

Advancing Your Career and Social Distancing



Life as we know it has changed quickly in the last couple of weeks. Your normal routine of going to the office Monday through Friday has been halted. With good reason. The need to socially distance ourselves from others in this time of crisis is real. With all the unknowns, there's no denying that the economic impact is going to be significant.

In a time of fear and not knowing, there's good news. As people are spending more and more time at home, that means they're spending increased time online. Virtual happy hours, shopping, and yes, networking are becoming the new norm. Just because it's more or less impossible to meet in person, doesn't mean that you still can't network and keep progressing in your career.

Catch Up

Reality as we knew it was abruptly stopped in its tracks in the last week or two. We're being asked to slow down. Sure, it's a tough adjustment. Fortunately, this time is a great opportunity to catch up with friends and former colleagues. Reach out to that old boss you haven't talked to in years. Ask them how they're doing and what they've been up to. Pick their brain about what's going on with their company and industry wide.

Increase Your Online Presence

This one is a no-brainer. With the sudden influx of people working remotely,

there's no time like the present to make yourself relevant on the Internet. How does your LinkedIn profile look? Have you updated your resume and professional summary? What about that profile picture from 10 years ago?

There's no time like the present to make your personal brand known. What are your strengths? How about passions? Do you have any unique skill sets that companies are looking for?

If you're not sure what the process of rebranding looks like, see what people you look up to are doing. What do their professional profiles look like? If you want to take it a step further, reach out to these people and ask for their advice. You'll likely find yourself surprised with how willing others are to help.

Keep Learning

With extra time on your hands, now's the perfect opportunity to learn and advance your existing skills. There's no shortage of accredited online sources to help you learn, earn a certification, and beef up your resume.

If you're not sure how to go about it, contact a professional recruiter. They're experts in not only helping employers attract top job candidates. They're also well versed in advising job seekers on how they can become qualified for the jobs they seek.

Become a Resource

Most of us haven't seen anything like this in our lifetime. No question, it feels weird to be asked to help by doing nothing. While that might be the case for public health, it's not for businesses. At a time where businesses are tightening their purse strings, there's an increasing demand for specialized skill sets to keep business going.

Now is a great time to consider offering your skills on a consultative basis. Consulting is a great way to not only offset lost income, but make a positive, meaningful difference in a time of need.

No one is going to argue that our realities have become vastly different than they were only a short time ago. Yes, times ahead remain uncertain. Yes, the economy

has, and will continue to slow. That doesn't mean that your career has to though. In fact, there's no reason you can't accelerate the progression toward your professional goals. With a little creativity and productive use of your time, you can come out of these difficult times more primed for success than you were before.

How to Productively Work From Home During the Coronavirus



What a week it's been. For many, the order to work from home can be a big bonus, and others dread the thought. Even those that enjoy working from home a day or two a week can eventually start to feel a bit isolated.

Having gone through the change from working in an office of over 400, to working remotely out of a home office, I know the transition can be difficult for many. At first it can seem new and fun, but then you realize you have a hard time focusing on what needs to be done because, well, you're home! Home is where you relax and try to get your mind off of work. Here are some suggestions to help bring a little structure to your workday when working from home:

- Try to set up a designated work room or area, even if it's just the other end of the dinning room table from where you would normally sit. You want a zone that is your work focus zone. When you are in that zone, you are there to work. And to the best of

your ability, have family members understand that when you are in that space, you are “at work” and need to minimize distractions and interruptions as much as possible.

- For some (me included in the beginning) I had to stay with my normal morning routine and exercise, shower, eat breakfast and “dress for work”. It is very tempting to work on your favorite sweatpants and tee shirt, but for a lot of people that keeps them in the “I’m at home” state of mind and work gets harder to focus on. Put on the clothes you would normally wear to work. This, and having your work zone in the house, will help you mentally feel like you’re at work.
- Structure your day to simulate what you would be doing if you were at the office. Do you have normal times of the day where you check your emails, or dedicate to a project? Keep that same schedule and structure when working from home.

You may also start to miss the interaction and social aspect of working with coworkers. You are probably already set up to join in on the virtual meetings, and that is an important part of staying connected to your team as well. But you may still feel a bit isolated from other coworkers you normally talk to during the day. Stay in touch with them. Send them an email or, even better, talk with them on the phone. There’s a high likelihood they are feeling the same way. Don’t afraid to reach out. You’ll both be glad you did.

