

The Career Development Process

BE AWARE OF THE MARKETPLACE

Keep current with trends and advances in the marketplace in general and your field in particular. Careers are changing faster than ever. New careers are emerging. Awareness of what is going on shows your responsibility for yourself in the career development process. Join organizations and associations and be an active member.

CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR AND EVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS

Do some serious soul searching at various points in your career. Evaluate yourself versus the goals you have set. Revise goals as necessary and/or develop new plans to refocus and redirect where you want to go.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT OR LIKE TO DO

Sounds obvious, but many people actually forget about this when considering jobs and careers. You will probably spend over half of your waking hours at work. You owe it to yourself to seek opportunities that interest you.

FOCUS ON FIT

Bottom line, you need to find opportunities that best fit you (knowing that “perfect” doesn’t exist). Elements of fit include job duties, training and support, pay, work environment, culture, values and more.

INVEST IN YOURSELF AFTER YOUR FORMAL EDUCATION ENDS

Take advantage of your organization’s continuing education opportunities or invest in yourself through training courses, seminars, outside education or reading in your field.

FOCUS LONG-TERM

Positioning yourself to reach your long-term goals must be a strong motivator for you. Accepting the long-term challenge is vital. At the same time, do not totally forsake short-term considerations, like your need to pay bills, eat, and have a home, friends and family. Use short-term experiences to get to your long-term goals.

TALK TO PEOPLE

This is, and always will be, the most critical action in your career development process. Whether it is interviewing, finding out information about jobs and careers, or simply staying in touch with colleagues, you invest in yourself and your career by talking to others. This investment of time will greatly increase your understanding of the steps you need to take to have career success.

USE CURRENT STRENGTHS AND DEVELOP NEW ONES

Continue to capitalize on your strengths and look for new ways to develop. Change is a guarantee in the workplace, which requires you to adapt your current skills and continually look for ways to improve your own skill set. Add to your knowledge base, both in and outside of your current occupation, industry and employer.

DO NOT CONFUSE THE WRONG JOB WITH THE WRONG WORK SETTING

Organizations change whether for better or worse. Do not ditch a career because of changes in your workplace. Career renewal may be simply a matter of finding a better fit for your skills and knowledge.

WATCH OUT FOR THE KILLER B'S: BLOCKAGE, BOREDOM, BURNOUT

Job dissatisfaction usually is tied to these areas. Evaluate the hurdles, monotony and stresses that are making you unhappy. Develop alternatives to address them.

CHANGE JOBS OR CAREERS IF YOU NEED TO – OR WANT TO

You owe it to yourself to be happy. No one ever said you have to stay in a job or career you dislike. Make the adjustments and changes that will give you the happiness and fulfillment you need.

RECYCLE VERSUS REPLACEMENT

Do not throw out a career without in-depth examination and soul searching. If you have done solid decision-making to this point in your career, dissatisfaction may be primarily related to the employer or workplace. New responsibilities may be a point of discussion for you and your current employer. Adjustments or changes in these directions may be all you need to renew your energy and outlook.

BE PROFESSIONAL

Always show courtesy and use your best manners with anyone you are in contact with in the job process. Being goal directed does not allow you to be rude. Treat others how you would want to be treated, both in person and in written communications.

REMEMBER THE BIG PICTURE

Your career is PART of your life. It is not “your life.” The decisions you make concerning your career must be made within the greater aspect of your life planning. How you blend your career and non-career life will play a key role in your happiness throughout life.

REALIZE THESE ARE IMPORTANT DECISIONS – NOT LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS

Yes, careers and jobs are important. But what else is important to you? Health? Family? Travel? Leisure time? Ask yourself how these (and other things) combine to make you a happy and fulfilled person. Remember, you are striving to make the BEST DECISIONS based on what you know or what you anticipate. There are NO PERFECT DECISIONS and as you gain new information, you will continue to revisit your decisions to evaluate and make adjustments.

PLAY FROM AHEAD

In sports, it is easier to win if you are ahead in the game. Apply this principle to your career. Continually monitor your progress, communicate with your network, keep your resume up to date, and know your story as it develops. Be ready to go on the job/career hunt at a moments' notice. Some day you may have to find a new job because of downsizing. If you let your process become inactive for a long period of time, it is that much more difficult to get going. STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME!