

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

BY: Maria R. Goonan
Executive Career Coach and Instructor
UCSD Extension

We are all responsible for our own career growth and development. If you are feeling “comfortable” in your current position, you are most likely not growing or developing in order to get to the “next level” in your position and career. Contemporary careers are evolving and ever-changing and it is imperative to keep up with the fast pace. You are a business partner – you have integrity and pride in your work and are responsible for your own professional and personal growth and development.

Change is inevitable. Understand how to respond to change with dignity. See changes as opportunities for growth. Take stock of your skills on a regular basis. See yourself as a “portfolio of skills.” Promote your skills and look for opportunities to apply them. Look for new challenges, projects and responsibilities and effectively communicate your interest in pursuing them. Make yourself visible within your organization. Do internal networking. Showcase the quality and style of your commitment. Add value and benefit to your position and your organization.

All the above requires that you have passion, motivation, discipline and commitment. **NEVER STOP LEARNING! NEVER STOP GROWING! AND DO IT ALL WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE!**

The rising interest in career development has been stimulated by heightened employee desires such as:

1. increased personal responsibility for your career
2. increased desire of participation in decision-making
3. more meaningful work leading to a contribution to society
4. increased job challenge and satisfaction
5. more on-the-job learning experiences
6. good relationships with upper management and colleagues
7. more opportunity to enhance skills in position

Having passion for your work provides desire to set goals and have direction. You can choose to take your position to the “next level.” It is very important to set attainable goal(s):

1. identify goal(s)
2. list benefits for achieving goal(s)
3. identify any obstacles you must overcome to reach goal(s)
4. what skills and knowledge are needed to reach goal(s)
5. develop plan to reach goal(s)
6. decide on realistic time frame to achieve goal(s)

OBSTACLES ARE THOSE FRIGHTFUL THINGS YOU SEE WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR EYES OFF YOUR GOAL(S) -- Henry Ford

Challenge, commitment and control are the most important factors in your success in developing your skills. You must have a challenge that will stretch your present capabilities. You must be committed with your heart and your mind, and you must take control by being proactive rather than reactive. Have a thorough understanding of how your abilities, interests and values match your career requirements and always strive to improve to the “next level.” Always work at formulating an action plan to implement your career “blueprint.” The career blueprints and your skills inventory should identify the actions, along with your goal(s) to be achieved, for growth and development. To manage your career effectively, you should continuously manage your job performance and satisfaction, and develop your skills in an ever-changing environment around you. Personality and attitude are extremely important factors in determining your happiness and success in your position. Your personality defines your tolerance level for characteristics of a particular work environment. It is imperative to be flexible and open to change and opportunity. Please be advised that any issues or concerns you may experience may be resolved through regaining a sense of control and positive attitude. It is possible to regain your passion, enthusiasm and commitment in your position and continue to grow and develop on a regular basis.

The following are bonuses incurred when you have passion for your work:

1. when you have passion for your work, you do it well
2. you are more motivated and committed
3. you have boundless energy
4. success comes naturally
5. you are confident in your path
6. you tend to enjoy life more professionally and personally

As people become more open to effective, positive communication, trust increases. As trust and relationships continue to improve, so does understanding. Better communication, information follows. People listen more, decisions improve and productivity heightens. The more we know ourselves, the more effectively we can communicate and work with others. Our weaknesses are often extensions of our strengths. You are who and where you are by what goes on in your mind - you change who and where you are by changing what goes on in your mind. You have choices - making the decision is essential! Do you want to be happy? Make that decision....

Initiative is a key ingredient in making improvements at work and dealing with change. Initiative uses intelligence, critical thinking, expertise and other motivating factors to improve performance and productivity. It enables you to take on challenging tasks and projects with confidence and to work towards personal and organizational goals.

Managing Up! You have the ability to voice your innovative ideas, opinions and decisions “up” the organization and help your supervisors, managers and bosses to be

more successful. A sincere, specific and timely message that says you appreciate your boss - such as their openness or integrity, goes a long way towards reinforcing the very behavior you value - making for better relationships and a better working atmosphere. Master that skill of managing up and you will have much greater control over your own destiny.

Six ways of managing up:

1. offer solutions, not complaints
2. apologize for a mistake, do not shift blame
3. stay central in the information flow
4. praise your boss
5. build relationships with other supervisors and managers within the organization
6. ask for feedback -do not take anything for granted

Develop a mentor relationship or relationships with people you admire in the organization. Mentors and mentees make a huge impact on each other. It is the responsibility of the mentee to schedule periodic meetings with their mentor(s) and view this relationship as a priority.

Heart and spirit at work is best described as an attitude we want to have towards our jobs and the people we interact with daily:

1. show kindness and tolerance to others
2. do the best you can under all circumstances - find solutions
3. do not blame others
4. focus on the positive all the time
5. listen and support others when they encounter difficulties or need assistance
6. help others grow and realize their potential as well (mentor/mentee)
7. lead by example - walk the walk
8. be dependable and reliable
9. show respect and consideration for others
10. accept people for who they are
11. do not be a part of negative office politics or rumor mills
12. **LIVE IN THE PRESENT — STAY BALANCED — HAVE FUN!**
It is by adjusting or changing our attitude and by taking action that we can contribute to and enjoy a happy, harmonious growing professional environment.

Perform a periodic self-inventory by evaluating your skills, abilities, interests, relationships and commitment. By developing and maintaining an understanding of yourself and your life, you will stay aware of the interrelationship between these realities and your career growth and development.

Maria R. Goonan
Executive Career Coach/Instructor
UCSD Extension
858/1882-8014
mgoonan@ucsd.edu