



10 Tips for Managing Your Career

By Alvah Parker

Here are some tips for those just beginning a new career and career changers. If you have been in a job for a while, these tips may be helpful in revitalizing your career or in focusing your attention on the need to make a change.

1. Take responsibility for building your own career - In today's work environment managing your career is your responsibility. Even if you are lucky enough to have a mentor you are the one that needs to take charge of building your career. Mentors make suggestions but you decide if the suggestions fit or if they will work for you and then act on them. You must have a vision of where you are headed and then find your own path!
2. Define career satisfaction for yourself - Notice what gives you the most satisfaction and where your passion is. Know your life purpose and use it to guide your career. Once you know what you love and what is most satisfying to you, find ways to do this kind of meaningful work either in your current job or another.
3. Have a detailed career plan which you update regularly - Make a career plan and follow it. Watch for job opportunities that meet your career goals and apply for them. If you miss a goal in your career plan, update the plan and create an action plan to attain the missed goal. Use your weekly career time (see #8) to call people (see #6) who can help you to reach your goal.
4. Build your own brand - Find a facet of your work that interests you and that is useful to others. Develop an expertise so that you are the "go to" person for this expertise. This gives you a competitive edge and you become known for your knowledge (the expert).
5. Track your accomplishments - You cannot rely on your manager or your peers to remember and credit you with your accomplishments. Keep a list that gives your accomplishments in the format that states the problem, the solution and the result. You can use this document as a reminder for yourself during your annual review and also as a basis for updating your resume.
6. Build relationships - It is all about your network. Building and maintaining relationships with people in your field and people who are in a position to help you move forward in your career is imperative. Start with your college professors! Find other mentors, advisors and coaches along the way to help you expand your network. Stay connected to colleagues from past jobs who may be able to help you in the future.
7. Communicate frequently - To become known as an expert in your field you will need to write and speak frequently. Work with the leading professional organization in your field to speak at meetings and

write for their publications. Find other places to speak and write on your expertise. This will help you to build your brand, become an expert in your field, and meet other people who can help you to move forward.

8. Set a regular time each week to work on your career and brand building - It is easy to get caught up in the activities of the job and to convince yourself that there is no time for working on your career. Doing that may be good for the company you work for but it is not good for your career. Setting time aside weekly to add accomplishments to your list, to identify people to network with and to find meetings to go to is an investment in yourself and your career.

9. Know your value to your organization - Why do others want you on their team? Be very clear on the value you bring to the organization and be able to say it simply and clearly. Take credit for this value and let others know about it. It is part of gaining credit for being an expert and branding yourself.

10. Be proactive - Don't wait for others to do this. Get started today! In this case the early bird gets the prime assignments, the promotions and the new job.

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