

Employment Career Tips

Unique Pieces of Career Advice

How you quit a job is every bit as important as how you interview for one. If you don't give enough notice, bad-mouth your employer in your final weeks, leave projects unfinished, or fail to thank your boss and say farewell nicely, you may risk getting a reference in the future. No matter how awful a job is, you should always depart like a gentleman or a lady.

Nancy A. Shenker

Author of "Don't Hook Up With the Dude in the Next Cube"

Professionals should plan their careers with current and future flexibility preferences in mind. In a recent workplace trend survey conducted on behalf of Mom Corps by Harris Interactive (released today), we found that 73 percent of working adults agree that flexibility is one of the most important factors they consider when looking for a new job or deciding what company to work for.

For the best integration of personal and professional domains, it's important to consider early on how to make this happen, in an effort to make better long-term choices. College students and young professionals are best poised for this as they choose a profession. To set themselves up for a career that synthesizes with the type of personal life they want to have, they should consider how their business choices (corporate specialties, travel requirements) might affect their future family life and personal preferences (extended maternity leave, sabbaticals).

For example, choosing a career in law can lead down many paths. A mergers and acquisition lawyer has a different schedule than an estate lawyer, and one may be more conducive to raising a family and offering desired flexibility, but both are in the legal profession. Or a career in accounting may offer more flexibility in the off season, allowing a professional to focus on work only during tax season.

Allison O'Kelly, founder/CEO of Mom Corps

I'm a professor at the University of Oklahoma. I've written a couple of textbooks and several business books in graphic novel format. I teach seniors in their final semester of business school so we discuss career issues often. One bit of advice I always mention to students is to not treat a career fair like the country fair. At the county fair, that's the place to dress casually, go with your friends, have no expectations, and collect cheap plastic junk that you will throw away later. But often students approach the career fair in the same way. They go with friends (either from their frat or sorority or with a boyfriend/ girlfriend), they may not have researched companies in advance, and dressing appropriate may be an issue. They often turn in walks away with the freebies that potential employers may provide but with little progress in the job search.

So, that's my bit of advice that might be helpful. What I hope students do is carefully search for employers and jobs that match their interest, carefully research the company and its strategy and any recent news stories that might be relevant, and go to the career fair with a focus on meeting their long term goals.

Jeremy Short

Rath Chair in Strategic Management

Price College of Business

University of Oklahoma

Don't be afraid to make a change. It's business and business changes all the time. Don't feel bad leaving your company and current

Employment Career Tips

position, if your company needed to get rid of you to stay in business they would. Unless it's a startup, the business existed before you were hired and it will continue to exist after you're gone. It's ok to be a little selfish and find a position you want to be in.

Mike Wolfe
President

When I worked as a Career Advisor, I would provide each of my advisee's with a piece of paper with one line written on it:

"I will be employed by: _____"

I then requested that they think of a realistic date of employment, and place this piece of paper under their family TV or on their fridge.

When someone is unemployed or underemployed it is easy to get lost in the minutia of life. Due to the feelings of rejection and inadequacy, which can be a daily experience for those seeking employment, finding a new job often becomes secondary to picking up the kids, getting dinner made, homework, current business projects or just about anything else. I found that those who set a realistic and tangible goal for themselves, and then display the goal in a public place are often better able to maintain the motivation and drive needed to get employed. After all, who wants to explain to a spouse, child or friend why they haven't met their goal?

For what it is worth, I believe in this method so much that when I was laid off in January I used it myself, and had six job offers by the end of March!

Michael Detzel
Associate Director of Online Initiatives
College of Mount St. Joseph

I think one of the things that is most pressing for people about their careers is to know themselves. One of the best ways to do that is through understanding your own life purpose so that everything that you do will be fulfilling and in service to something bigger than yourself. Knowing your life purpose also helps with your self-confidence and having a direction in life. People can then more accurately design their career path or reinvent themselves from this perspective to live an authentic life. Each person has a unique "Life Purpose DNA" that they can use to make decisions.

Suzanne Strisower, M.A., PCC
Life Purpose Expert & Life and Career Coach
Author & Radio Show Host

The best piece of career advice that I can give Gen Y is that sarcasm has no place in the workplace either in email or face-to-face. Saying, "don't ever give me another project like this one" will be taken literally. I've heard this from two different receptionists in the past 5 years, and while they said that they were joking, it placed that kernel of doubt in my mind about whether they wanted to work. Humor also does not work well in email. People naturally want to read between the lines in written correspondence and the reader may inadvertently place a tone of voice in your email that was not intended by you.

Monique Littlejohn, Development Director
Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara

Employment Career Tips

Especially with people entering the job market right out of college, I often hear the complaint that people don't have much experience to refer to.

I think part of the reason for this is that people are wrongly limiting themselves to thinking, talking, and writing only about experience in formal jobs. For most people coming right out of college, a relatively small portion of their life will have been spent in jobs, but this doesn't mean they don't have job skills.

In my case, I had many tangible skills that I could demonstrate to employers that I had developed during my spare time. I could demonstrate my programming skill by showing a chess program I wrote, which was good enough to beat me, and I had a portfolio of music that I had written, and two brief albums of live recordings. I also had discovered a group of mathematical sequences, which were published in the Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences.