This is a very unique and unsettling time and has many people feeling very anxious. Don’t fight it, it’s normal to feel that way. But also remember, this is a temporary thing and things will turn back to normal soon. We are taking extraordinary measures now to limit the impact of this virus. And once that is achieved things will turn quickly back to where they were before. Who knows, maybe your family will be a better understanding of what it is you do when you go to the office.

Take care of yourselves and each other (family, friends, and coworkers). The next few weeks will be an adjustment. But focusing on what you need to do for work so you’re ready when things get back to normal will also help you keep perspective on the bigger picture and hopefully keep you too busy to dwell on the doom and gloom that is on all of the news

updates. Stay informed, be safe and smart in your actions, but don't dwell on all of the negativity.

Why a Recruiter Can Help You Find a Dream Job



At some point, you've probably been contacted by a recruiter. Maybe it's a frequent occurrence for people in your line of work. When recruiters come calling through email, LinkedIn, or over the phone, it's easy to brush them off. You figure, I really don't have time for yet another conversation with someone I don't even know.

But there comes a point when it's time for a change. You start doing some research, polish up your resume, and hit the job boards. The problem is, most of the jobs you find, you're overqualified for or have already been filled. Perhaps you even send out a few resumes thinking there's a high likelihood you're going to hear something back. Crickets. After a while, you start to panic a little.

This is where a recruiter can help. If you're still not convinced, keep reading to find out the top reasons why working with a reputable recruiter, can give you a leg up on the competition.

Recruiters Help You Through the Process

Even though you think you've got the job hunting gig figured out, it's what professional recruiters do for a living. It's in their best interest to place the best candidates in front of hiring managers.

When you work with a recruiter, they'll be able to answer any and all questions you might have. Whether it's polishing your resume, or salary negotiation, they're in the job hunting and placement trenches on a daily basis. Have some anxieties about the job interview? No problem, a good recruiter will help you prepare.

Recruiters Have Huge Networks

Even if you think your professional network is substantial, it's nothing compared to that of a professional recruiter. Think about it. They don't have a choice but to have a wide and vast network of people they work with.

This one is pretty simple. The larger the network of people you can be introduced to, the more opportunities you'll have of landing the right job.

Recruiters Are Specialized, Just Like You

Your experience, knowledge and skill set in life sciences speaks for itself. The best recruiters are niched as well. As a result, they know what to look for in certain candidates for specific positions.

Because of the fact that they're "in the know," they can give details about positions you might be interested in that you couldn't glean from a simple job description.

When you work with a recruiter that's versed in your specialized skill set, you'll be able to narrow down the job search to quality positions that

require your unique experience.

You're Never Forgotten

We live in a day and age that operates on databases. You know those telemarketing calls you get on a daily basis? Guess what? You're part of the call list. Most folks take measures to limit the number of databases they're in because they're annoying.

When it comes to recruiting however, it actually works to your advantage. Let's say you're satisfied with your current job, but you want to keep your eyes open in case a better opportunity comes along. That's where recruiters give you an advantage. They know who you are and what you're capable of. Whenever an opportunity that requires your skills and experience comes along, a good recruiter knows where to find you.

Talk about having the hard work done for you!

Recruiters Save You Time

The job search can be toilsome at best. On top of the demands you have at the office every day, allocating the time to diligently pursue new opportunities is difficult at best. Between searching job boards, chasing down less than promising leads, and customizing your resume and cover letter for each job you apply for, the hours add up.

Recruiters know what jobs you're after and which are available. Even though there's going to be some work required on your end, a quality recruiter will do most of the leg work for you.

At the end of the day, the job market is highly competitive. Hiring managers pour over numerous resumes and cover letters as they try to fill positions. Even if you jump off the page, you're not guaranteed a job or even an interview.

That's why working with a recruiter that knows you personally, and professionally, is so crucial. It's their job to find the perfect match for both employers and prospective job hunters, and they can give the hiring

manager a little background on why they think you are a good match for the job that might not be apparent on your resume.

