field. Consequently, I will remain updated about the newly developing requirements of my career and job prospects.

## Budgeting plan

My savings from this job and the family inheritance will help me to cover my expenses to meet the educational plans.

Cost of tuition on my bachelor’s degree, cost of professional courses, cost of retraining programs, are the primary expenses for which I will make a detailed budget plan. I will ensure that I don’t become indebted as I have to save to pursue the development of a website of my law firm and to build a referral network. All through my educational period, I will underestimate my income from my current job and I will overestimate the incurring expenditures of my online professional courses. I will also build an emergency fund to face any adversities as opening one’s own law firm is entrepreneurial in spirit. Setting up realistic financial goals which are for the short term and long term objectives is mandatory for me to achieve my educational needs.

# References

Flood, J. (2019). Legal professionals of the future: Their ethos, role and skills. *Role and Skills*.

Jensen, S. H. (2019). *The changing nature of law firms: The business of providing legal services in the face of legal tech.* SAGE Publications: SAGE Business Cases Originals.