While these interests were not directly relevant to any jobs, talking about them, and even including them on my resume, showed that I was self-directed, able to pick up skills on my own, qualities most employers want. The musical projects demonstrated that I was able to organize and complete larger projects that required other people (in this case, an ensemble of chamber musicians) to carry out.

I had many positive reactions from employers in interviews, about these non-job points on my resume; people told me that these points jumped out at them as different, and got their attention.

Alex Zorach
Founder and Editor, RateTea.com

Most executives have no idea what they are doing. However, they have confidence in their ability to figure it out. Instead of trying to learn the details of a position before applying for a higher position, instead, learning how to gather information and think critically.

How much time you hold in your mind correlate with how far you will go in your career. You should be able to picture or envision your career 10-12 years out. That picture should influence your big decisions even in a career that requires monthly, quarterly or annual reports.

Part of being human means that your performance will go up and down, seemingly at random. Do not judge your capabilities based on your worst days and don't fall into the trap of thinking you will always be as good as your best day.

Relationships matter but the relationships that matter most are ones where the other believes in your character, your capabilities, feels good when they are around you and believes that the relationship is reciprocal. If any of the four things is missing, the relationship will not benefit your career in any significant way.

Ethics are valuable on their own merit. However, in your career, ethics protects your talent. A talented person without ethics eventually gets themselves into a deep hole. For those who lack ethics, it would have been better to lack talent as well.

I can go on all day, however one of the best pieces of advice did not come from me but from Gregory Bateson who said- I would be so much more effective if I could take all that I know about interpersonal dynamics and apply those insights to my own life (paraphrase).

Dave Popple PhD, President
Corporate Insights

Employment Career Tips

Best career advice I ever received was not to take advice from my spouse regarding my professional career.

The idea behind it was that spouses respond in two ways: defend or attack. An ultra-supportive spouse will always tell you that you are right, or you are the best, or you are the smartest because they do not objectively see your flaws or weaknesses at work. Men are especially protective of women and any criticism causes them to defend their wives. Women are equally protective and might baby a man through a career situation. Even if the conversation never leaves the bedroom, a spouse who is overly protective and supportive may not give objective feedback. On the other hand, a spouse that does not respect or support you (even subconsciously) will make you question every tough decision. Men may subtly pressure women to be nice and supportive, while women might pressure men to be strong or confrontational when that is not what is called for in the workplace.

Julie Angelen Joy
Z Group PR

A bit of advice: if you are currently looking for a job, save yourself and potential employers some agony by doing your research. Find out everything you possibly can about the office environment wherever you are looking to apply. If it doesn't seem like someplace you would thrive, move on to the next opportunity. When possible, incorporate your understanding of how you would fit into the organization's culture into your cover letter. Finally, be sure to emphasize the congruence of your personality with the job in your interview to make yourself stand out from other applicants whose qualifications may be the same, but may not fit as well culturally.

www.nonprofithr.com

Here's a key piece of career advice that's seldom if ever discussed: the best way to get that raise.

1. Be ready with a list of your accomplishments, all the reasons why you've earned a pay raise. (Not why you NEED a pay raise.) If you can assign a dollar value, how much the accomplishments on that list have earned or saved the company, so much the better.
2. What's the benefit to the company in giving you a raise? You'd better know. And almost as important, you should be able to show a benefit to your boss, the one who probably recommends (or doesn't recommend) the raises. How is giving you more money going to advance the interests of the company and the interests of your boss?
3. Send a short note to your boss at the end of each week, just keeping him or her apprised of everything you did during that week. Come evaluation time the boss may well use those notes to help write the evaluation. And at the very least you'll have all that ammunition when it's time to discuss raises.
4. And remember, the first offer is just that: a first offer. Come back with a polite counter offer: "I was really thinking in terms of X dollars, boss." Then you can settle on something between the two.

Before you do any of that though, ask yourself the following question, "Do I believe I deserve a raise strongly enough that I can create a case that should convince my boss?" If you can't convince yourself, you'll never convince your boss.

Of course, business being business, you're not always going to get the raise you want. When that happens, politely and respectfully ask your boss if you can sit down together and determine what specifically you need to do in order to earn the raise in the future. Try to work out deliverables that are as specific as possible and try to pin down a time frame. Take notes, let your boss see that you're taking notes, and if possible work up something in writing you can both agree to. Ask for his or her help in achieving those deliverables. Then report your progress regularly. Once you've met those specific goals, it will be very difficult for your boss not to grant your raise or at the very least fight for it.

Employment Career Tips

Barry Maher, consultant, author, speaker, www.barrymaher.com, has appeared on the Today Show, NBC Nightly News, CNBC, and he's frequently featured in publications like the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the London Times, Business Week and USA Today.

DO:

- Create a network of colleagues, managers and higher ups that understand your goals and current skills.
- Vocalize your plans to stay within the company with your manager and beyond.
- Invest in continuous learning to stay on top of your game.
- Fully understand the company's business strategy and how your role contributes.
- Anticipate the department needs...don't wait to be asked to get involved.
- Volunteer to get involved with special projects, particularly those across business units.

DON'T:

- Don't complain about the business or co-workers...at work or on-line.
- Don't take advantage of flexible working arrangements.
- Don't be a high maintenance employee for your manager.