Ever apply for a job and never hear anything back? It happens a lot. But if you're working with a good recruiter, they will not only make sure the appropriate people see your resume, they will also provide you some feedback. Even if you don't get the job, they can give you some insights as to why you were not chosen, and possibly help you to do better in the next interview.

So, instead of toiling away on the Internet and looking at job boards, do yourself a favor. Do some research and find a recruiter that you can trust and knows your industry. Even if it takes a while, chances are you'll be glad you did in the end.

How-To Get the Promotion You are After



You've been at your current company for a while. That enthusiasm you had for your job on day one hasn't wavered. In fact, you're more excited about the work you're doing, and the people around you than you've ever been. You've been a model of consistency meeting deadlines, leading teams, and tackling big projects. Your hard work hasn't gone unnoticed either. Your diligence has been lauded by your superiors. Maybe you've even received a bonus.

But now, you want more. More responsibility. More influence in decision making. More money wouldn't be the worst thing either. We're talking about a promotion. You feel like you're on the cusp of receiving great news but, the days, weeks and months seem to pass by.

The truth is, while you're doing an exceptional job, there's probably more to the equation. We polled the experts about what it takes to secure that promotion you're after. Here's what they had to say.

Offer Solutions

Take a quick minute to think about someone in your organization who constantly complains. In their eyes, this person doesn't make enough money. When they make a mistake, they always place the blame on someone or something else. This mindset is the surest way to NOT get promoted.

Instead, be a catalyst for solutions. You're going to make mistakes every now and then. The key is to learn from them and deliver solutions that can be put into action. Share these ideas with your boss. Not only does it show that you're humble enough to take ownership of your mistakes, but that you have the capacity to be proactive when things don't go according to plan.

It Actually IS Your Job

There's nothing a boss hates hearing more than the words, "that's not my job." Just because something isn't in your job description, doesn't mean you can't lend a helping hand elsewhere when needed.

There's inevitably going to come a time when you're asked to perform a task outside your normal responsibilities. Instead of loathing this opportunity, look at it as a chance to make your organization better. Sure, your "job" might be outlined in the description from your hiring packet. However, your real JOB is to do everything you can to contribute to the greater good.

To go a step further, actively look for ways that you can help those around

you without being asked or told. This type of behavior won't go unnoticed. In fact, it shows your commitment and dedication to the greater success of the company and everyone around you.

Find a Mentor

The reality is that most of your coworkers don't actively seek out a professional mentor. Sure, they might be great at their job, but they don't make the effort to find someone they can learn from. Seeking out a mentor is one of the best things you can do if you want to move up.

Not only does it show that you're hungry, and don't want to remain stagnant, it puts you front and center in the eyes of your superiors. When the time comes, which it will, for someone to take the lead on an important project or department, you'll be in prime position.

Become a Problem Anticipator, Not a Problem Solver

There's no question that your ability to remain cool under pressure is going to serve you well in your career. When things go awry, maintaining a level head, and thinking clearly, are essential skills.

You know what your superiors love even more, though? Someone who can spot problems before they arise. When you're able to think strategically, and enact a plan of action, you demonstrate one of the most critical skills a leader can possess.

How Do You Spend Your Free Time?

Take a look around and ask yourself how many of your colleagues are pursuing continuing education or attending industry workshops and networking events. Probably not all that many.

It's one thing to go through the mandatory compliance and professional development training. Improving your skills on your own volition is another matter entirely. The best part, it doesn't take all that much effort.

A good strategy is to set aside some time once or twice a month to immerse yourself in a setting where you're surrounded by industry leaders and learn.

If you don't have time for that, try reading an industry publication or book in your spare time. Whatever you can do to advance your skills and knowledge is only going to be of benefit.

There's more talent in the workforce today than ever before. If you want to move up, you've no choice but to separate yourself from the status quo. If you make the effort, and employ some of the strategies above, your chances of getting that promotion you're after increase exponentially. The good news might even come faster than you think.

Best Strategies to Build the Confidence You Need to Succeed



At some point in your career, you've dealt with self-doubt of some sort. Am I good enough for this job? Do I deserve this promotion? What if I fail? If any of those questions sound familiar, you're not alone. Everyone goes through times when their confidence is in crisis and fear takes over. Maybe it's something you're struggling with right now. The good news is that these thoughts of self-doubt don't last forever, and your worst fears rarely come true.

