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## Want To Grow Your Career? 6 Surprising Ways To Write Your Future



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Careers

*I write about the changing nature of work, workers and the workplace.*



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Your handwriting is a surprising tool to reflect, renew and grow your career. GETTY

January can be a long dark month. Winter is dragging on and so is the pandemic. But you want to recharge and re-energize your career in the new year. You may be in need of something just a little unexpected.

This is it.

With devices, keypads and voice recognition, handwriting is becoming a thing of the past and a lost art. But the one thing we still write by hand is our signatures. Just in time for National Handwriting Day on January 23 (who knew there was a day for acknowledging handwriting?), you will want to know your signature can betray key elements of your personality.

The timing is good. With the beginning of a new year, now is the time to consider who you are, how you want to develop and where you go from here—writing your future.

## **Why It Matters**

First, know when you write by hand, instead of typing on a keyboard, you enhance learning, memory and cognitive engagement. [Research](#) by the University of Stavanger has proven the power of handwriting based on haptics—perception through touch and motion. Putting pen to paper engages three different parts of our brain—and we cement learning and remember more as a result of writing something down.

In addition to contributing to cognitive development, handwriting can also provide a lens for reflection and an avenue toward career growth. It's a surprising way to reflect and regroup. Marc Seifer, handwriting expert engaged by BIC, has some insights on your handwriting. I've added relevant and important implications for your career growth.

Here's what you need to consider as you assess, appraise and prepare to animate your career heading into 2021:

## **Consider How You Come Across**

First impressions matter immensely and while your choice of pen matters (are you using a gel pen or a color felt-tip pen to make a statement or show your artistic side?), the way you introduce and express yourself, make eye contact and focus on the person you're meeting is more important. Be conscious about how you come across and remind yourself how critical your impression is to establishing rapport and credibility quickly.

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## **Consider How You Respond**

Are you rebellious or a conformist? If your handwriting slants significantly to the right, you may be more passionate and more forward-looking. If your writing is more upright, you may be good at keeping your cool. And if you're right-handed and your writing slants to the left, you may be more rebellious. If your writing is close together—rather than expansive—you may be more likely to hold yourself back from new experiences or adventure.

Regardless of your handwriting, consider how you respond to situations. EQ is the ability to tune into your emotions, manage them and respond intentionally. These skills are important for your success so hone them carefully.

## **Consider Your Communication**

The ability to articulate your thoughts, share your ideas and persuade others are some of the most important capabilities to your career advancement. If your handwriting is legible, it may suggest your willingness and desire to clearly communicate. If your writing is more difficult to read, you may be more private or reticent. When people are more aggressive, their writing may have more angles, and if their writing is curvy, it may demonstrate a greater willingness to compromise.

Focus on your communication style and embrace your own best approach. Emulate the styles of those you admire, but (of course) don't try to mimic someone else. Instead, find the style that works best for you.

## Consider Details

Are you all about the details or do you prefer to give your attention to the big picture? It will come as no surprise that a person who focuses less on details is also less likely to dot their i's.

It's natural to have more—or less—proclivity for details, but you'll want to be intentional about your role and responsibilities to find the best match. If you're a detail-person in a job that demands blue-sky thinking, you're unlikely to excel. And the opposite is true. If you struggle with the specifics, you'll want to steer clear of a set of responsibilities which demands this talent.

## Consider How You Make Your Mark

Everyone wants to feel like they matter, and speaking of dotting your i's, people who circle the dots in their i's are more likely to want to be seen as creative and unique. In addition, if the capital letter of your first name is significantly taller than that of your family name, you may be a person who wants to make your own mark in the world. On the other hand, if the capital letter of your family member outsizes your first name, you may take significant pride in your family.

The importance here is to remind yourself of your purpose and how you make a unique contribution to your work, family and community. Each of us has a role to play and when you validate your own importance, you'll encourage your confidence and energy—which are very good for your career.

## Consider Your Pace

Finally, decision making counts. If you're quick to make decisions, it's likely you sign your name very quickly. And the opposite is true as well. More deliberate decision making tends to correlate with those who take more time to sign.

Developing your career demands sound decision making—on all things, both large and small. Be intentional about how you consider options, assess and ultimately, choose so you can pick the path that's best for you.

## In Sum

My friend Leslie is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and isn't allowed to spend official class time teaching handwriting. The rest of the curriculum has edged out this special skill. But Leslie teaches it anyway—in enrichment time with her students. She's brilliant to do so. Whether you're writing in cursive or block letters, putting pen to paper can enhance your learning. In addition, taking time to consider where you are and where you want to go bode well for your career development and for finding your best path forward in 2021.

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