Shawnice Meador

Director of Career Management & Leadership at MBA@UNC

Do something to shake up your perspective. Our volunteers often tell us that mentoring an aspiring professional in their industry reinvigorates the mentor, not just the mentee. Sometimes, discussing how you got into this line of work and the skills it demands, reminds you of why you chose the field in the first place and how much you enjoy it. You are likely to leave the volunteer session with a renewed sense of gratitude and accomplishment.

Jenni Luke

CEO of Step Up Women's Network

Los Angeles, CA

The best advice I ever received from my dad, way before I was even in the job market was to be true to your values and core beliefs. Too many of us forsake this and put the job above ourselves. Tibi esse verum, to thyself be true. Every time I short-sold myself and my core values, it never worked out. I lead a much happier, balanced life sticking to what I believe and surrounding myself with like-minded people. Patrick Lencioni's book, *The Advantage*, hits it right on the mark when it comes to not only leadership but sticking to those key core values.

Bruce Specter

I have launched and sold several ecommerce sites and now do ecommerce strategy and marketing strategy for over 20 large brands.

Employment Career Tips

The most valuable piece of advice that I received that I honestly don't hear often is that everyone has great ideas, go do something, get started.

I hear people say "work hard" "be smart" "it's about who you know" "don't take no for an answer" etc. and these are all important, but what has allowed me to be successful, even during a crazy recession with no real work experience, was just getting things done. If I had an idea, as soon as I vetted it and saw it as viable, I started building it, then finished building it and launched it.

Erik Huberman
Hawke Media

As I lecture to students transitioning to graduation and then becoming doctors I tell something they have never heard before, it is this:

'Become the Embodiment of that thing you're selling.'

Examples, 1) If you're going to be a health and wellness practitioner you had better be the Embodiment of health and wellness. 2) If you're going to dispense with marketing advice you had better be able to show something you've built marketed and launched.

Scott Evans

I think that there is a common belief that is assumed by most people who work in a corporate or large company environment that the Human Resources department somehow is on the employees side or works for the employees' best interest. Many, many times when I hear people talk about problems at work, the first thing that comes out of someone's mouth is "Go see HR" or "Report that to HR" as if HR will take their side and work for them. So the piece of career advice I always give is that employees MUST remember that HR does not work for them! HR works for management to maximize the return on its most expensive asset-its human assets. I think this is rarely heard in the business world. I have never heard anyone else say it. Now, I am not denigrating the fine work that HR professionals do, nor do I have any disrespect whatsoever for them. My point is that each person must take command of their own career situation and do what is best for them and not to rely on someone else to look out for them, because that does not exist. Similarly, I would say the same about recruiters. Again I often hear people speaking about this or that recruiter "finding" them a job or getting them a great placement at a company. The recruiter works for the company who is paying their commission, NOT the employee. It seems to me that employees will let a recruiter direct their career path, when it should be the other way around. And again, no disrespect to recruiters. They do the job they are paid to do and many of them are quite good at finding good matches between staff and company. Employees get complacent and feel it's easier to let someone else take responsibility. That's the advice I often give.

Ellen Mastros

As a writer and coach on this subject, I have a lot of ideas, but the two that most people seem not to get are: 1. An interview is a conversation, not an interrogation. The more you can convert it to that, the more success you have 2. People hire who they like over who is most qualified. This is why 1 is so important. Find ways to connect with the interviewer on more than just a work level.

Denise P. Kalm
Chief Innovator
Kalm Kreative, Inc.

Employment Career Tips

I am a bi-coastal (Los Angeles & Brooklyn-based) wine maven with a non-standard piece of career advice: don't be afraid to add some color!

This advice has helped me, and I've seen it work well for others too. Incorporating color into your wardrobe - in moderation! - is a fun way to exude confidence and subconsciously reinforce that you're worth getting to know more about, since you don't blend into the crowd. Your audience will know that it's more likely your deliverable won't be the same staid ones they could get from everyone else! The chance to stand out in non-verbal ways can be especially helpful for younger or returning professionals as they continue to (re)learn the ropes and (re)develop their business "voice."

I am the President & CEO of Heritage Link Brands, which I co-founded with my husband Khary to transform select African products into iconic, global brands. On a serendipitous trip to South Africa in 2005, I learned that its \$3 billion wine industry had less than 2% black ownership (despite blacks representing 80% of the country's population). So I sprang into action!

We began partnering with South African producers who until 1994 were formerly prohibited from ownership or management within the wine industry due to apartheid. We are honored to collaborate with our producers - including the exciting House of Mandela brand, owned and operated by Nelson Mandela's family.

Today our company is the largest marketer of black-produced wine from Africa in the United States. Serving a loyal customer base of household names from American Airlines to Whole Foods, our award-winning wines are sold in 40 U.S. states, South Africa, Nigeria, and literally, worldwide, aboard two airlines.

Selena Cuffe

This seems so obvious, but it is wisdom I never read about in career columns or hear about from job coaches: know business.

So much emphasis is placed on career planning, communications, soft skill development etc. with very little attention paid to how critically important it is to know the fundamentals of business, how the major topics interrelate and how, as an employee, you can implement this knowledge effectively to enhance the goals of your intended workplace.

Maria Katrien Heslin
CEO, Independent George LLC

1. Build both external and internal allies. You never know when you will need them both to support you.
2. Be nice to Secretaries and Janitors...they hear a lot (because they are often dismissed) and if they are well liked, can open doors to those in charge.
3. Saying words like 'Thank you' and 'please' can take you places.