However, if you're going to succeed in the long run, you need to believe in yourself and your abilities. Even though it's not easy, it's a skill that can be learned. This week we talk about the best strategies to help grow your self-confidence.

Remember Your Accomplishments

This is a great place to start if you're working on building your confidence. In times of fear and doubt, it's easy to forget all that you've done. But remember, you didn't get to where you are today without doing some pretty amazing things along the way.

Find a quiet place where you can be by yourself. Write down a list of ten things you're most proud of. They don't even have to be related to your career. Maybe you ran a marathon. What about that time you got a promotion when you least expected it? Put this list somewhere you can see it daily. Tape it to your bathroom mirror or put it on the nightstand next to your bed. After you start seeing your list of accomplishments enough, you'll start to think of yourself in a more positive light and begin silencing your inner critic.

Inner Critic

Speaking of your inner critic, everyone has one. And, it's almost always your worst critic. Unfortunately, your inner critic rarely, if ever, does you any good. Sure, it's an admirable trait to be humble but, your inner critic can be flat out mean.

To silence your inner critic, Dr. Lisa Firestone has some great advice. Start by acknowledging its presence. Trying to suppress it won't do any good.

Next, listen to what that evil voice inside your head is telling you. Write those thoughts down in second person. If the thought is "I'm not good enough," write it down as "You're not good enough." This helps your brain see these thoughts from an outside perspective.

Now, write down constructive responses to these thoughts using "I". "I

might be having a tough time, but I know I have what it takes to get through it.”

By practicing this simple exercise whenever your inner critic rears its ugly head, you’ll start to show yourself some compassion, which is critical if you want your confidence to grow.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

It’s a habit for people that are struggling with confidence to compare themselves to others. They look at everyone else’s accomplishments and think they don’t deserve the same for themselves. This kind of destructive behavior is poison for your confidence.

The key is to train your mind to think of others and what they have as equal to you. Yes, this is easier said than done but, it CAN be done.

Social media is a great example. When you find yourself scrolling through Facebook or Instagram, you’re looking at everyone’s perfect little life. That’s what they want others to see. The reality is what people post is a far cry from reality. Status updates get blown out of proportion. Pictures are photoshopped to look perfect. The list goes on.

When you can stop comparing yourself to others, you’re on the verge of realizing the self-confidence it takes to succeed in your career and, as a person.

Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

It’s human nature to want to be comfortable. It’s safe and predictable. Unfortunately, there isn’t much room for meaningful growth unless you put yourself in uncomfortable situations.

Think about it in the context of a high school dance. A boy has his eye on a girl but he’s too afraid to ask her to dance for fear of being rejected. The reality is, the only way he’s going to get the girl to notice his existence, is to risk being uncomfortable and asking her to dance.

The same goes for your career and life. If you want to grow and achieve your goals, you have to take some risks and be uncomfortable.

Contrary to popular belief, confidence isn't something you're either born with or without. It's a skill that can be learned and, it's necessary for your growth, success, health and happiness. If you're struggling to believe you have what it takes to accomplish whatever it is you're after, know that it won't last forever. If you employ some of the strategies above, you might just be surprised by how much your confidence grows in a short amount of time.

Getting the Most Out of LinkedIn



Chances are, you have a LinkedIn profile. Like any other kind of social media, it's something you check when you need a mental break from whatever task has your attention. Over the years, you've updated your professional summary with educational achievements, jobs, and promotions. You may notice that there are folks writing intriguing content. Maybe you decide to even join a few groups specific to your industry. Unlike other social media like Facebook and Instagram, the groups you belong to on LinkedIn can help you grow your network. Doing so can even highlight you as a viable candidate in the job market. If you're considering looking for a new job, or even just to grow your network,

there's some do's and don'ts you should follow in order to get the most of your time and presence on LinkedIn.

Investigate

Just like any networking event in real life, you probably wouldn't just walk in and start spouting off your accomplishments and unfound knowledge. The same goes for groups on LinkedIn. You need to get a feel for what's happening within a group. What types of things are being discussed? Who's posting the content that's the most engaging? What's their background? Are they someone you should connect with? Read the comments. That's often where the richest ideas and discussion take place. What's the tone of the group like? Is it casual? Or, is it strictly professional? How does the group fit with the type of culture you're accustomed to?