Froswa' Booker-Drew

Most business owners know to create careful plans that build in room for unexpected expenses, but you should also create plans for the best case scenario, and build in readiness for unexpected success. I first opened my doors at Lexion Capital at 2pm one day in fall 2010, and by close of business that evening I had more clients than I had projected for the entire first quarter. This flood of business became

Employment Career Tips

what I can only term a "reverse curse," as I had to temporarily shut my doors to further new clients for the next few months. My advice to new entrepreneurs is to dream big and plan for those results as carefully as you would for any other contingency. When you plan ahead for the best-case possibilities of rapid growth, you'll be poised to take advantage of those opportunities when they do arise without overwhelming your resources. Lexion Capital today is a thriving firm that continues to rapidly grow, and my perspective as CEO is to always dream bigger and keep expanding my definition of success.

Elle Kaplan
Lexion Capital

I recently released my first book on using comedy in the workplace, which was named by Forbes as "One of Three Books That May Make You Re-Think Your Career."

One piece of career advice that I love but believe doesn't get enough attention is the following:

- You don't need to quit a stable job and follow your dream. You can find a way to merge your work with your passion and both can co-exist if done correctly.

I also would say to people that they should stop worrying about things that they haven't done. Stop talking about what you should be doing, and just start doing things. Even if they aren't getting you where you want them to, you WILL achieve something awesome if you stop talking and start acting.

Bill Connolly

As in the movie, The Graduate, where 'plastics' was the recommended investment to the college kid, I would recommend: Specializing. It is better to be the best at one thing, than to be really good at a lot of things. The really big bucks go to those who are the best at what they do, and they do it in a narrow field. I wish I'd known that in college.

Celeste Zimmerman, CPA, Mediator

The best advice I have ever received and given is "Once it stops being a challenge and you are not learning anything new ... Move on". This advice has kept me from staying at a "dead job" no matter how great the pay. It has helped my resume and my real life experience. I have applied my experience and education from each position I have held to my own company now. I am well rounded and ready for anything!

Nique Mealey

1. Technical skills are not enough.
2. Time management and productivity skills are not enough.
3. Hard working, strong work ethic is not enough.

What is enough? What is *essential* to have is an attitude to serve people, interpersonal skills. Organizations hire for attitude because

Employment Career Tips

they can train easily for technical skills. And...in this age of diversity where more generations are in the workplace than ever before, organizations rarely find themselves in litigation for productivity issues.

Brian Braudis,
Consultant, Coach, Speaker

The following are three pieces of career advice that are often overlooked / unspoken....

1) You Have Already Made a Decision

Often employees remain in roles that they have already outgrown, or that are unhealthy for them. What can keep them frozen in this space is the fear of making a decision, believing that "inaction" equates to "indecision". Since they are unsure of what to do next, they "avoid making a decision." In actuality, every day that a person shows up to work they are deciding to be there. This shift in perspective can help awaken individuals to the decisions that they are making... and the potential realization that it is time for a change.

2) Listen to Your Body, Heart and Spirit

In deciding whether to seek out opportunities, or choose between roles, oftentimes people rely on both the advice of others and "what their head is telling them." While thoughtful analysis and the opinion of others may be helpful, there are other equally important data points that should be considered: namely, body, heart and spirit. In making career decision it is wise to ask the following questions of yourself: "What is your body telling you?" "What is your heart telling you?" "What is the gentle whisper of the inner voice (your soul) telling you?" These questions can help shift our over reliance on analysis and opinions in making decisions, and open us to the wisdom of our body, heart and spirit.

3) It Doesn't Have to Be That Hard

In identifying career opportunities that leverage individuals' unique gifts and talents we may be blind to areas of opportunity. A good question to begin with is: "What is it that people seek you out to do?" Individuals may not recognize or place value on skills and talents that come so easily to them. While it is human nature to value what has been achieved by effort and hard work, we can mistakenly overlook the contributions that effortlessly flow from us. By asking yourself the above question, we may begin to value what others value in us and seek opportunities to leverage those skills and talents. The "work" that doesn't feel like "work" is the contribution that we were created to bring to the world.

Sheila McCaffrey, Principal
Turas Coaching

When you alert your boss to a problem, include one or three suggested solutions.

Suzanne Fulton
Public Relations Consultant (former employee at several organizations)
Cornelius, NC

I'm a pastor and church consultant.

Employment Career Tips

I recommend prayer. If a person believes in the Bible, I recommend taking a "spiritual gift" test that identifies a person's spiritual gifts based on the lists of them in the Bible.

Drew Hayes

Successful people are always gaining knowledge about how to become more effective. Knowledge is key. Without it we cannot go to the next level. Then we have to put knowledge to use. To be successful we need to learn to use the knowledge we have.

Status quo keeps many from regularly developing and actually using new knowledge. It takes concentrated, focused effort. A great attitude to have is what I call the 1% attitude. 1% is a tiny amount. If you can improve your effectiveness just 1% a month in about 5 years you will have doubled your effectiveness. This is a positive attitude to build sustainability in career growth around.

Tom Northup
Leadership Management Group

Author of the book, Five Hidden Mistakes CEOs Make: How to Unlock the Secrets that Drive Growth and Profitability Author of the upcoming book, Leadership Is Not A Soft Skill: How To Develop Behaviors That Drive Sustainable Results

I've worked in marketing and sales for the past 10 years and many of the same principles that apply to business development apply to job searching.

I am currently the Co-Founder of PolitePersistence an email app that helps people spend less time on email by eliminating the need for ever having to manually follow up ever again.

My previous professional background is in private equity and management consulting.

The best piece of advice I can provide is to use the '3-shot kill' rule when contacting those who are in a position to offer information, advice or placements for your job search.

A 3 shot kill rule means:

- If you are going to email someone for an informational interview be sure to follow up at least 3 times via email.
- However, don't rely on just email. If you have access to their social media accounts connect with them on that medium. This will help differentiate you.

John Genovese
PolitePersistence

1. Know your weaknesses and how you are going to work with or around these faults, for example: if you are dyslectic and have trouble with spelling, have an editor who you use whenever you have to write something important (someone outside or inside your company)
2. Take ownership of your mistakes, past and current. You will be trusted if you are not perceived as someone who cover-ups or tells white lies.

Employment Career Tips

3. Be competitive with yourself not others.
4. Keep your workplaces relationships friendly, but do not cross into friendship often.

Kathi Elster
K Squared Enterprises

Kathi is an executive coach and the co-author of *Working with You Is Killing Me*, *Mean Girls at Work* and *Working for You Isn't Working for Me*.

Contrary to popular advice, don't leave your emotions at the door when you go to work. Play your cards close to the vest, yes, but don't forget to look at them yourself! You should know how you feel, not just what you think, about everything that goes on around you. That way, you'll have access to subtle information that lives in the world of feelings, such as hunches about hidden dangers or opportunities.

I'm a licensed professional counselor in Portland, Oregon. I offer career and personal counseling to individual adults, and teach a free class on finding the right work.

Tina Gilbertson, LPC

Author of the forthcoming book, "Constructive Wallowing: How to Beat Bad Feelings by Letting Yourself Have Them"

The best piece of advice I was given (and offer to others) goes against the normal flow of job search. This advice was to not worry so much about open job postings online. Those have too much competition. Instead I just contacted the people who had the power to hire me (at organizations I really wanted to work with) and set up meetings.

BAM! Instant interview without the competition! Guess who got job offers each time they had a position come open! Some people will say no to the meetings but you will be surprised at how many people say yes and how much of an edge that gives you when they go to hire someone.

Recruiters and other gate keepers will tell you NOT to do this (because it bypasses them) but I have had as many as 4 job offers using this method.

I have used this method in Human Resources, but I also work with many other people as a coach for a variety of industries (education, IT, Manufacturing, Retail, Training, Government, etc.)

Scott Anthony Barlow, Founder
Happen to Your Career

The way you 'be' is just as important as what you 'do.' This is a twist on the adage, "it's not what you say, it's how you say it." I describe the distinction between 'being' and 'doing' to my clients with a story about Marilyn Monroe:

One day, Norma Jean is casually walking down the crowded streets of Manhattan among a group of women, and one of her friends points out her sheer amazement that nobody has noticed Marilyn. Never one to shy from a challenge, Marilyn then proceeds to break out slightly ahead - head up, shoulders back, bright smile, and hips swaying in a way only she can. Suddenly, throngs of people are pointing and

Employment Career Tips

shouting, "Look, it's Marilyn Monroe!"

In both cases, she was DO-ing the same thing - walking down the streets of NYC - so what was the difference? In the first situation, she was walking discretely, blending in. In the second scenario, she was BE-ing Marilyn Monroe in all of her glory. Lesson: oftentimes, you can make an even bigger impact by focusing on how you show up when you take action, rather than relying on the action alone.

Learn when and how to expand your 'circle of influence'. You see, we can look at any situation in the context of three concentric circles:

1. In control - The only thing we can truly control are our own actions and thoughts in any given moment.
2. Out of control - Likewise, many things in life are truly out of our control, such as traffic, flight delays, and natural disasters. Don't waste time or energy on these.
3. Influence - This is where magic happens. Many people prejudge situations as being out of their control, when in fact, they may have the ability to influence!

When things at work seem challenging or inescapable, don't shrink back into your small area of control, as most people are inclined to do, because then you'll think small. Rather, thoughtfully dance around the edges and think big about the choices you have to expand that circle of influence. Lesson: It's the only way to avoid being a victim of circumstance, take control of your career destiny, and make big things happen. Having a mentor or coach is invaluable in helping you make good decisions about when and how to take action (and of course, about how to BE while you're doing it!).

Shani Magosky, Founder/Chief Infusion Officer at Vitesse Consulting

If you do not have a position, you need to make sure you have contact cards (formerly called business cards). My experience is about 90 percent of people looking for jobs do not have cards. You cannot give a resume to everyone. How you are going to make it easy for people to get in touch with you or pass on your name if you do not have one?

Send a handwritten note, with your contact card, to EVERYONE that helps you in your job search. Nobody is doing it. You'll will stand out and trust me it will be passed around.

Kathy Condon

I am a business and efficiency coach. I use career management, time management and work life balance strategies to help professional individuals stay ahead. I never kept track of anything in my last job because I didn't think I would have to. Now I'm unemployed and have no numbers to quote. Now what? One of the things I notice most is that people don't do is to keep an accurate Professional Press Kit. Most celebrities, models, authors, etc. keep their press kit and portfolio updated as things happen. But very few professionals keep a Professional Press Kit, their portfolio or even their resume up to date. The Press Kit can be a simple folder of accomplishments, recognitions, and awards.