If one group isn't a good fit, don't fret. There are plenty of other groups you can research and join.

Participate

When you join a group on LinkedIn, you need to understand that there's a certain decorum that's expected. Believe it or not, life in the virtual world isn't all that different from life in the real world. When you first join a group, don't come in guns-a-blazing. Even if you're an expert in your field, people are put off if you jump in with both feet and start preaching.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't participate though. In fact, that's exactly what you should do. Like and comment on other posts. This shows that you're engaging and can add value to the conversation.

If you come across an article, YouTube video or something else that pertains to the group, feel free to share and comment on how it's beneficial to you or why you think it's relevant. Trust in these groups is something that has to be earned.

By sharing relevant content and engaging with others, you make the point that you're in the group to learn and share ideas, not promote your own

agenda.

Think Before You Post

You're to the point that you want to start posting regularly. It doesn't matter if it's someone else's content or your own. Before you pull the trigger, ask yourself if what you're about to share is relevant to the group. Does it add value to the greater conversation taking place? Is it something that can be beneficial to other people?

Something else to keep in mind is posting too often. This habit does two things. First, it makes you look desperate for attention. Second, you come across as a know-it-all.

There's a balance and art to posting. The key is to make what you're sharing is worthwhile and, the frequency with which you post isn't so high that your content ends up as spam.

Don't Troll

In the age of technology, cyberbullying is a real thing. And it's not just high school kids on Facebook. If you've ever read a political editorial and read the comments, chances are you've seen this type of behavior.

The last place you want to be disrespectful is LinkedIn. If you disagree with what someone has to say, ask meaningful questions and be professional. Or, don't say anything at all.

LinkedIn can be a powerful resource if you use it the right way. Joining and participating in groups is a great method for growing your network and learning about industry trends and happenings. You need to go about it in the right way, however. If you take the time to investigate what's going on, participate and post content that's engaging, you might just surprise yourself with what you can get out of LinkedIn.

How-To Make a Career Decision You Won't Regret



Even though the modern job market is more competitive now than it's ever been, there's no shortage of resources to help you make the right career decision. Between coaches, training courses, online job boards, and advice from everyone in your professional and personal circle, logic would dictate that finding your dream job shouldn't be all that hard. Believe it or not, there's an argument to be made that it's actually quite the opposite. The information age has people so inundated with data and advice, and the opinions of others, that thinking for oneself becomes next to impossible. With all these fancy tools and resources, there are often lots of career paths to choose.

For this reason, it's easy to make important career decisions for the wrong reasons. It could be advice from a colleague. Maybe you even make a choice out of fear or desperation. Unfortunately, these choices that often lead to shoulda-woulda-coulda's down the road. That begs the question, how do you go about making career decisions you won't regret?

Expertise and Purpose

A great place to start the process is identifying what you're good at and the impact you want to leave on the world. Sure, this sounds a little cliché. But, it's grounded in fact. When you get crystal clear on these factors, the decision-making process becomes pretty simple at its core. Does taking that promotion align with your values? Will staying in your current position allow you to perform at your best and grow? If you can't

feel challenged and fulfilled, it's not the right fit.

Get Clear on What's Most Important to You

In order to eliminate all the outside noise regarding your career choice, get clear on what's most important to you. Start by writing things down. What does your dream job look like? How will it fit with your dynamics at home? What goals do you want to accomplish? What does your plan look like to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? The vision you create should be one that gets you excited. If it scares you a little, all the better. Now you share it with others.

Support is Better than Advice

When you start sharing your vision with other people, they're going to be quick to imply their wisdom. In most cases, that wisdom is anything but ill-intended. However, you need to make it clear that you're clear on the direction you're headed. Let them know that the best thing they can do is offer support with whatever decision you make and not impart their fears and biases.

Filter all the advice you hear. Just because it worked for one person in a specific situation, doesn't mean it's the best advice for you. Ask yourself if the advice you receive makes sense for you. If it doesn't, let it go in one ear and out the other.

What's Popular isn't Always Right and What's Right isn't Always Popular

You got me. I stole that one from my fourth-grade teacher. But it's something that's stuck with me my whole life.

The urge to conform is all around you. There's a human need to be part of a group. It gets back to that whole safety in numbers thing. Whatever it takes, you have to do what's right for you. That takes confidence.

Be Confident

Speaking of which... Whenever you're in the process of figuring out the next step, you're going to experience moments when your confidence is in crisis. It's important to remember that everyone has confidence issues. It isn't some elusive trait that some people have, and others don't.

You also have to realize building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. As silly as it might sound, positive affirmations do wonders for your confidence. Whether they're something you tell yourself or, notes you post on your bathroom mirror, self affirmations work to rewire your brain in a beneficial way. With a little practice, you can develop the unwavering confidence to make difficult choices.

Everyone says they want to live without regrets. Sadly, the number of people that actually do, is pretty small. When it comes to your career, you're going to face crossroads and difficult decisions. The last thing you want is to look back and say, "I wish I would've taken that chance when I had the opportunity." The good news is that important career decisions are your choice to make, not anyone else's. They're going to be uncomfortable. You're going to second guess yourself at some point. But, if you're clear about what you want and keep the noise from others at bay, you'll arrive at the right choice for you. With no regrets.

Signs It's Time to Say Goodbye to Your Boss



It's something almost everyone complains about at some point during their career. That boss they just can't stand. Whether you got off on the wrong foot, don't feel valued, or don't agree with the decisions being made, there comes a point when you've had just about all you can take. You go to work in a bad mood and come home discouraged. Eventually, enough is enough.

If you find yourself frustrated with your boss, look for the traits we talk about below. If any of them stand out, it's a clear sign something needs to change.

Takes All the Credit

You know the type of person we're talking about. The one that takes all the credit for everyone else's work. It's like they're more concerned with making themselves look good than they are with recognizing the talented people they manage. If this type of behavior seems to be an ongoing theme, it's a red flag.

Narcissistic

A boss that's narcissistic won't be hard to spot. They will single out what they perceive as weaker individuals, and exert their power over them. They're quick to take credit and spread blame to anyone but themselves. If doesn't take long for this type of behavior to ruin morale and toxify culture.

Throws People Under the Bus

A good leader always has your back. They might be tough on you but they will have your back when your neck is on the line. Unfortunately, there are too many bosses out there that throw their employees under the bus. They might gossip about certain people and are always pointing their finger.

Management might even love these people as they're adept at playing both sides of the fence. They're often solely motivated by their own success and will do whatever it takes to ensure their future.

Ignores You

On an effective team, everyone's ideas should be welcomed and considered. If you find your input continually suppressed, rejected or flat out ignored, it's a sure sign your boss doesn't see your value. They're either insecure and see you as a potential threat or, think they have all the answers.

You should feel valued in your job. If that's not the case, it needs to be addressed.

Can't Handle Problems

Problems are going to arise in any organization. This is when a leader's true colors show. If your boss loses their cool when issues come up, it spreads fear throughout the whole team. Once everyone has seen enough angry episodes, they become afraid to do any little thing that might trigger abhorrent outbursts. Constantly feeling like you're walking on eggshells isn't how you should feel at work.

If your boss consistently exudes any of these behaviors and, nothing has been done to address them, it might be time to consider making a change. Before you pack your things and give your two weeks notice however, there are some things to consider.

Get to Work

Not with the daily tasks of your current job. Rather, get to work making yourself visible in the market. Tell your friends and family that you're looking for a new opportunity. Engage on LinkedIn. Catch up with former colleagues over lunch. Attend a professional conference. Get back in touch with recruiters you've worked with. Even though the tendency for most people is to hide in a corner when things aren't going well at work, being proactive is a much better way to go.

Come Up with Your Own Job Description

Have you ever wondered what your dream job would look like? There's no better time than now to try and make it a reality. Go into detail. This exercise might be difficult, because most people know what they don't want. However, it's an important step to take. When you write these ideas down and share them, you narrow down the focus on what you truly desire in your next opportunity and communicate to everyone around you.

Hit the Ground Running

Even if you're still at your current job, set aside time to start looking for new opportunities that you're excited about. Polish up your resume and send it out. Contact a recruiter. Now that you've armed yourself with a detailed picture of what you're looking for, you won't waste time applying for jobs that aren't fulfilling.