The press kit also needs to include quantifiable results in terms of value to the company. Reporting that you created a tool in Java is nice. But what does it really mean to the company's bottom line? On the other hand, reporting in your press kit: Provided online entry and tracking of the recruitment process. Reduced the need of 3 clerks to 1 to process 10,000+ job applications. This new online application is saving the company \$60,000/year.

Laura Lee Rose, CTACC
Business and Efficiency Coach

Employment Career Tips

People need to talk more about being positive and not saying no. "Show must go on" was a motto long ago and making the show happen helped make the country succeed. Also it is important just to make your immediate environment free of mess, like your desk, that makes you feel more positive and capable. I curate The Museum of Interesting Things. I like to show people their iPods did not pop out of thin air!

Denny Daniel

Fail...That is how you succeed.

NEVER compromise your morals and stay shy of people who do ... You are seeing what they will do to you eventually AND if you ever walk in an office where the posted sign says HONEST accountant/lawyer/fill in the blank? RUN!!!

Carrie Devorah

I would tell people that jobs and job leads can come from anyone anywhere anytime so you should always be on your best behavior & make a great lasting impression. You'd be amazed where some of my best contacts have come from over the years. A gardener who also happened to work for someone who was in a position to help, a hair stylist who had well heeled (and coiffed) clients, standing in line for the bathroom at a conference I struck up a conversation with a top recruiter. Seriously be nice to everyone & make friends before you need them, you never know who is in or will be in a position to help!

Paige Arnof-Fenn, Founder & CEO
Mavens & Moguls

The best career advice I ever received was "Be nice... and ask questions". Be nice -as in always enter a situation with a positive frame of mind. Be polite, even if the other party isn't. One may have misread a situation or motives. That's where the "ask questions" part kicks in. Be sure you understand all the facts. Ask questions like "Why do you need that information?" or "How will that help you?"

Marilyn Santiesteban
Assistant Director of Graduate and Alumni Career Services
Bentley University

In the broad spectrum, tuning into what you WANT to do, rather than what you WANT to WANT to do is tough, but important. And navigating that amidst the unknowns of a job market and personal demands can make this tougher still. Naturally, anxiety is almost always a part of this equation, but it is often viewed as something that is a hindrance rather than a help to the career process. I've noticed the opposite: When people really tune into their fears and conflicts, they start to see things more clearly and get closer to what really makes them tick so that they can forge a path ahead that resonates. One thing I've noticed has been helpful is to ask people what they are afraid of. And then, what they want. The answers to these two simple questions often begin the conversation of listening to the quiet anxieties almost always present in major life transitions that are always telling you something important. Next step is talking, talking, talking to trusted friends, family members, professionals who will listen to you and reflect back what they hear. Getting really clear on what your anxiety is whispering often provides the road map, and the anxiety itself provides the energy to walk the road ahead.

Employment Career Tips

On a smaller scale and in a different direction, one of the biggest stressors in peoples' careers is unemployment and looking for a job. After days and days of hearing no feedback, and worse negative feedback, anyone starts to lose perspective and confidence. One tip I have found particularly useful in maintaining a positive perspective is to "look behind you, instead of ahead of you," for those times in your life when you have succeeded and accomplished things about which you are proud. Distill these successes into small phrases or mantras, print them, copy and laminate them, and put them everywhere you might need a confidence boost - your bathroom mirror, your car, your briefcase, your computer. Remember job searching is a marathon, not a sprint and all we need is one at a time (usually). Staying focused on our strengths and the positive will keep us motivated and resilient.

Alicia H. Clark, PsyD, PLLC
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Washington, DC

General advice on success:

"Success is about building something that lasts. Longevity is what separates the real entrepreneurs from the opportunists. The real entrepreneur's investment is the blood, sweat and tears into building a real brand and future. I believe that surviving is succeeding and the journey is the reward. Most importantly, it's crucial to build a reputation that's worth owning. When people ask about you or your company, they better have nothing but good things to say!"

Advice on writing things down and planning:

"Sometimes planning is the best way to be wrong about something, especially in an industry like marketing and technology. Everything changes so constantly! By the time you finish writing your plan, your ideas are probably outdated. Don't get caught in that vicious cycle."

Dimple Thakkar
SYNERGY MARKETING, LLC
Founder / CEO / Impresario

Something that no one talks about but is noticed by many people in the office is what you eat for lunch.

I sat down to eat lunch last week and my colleague surprisingly asked why I purchased a salad from a nearby restaurant. She said I was a "bring your own lunch" person. Up until that point I had not paid much attention to what I ate for lunch/ However, I quickly realized that I could down a list of my co-workers and tell you if they buy lunch, bring their own lunch, if they eat off other's plates, or what their dietary restrictions are. So I started asking around and it turns out that we're secretly judging what other's by what they eat for lunch.

If you eat unhealthy foods like cheeseburgers and fries you are considered a person who doesn't care much about your health and thus are assumed that you have the same level of concern for your work. Eat a vegan meal for lunch and you are considered extreme and thus will probably go the extra mile to get work done. Bring your own lunch you are considered to be a planner and thus will be associated being a person who completes assignments on time and very reliable. In every office you have a least one person who scrounges around and eats vending machine snacks for lunch or the person who will eat the leftovers of someone else's lunch. The vendor machine/leftover person is the red flag of the office, this tends to the person that will steal credit for your project and will wait to the last minute to get things done.