The reality is that you need a job. But, a job doesn't have to merely be a means to an end. There's no reason you should feel chained to a situation that's toxic or where you don't feel valued. If you find yourself in this position, take note of types of behavior from your superiors that might be the root of the problem. If there's no apparent way to make things better, be proactive and make the necessary choices for your career and your life.

New Year's Career Resolutions You Can Keep



It's that time of the year again. You've thought about everything that's transpired and started to come up with a list of things you're going to do better or differently next year. Yes, we're talking about New Year's Resolutions. They're always well-intended. However, the reality is that most of them are forgotten by the end of January. Whether you just don't have time, or lose motivation, the truth remains, New Year's Resolutions are tough to keep.

When it comes to your career, you have goals you want to reach. Maybe it's becoming a Team Lead or a Chief Engineer. In order to reach those goals, you need to have specific steps that are going to get you there. What better time than the start of the New Year to set about making those smaller steps a priority? Here are a list of New Year's Career Resolutions that you can keep:

Brush Up Your Resume

Even if you don't have plans to look for a new job right now, you never know when an opportunity might present itself. This simple exercise keeps you from losing information you might need in the event that you decide to look for something new. The process can be reflective as well. When you look back at your past jobs and accomplishments, you can be

proud of how far you've come. Conversely, maybe there's a hole in your resume that needs filling and now's the perfect time to get to work.

Update Your LinkedIn Profile

When was the last time you looked at your LinkedIn profile? A lot has changed since the days when people threw up a professional picture, their schooling and titles for jobs they've held. Now, more than ever, your LinkedIn profile is part of your professional brand. The information, style and layout should be up to date. How's that professional summary coming along?

If you need some inspiration, check out the profiles of some of your connections. Chances are you'll learn a thing or two.

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We're all guilty of wasting time during the day. Whether it's scrolling through Instagram or checking fantasy football scores, the time can add up. The truth is though, we all need a mental break at some point. Why not put that time to good use and subscribe to a blog you find interesting? It doesn't even have to be related to your industry. There are literally hundreds of thousands of talented writers out there sharing their perspective and information for free. If you're not sure what kind of blog you might be interested in, ask around. Your friends and colleagues will have plenty of ideas.

Send One Thank You Note Per Week

Even though most of our communication takes place electronically, there's still no substitute for an old-fashioned hand-written thank you note. Whether it's to a person from another department that helped you out on a project or even just a friend, personal thank you notes are memorable. They don't take long to write and are a great way to practice gratitude – something we could all use more of.

Add a New Skill

The ways in which we work are constantly changing. As a result, your skills need to be current. Set aside some time each week to learn a new skill. It doesn't matter if it's learning a second language, new computer program or becoming a better public speaker. The point is that you're bettering yourself and enjoying the process.

Take Care of Your Health

We all know about those New Year's Resolutions focused on weight loss. "This year I'm joining a gym." "Starting in January, I'm going to do yoga three days a week." Just like most New Year's Resolutions, it's only a small percentage that are actually seen through.

The good news is you can take some smaller steps to improve your health and well-being. Buy a stand-up desk for your office. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Bring your own lunch instead of eating from the cafeteria. Replace that comfy computer chair with a Swiss ball. There are all sorts of easy ways to be healthier at work. The key is to find one or two that work for you and, stick to them.

Find a Mentor

Even if you're the company President, there are still people in your organization you can learn from. Find someone with some skills that you particularly admire. Approach that person and ask them if they'd be willing to mentor you in a specific area of your job. Together, you can set goals and have some fun along the way.

Become a Mentor

Maybe there's someone on your team who seems to go above and beyond. You can tell this person is passionate about what they do and is driven to meet their goals. You can't be everything to everybody but, if you make an effort to take an exceptional employee under your wing, they'll be more

than thankful. Giving back makes you feel good. Better yet, chances are you'll learn something too.

Get a New Professional Photo

You like the picture on your business card. Unfortunately, it's 15 years old. Yes, you have a little more gray hair now but, that baggy suit hasn't been fashionable since Y2K. As trivial as it might seem, people are going to judge you by your professional picture. Whether it's in an email signature, on your LinkedIn profile or on your business card, your professional picture is often the first chance someone has to put a face with your name. Why wouldn't you want to look good?

Most New Year's resolutions fail for one of two reasons. First, they're too big to tackle. Second, they aren't specific. The good news is it isn't that hard to make some small improvements to keep you on the track to success. Create some daily habits that don't take a ton of time but are fun and rewarding. You just might surprise yourself with the difference you see.

What's Holding You Back In Your Career



Maybe you're in a situation where you feel like you're just going through

the motions. You show up, do your job, go home. Wash, rinse, repeat. The days and months all seem to blend together. It might not be that you're miserable, you're just not as excited about your job as you once were. You haven't seen a raise or promotion for quite a while. It's not that your jobs in jeopardy. You just seem to have hit a glass ceiling.

If any of this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Millions of people feel stuck in their jobs. But, guess what? Sometimes, the obstacles that are in your way are ones you put there. I know, that might sound a little harsh. There's good news though. If you're willing to take an honest look in the mirror, identifying some mitigating behaviors is easy.

Explicit Goals

You have some goals in mind. You want to become a project leader or get into the next level of management? Great! Have you written these goals down? Better yet, have you formulated the steps to achieve them?

While long-term goals are wonderful, they require short-term goals to get there. Short-term goals need attention too. Think about what steps you need to take to achieve those long-term goals. Is it additional training, or more experience in a particular area? Setting these smaller steps as goals is something you can do now to get you closer to the long-term goals.

Handling Criticism

If you ask any successful businessperson how they got to where they are, learning from past mistakes will be a significant part of their answer. Part of learning from mistakes is taking constructive criticism to heart. Think about the last time your boss came to you with a suggestion or new idea about how you could improve. How did you react? Did you welcome the feedback? Or did you get defensive and confrontational?

If you're able to put your ego aside, and learn from constructive feedback, you'll quickly set yourself on the path to future success.

Waiting for More Responsibility

You know this one. It's how you got to where you currently are. We're talking about asking for more responsibility. If you now find yourself sitting back, waiting for the torch to be handed to you, you might be waiting for quite a while. Employers love people who are self-starters and go-getters. When you actively seek more responsibility, it shows that you're eager to learn and to get better. If you've become complacent, this one simple change could make all the difference and put you on your boss's radar for more responsibility or opportunities.

Seeking New Learning Opportunities

In the age of technology, learning has never been so fast paced. What was cutting edge two months ago might be obsolete now. In other words, if you aren't constantly learning, you're falling behind. We aren't saying that you need to attend every new tech promo available. However, it's essential that you keep yourself abreast of the latest skills and industry trends if you want to move up.

Networking

Networking is a buzz word, we know. But, it's one that isn't going away any time soon. Whether your job relies on it entirely, or you work by yourself, you're going to have to network at some point. The good news is that networking is something you can do all the time. If it's at an organized networking event, you should go. If it's a weekend round of golf with some strangers, same story.

In the end, it's a numbers game. The more people you know, the better. Even though the business world has become flatter thanks to the ability to communicate electronically, there is still no substitute for building relationships in person.

Asking for Raises or Promotions

There's an old axiom that says, "the worst thing that happens when you ask, is that you end up in the same place." When was the last time you asked for a raise or promotion? You've taken on more work, more stress, more responsibility. But you're making the same amount of money as when you started.

What gives?

Even if you haven't taken on more responsibilities, you can ask what you would need to do to get that promotion or raise. At least then you will know what the expectations are and you can start working towards it.

If you want to advance your career, you have to ask for more at some point. Yes, it's going to be uncomfortable. Yes, you're going to have thoughts and feelings that you're overstepping your bounds. That's ok. But, if you've proven yourself time and again, you owe it to yourself to ask that question. You might very well be surprised by the response you receive.

In an age where everything changes in the blink of an eye, it's only natural to seek comfort and stability. You can pay the bills, achieve some level of fulfillment and feel secure. After a while though, you become bored, maybe even apathetic. When it gets to that point, the onus is on you. If you want more - more money, more meaning, more success, ask yourself some of these questions. If you answer them honestly and take some small steps, you just might find what you've been waiting for.