While this hasn't been scientifically proven there seems to be a general consensus among the 30+ people in my office.

Employment Career Tips

Jacqueline Twillie

One thing I am surprised other people don't do (that I do all the time) is change the name of the position they put on their resume. I am never "Analyst 1" or something generic like that.

I always use the position description to highlight skills that are honest for what I actually did, and that matches what the employer is seeking in the job description. So in software, if someone is looking for Ruby on Rails developer, and I used to be in a Ruby on Rails in a position, I would list that position as "Ruby on Rails Developer" - not "Tech Specialist III" or a generic term given to me by human resources. There's nothing dishonest about it - the former employer knows that was what my role was, and my new employer gets to skim my resume in a language that makes sense to them.

Sid Savara - Personal Development Trainer at SidSavara.com

I am a Career Coach and Co-Owner of Living the Dream Coaches, LLC in Scottsdale, Arizona. Most of the common career advice is to decide what you want to do/be, and then create a plan to get there. Network, find resources, get credentialed, and make it happen. That's all good advice.

But what got me where I am today was to be pushed, kicking and screaming, into a role I didn't want, which became a passion of mine after about eighteen months in the job. My advice is this - sometimes you should listen to what others see in you, that you may not see in yourself.

All through the early part of my career in banking, people kept pointing me toward training and human resources. I was not enthusiastic about it. I liked direct line management, where I was in charge of people, projects, and initiatives. I was the go-to person, the one who made things happen. And yet... people kept saying I should head toward human resources. I was already the person that people were sent to in order to learn their roles or learn them better. But I was happy to do training part time, in the evenings, and do my day-job as a line leader.

After eighteen months as a training leader, a role I initially disliked immensely, something started to happen - I saw the results of my work, starting to shift the bank's culture, starting to make a difference in the lives of those I trained. Things started to shift for me, and whatever I've done since then, there has been a heavy flavor of training and developing others.

I ended up with a degree in human resources, a master's degree in organizational development, and now I'm a certified coach - life, career, workplace, and leadership coaching is my passion. Working with women to claim their power is my passion. I use all the training and organizational development education to create programs for people who are ready to change. Had I not been pushed into that training role, I would not be where I am and who I am today. So the message is this - if you keep hearing the same message from others over and over, pay attention. Or you may overlook the one thing that will fuel your passion throughout your life.

Laurie D Battaglia, MSOD, ACC, ELI-MP
Certified Professional Coach
Living the Dream Coaches, LLC

As a college professor teaching business and management for the past 13 years, I often give career advice to students. Some of the best advice I give is planning for the long haul. The question is essentially "how to stay competitive (and hence employed) for over the next 30, 40, or maybe even fifty years? Once the idea that most college grads today need to work somewhere between 40-50 years, the reality of

Employment Career Tips

what needs to be done sinks in. All of sudden, concepts such as life-long learning, continuous sharpening of skills, creative destruction, renewal, and having multiple careers (I have 4, for example) starts to really sink in. Hope this is helpful.

Te Wu

Your personal brand matters:

What is a "Joe Wilson-type of project manager" or a "Linda Smith-type of marketing lead"? Do you have a brand? Are you the "McDonald's" of your profession or the "Norton's Steakhouse" of your profession? Being extremely mindful of the brand you wish to project is important, but even more so is whether or not everything you do, say or write reflects and backs up that brand. Are your actions congruent with the brand you wish to establish?

Also on the subject of brand, remember that your brand not only matters in the overall community in which you work, but more importantly it matters where you work TODAY. What is your brand at your current company? Are you associated with making others successful? Are you one of those people with whom others NEVER need to follow up (i.e., an action item with your name on it isn't worth following up on because it WILL get done)? Be conscious of your brand where you work TODAY and strive for congruency; everything you do, say or write should embody and back up your brand.

Your personal network:

Most people know that having a strong and active network is an important part of not only establishing yourself in your professional community but is also key in seeking your next opportunity or in getting referrals to build your own team. But how often do we pay attention to building, maintaining and leveraging our personal network where we work TODAY? Your ability to manage outcomes by influencing those over whom you have no authority is key to not only getting things done but in establishing a strong personal brand.

Make a point of getting to know other people within your firm BEFORE you have to call on them for a last-minute favor. Understand who they are, what their role is, their pain points, their goals, etc. Likewise, help others to get to know you too - same items (your role, your goals, etc.). Given the choice between authority and influence, choose influence. Authority comes from others and can be taken away, but influence is yours to earn or lose. Building and maintaining a personal network where you work now will help you become a strong and effective influencer, which is a better skill than the ability to exercise authority and also will strengthen your personal brand.

Mark E. Calabrese

Career Advice You Won't Hear Elsewhere:

Every employee who wants to be prized & get ahead needs to do three actions - in this order:

First, get along terrifically with your boss.

Second, make a fantastic impression on your boss' boss - because you will not get ahead unless your boss' boss thinks you are wonderful.

Third, do a super-good job - that is, be (a) highly productive and (b) produce results in your work that measurably increase your employer's profits.

Employment Career Tips

Michael Mercer, Ph.D., is author of the book "Job Hunting Made Easy."

Tom Hopkins primarily teaches salespeople about communication skills. However, many of our clients have learned that they sell themselves every day. They sell themselves into jobs. They sell themselves to upper management when they want a promotion or a raise. They sell themselves to co-workers and business clients all the time. Few people understand this concept. Those who do, excel at career growth because they have a "sales" plan and execute it daily. That's career advice you won't hear from a lot of other sources.

Judy Slack
Vice President of Business Development
Tom Hopkins International, Inc

Our advice is to maintain a good work ethic, but don't try to go over and bind yourself to any employer. It's not all about finding a job; it's substantially about keeping a job in the context of recessions, layoffs, etc. You have to make yourself invaluable to the company and difficult to replace.

Ian Aronovich, Co-founder and CEO
GovernmentAuctions.org

It is nice to be important, but more important to be nice. Be a pleasant and helpful co-worker to ensure positivity in the work place.

Lawrence Payne
The Employment Specialist at Polishing The Professional

One of the most powerful coaching questions I ask Executive Women is "What's enough?" It normally stops them in their tracks. These women are used to defining 'enough' as EVERYTHING! They are used to getting A+ scores - in school and now throughout their career.

So what happens when "everything" becomes impossible to accomplish? Guilt, depression, stress, anxiety and possibly even a decision to "drop out" or downsize their careers.

We need to start by accepting that everything is a physical impossibility and be redefining enough to focus on our true priorities. As much as any of us want to be otherwise, there truly are only 24 hours in a day. I ask my clients to define what's important to THEM - not their boss, spouse, family, coworkers - but THEM. Then we can allocate their time accordingly.

Most of us say yes to everything and end up saying no to some things we really care about - even if that no is an unconscious no. Saying yes to one more project at work may mean that you've effectively said no to seeing your kid's basketball games. That's not a choice you might make consciously - most of us would say our kids are the most important things. But the net result is you'll never get to be there on time or fully present. You'll be stressed and worried thinking about the project and everything else you've got to do.

So the first step is to get clear on what you truly value and want to put as a priority in your life. Then we time block accordingly, given the fixed and finite number of hours in the week. Anything that no longer fits is dropped.

Men are usually more able to ignore the stuff in their inbox and projects on their plate that don't fit into their top 5 priorities. Women try to

Employment Career Tips

do it all. It's much more effective from a career management standpoint to do 5 things well and promote your accomplishments than to try to do 25 things. The 25 will not be your best work, and you'll be too busy and stressed to tell anyone about them anyway. And they are too busy and stressed to notice, so you'll end up not getting full credit for the 25 anyway.

Prioritize based on your values; time block to make sure you execute. Overwork needs to become no longer an option.

Elene Cafasso
Enerpace, Inc. Executive Coaching

Career Advice for People Who Feel Stuck, Stymied, and Stultified

1. Connect with your deepest hopes. Fears keep your talent bottled up. Your hopes encourage creative, constructive outcomes. Surround yourself with people and objects that keep you connected to your hopes. Choose your hopes over your fears.
2. Get your "but" of your own way. Every time you express your hopes and add a "but" about why you can't realize them, you drain your own energy and squash possibilities. Every obstacle you encounter is an opportunity to use your talent, not to negate it.
3. Craft an inspirational story with yourself in the lead. When you tell the story of where you are and where you want to be at the end of this year, what character are you playing? Are you a victim, a bystander, or are you the hero. We live by the stories we tell, so tell a good one.
4. Grab every opportunity to grow. Chances are that in order to realize your hopes for your career, you are going to need to learn and grow. Be open, be curious, be willing stop pretending that you really know what you're doing.
5. Complete the 100 Resource Challenge. All of your accomplishments come through productive use of your resources: the people, places, and things that surround you. Start a master list of the resources you see; add to it daily until you reach 100. No matter how limited you may feel, when you recognize the many resources you can tap into, you'll regain your confidence to move forward.
6. I will use my resources to the fullest. Make sure you get the most from each of your resources. Learn what your technology can do for you. Tap into the skills you enjoy using. Make big requests of others. People love to contribute. Give them lots of opportunities.
7. Challenge yourself to stretch. Think of what you are comfortable doing and then go a little further. Find that place where excited meets nervous. Stretching increases your vitality and your sense of what's possible.
8. Turn your knowledge into tangible assets. You've undoubtedly accumulated some valuable knowledge on the job. Turning it into an enduring asset will help raise your visibility and help to define your personal brand. Create a web site, wiki, blog, product, system, book, instructional guide, procedure, song, video, visual art, sculpture, recipe, vocabulary, assessment, language, service, logo, brand, computer program, business plan, photograph, garden, concept, structure, innovation, poetry, award, event, e-mail, journal...

Jay Perry

Understand and study the company organizational chart. Always strive to deliver results for your direct report (boss). Making your supervisor shine is key (simple rule of managing up!)

Know that your career is not the "holy grail", nor will it offer you lifelong fulfillment. Your employer has no obligation to provide you with fulfillment - it's your responsibility to make the most of the opportunities presented. Find fulfillment in life with friends, family, hobbies and extracurricular activities - don't expect to find this in a job.

Show up with a SMILE- make it fun!

A positive attitude will attract others.

Employment Career Tips

Kimberly
COO/Managing Director for a Marketing Agency
Norwalk, CT