

MANAGING YOUR CAREER

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In today's highly competitive job market, it is more important than ever to be proactive about managing your career, regardless of your age or stage in life. Change is the norm in organizations and even the best and most competitive employees find themselves in career transition at one time or another. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor suggests that working professionals can expect to make two or three career changes and as many as ten job changes over the course of their working lives. So how can you best prepare for career transitions and effectively manage your career?

BE INTENTIONAL

Create a vision for your career and recognize the relationship between your work and other roles in your life. Build support systems and networks. Find mentors and sponsors – those individuals who are willing to be your champion within an organization. Become a mentor or sponsor to others. Strive to live a satisfying life that is aligned with your values. According to Gretchen Rubin, author of the bestseller *The Happiness Project*, “live in the moment and appreciate small things. Surround yourself with the things that inspire you and let go of the obsessions that want to take over your mind. It is a daily struggle and hard work but happiness begins with your own attitude and how you look at the world.”

INVEST IN YOURSELF

“Never stop learning,” advises Glenn Llopis, contributing writer at *Forbes Magazine*. Take advantage of personal and professional development opportunities to build strengths and competencies. Nurture the right relationships. Benchmark with those you aspire to be like. Write a development plan and update it on a regular basis. Consult with a career coach about your plan and ask for feedback.

MANAGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

Know your value in the market. Be visible in your field by joining and becoming active in professional associations. Volunteer to serve on a committee or plan an event. Distinguish yourself from others and look for opportunities to increase your social and emotional intelligence. Commit to excellence and be humble in the face of failure. Authenticity and the ability to listen to, understand and empathize with others makes you stand out as a leader, team player, and a professional. According to Daniel Goleman, award winning author and international speaker on emotional and social intelligence, “we are wired to connect.” Connect with others in a way that makes you stand out.

TRUST YOUR INTUITION

Know when it's time to make a career transition and find the courage to move on. There are usually plenty of signs that signal it's time for a change. Look first at your own workplace behaviors. Do you notice a decrease in your motivation or productivity at work? Do you use work time to take care of personal matters? Do you feel less satisfied overall? Are you daydreaming about a new job, or your next vacation? If so, begin to plan for your career transition. Do your research. Know the market and how you add value. Focus your career direction. Review your development plan to be sure that you have the skills, experiences, and credentials you need to be successful. If not, invest in yourself before you

begin your search. Recognize that career transitions take time and energy. Consider whether or not the timing is right for a change. If you are struggling in other areas of your life, you may need to focus on these challenges first. Reach out to a career coach or counselor to help you plan for and manage your career transition.

PLAN FINANCIALLY FOR LIFE & CAREER TRANSITIONS

Career planning and financial planning go hand in hand. Preparation is the key to success may sound cliché, but without financial resources, it is very difficult to plan for and execute a life or career change. Research suggests that younger generations of workers are saving less than their parents and grandparents did, are struggling to manage insurmountable debt, and are often living paycheck to paycheck. Consider how long you could afford to be unemployed. Creating a budget, paying down debt, building an emergency savings fund, and delaying the impulse to buy things you don't need are common sense strategies that lead to financial independence.

Live life by your design! Be proactive about managing your career. Anticipate and plan for inevitable career and life changes and seek out help when needed to stay on track.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Glenn Llopis (2012) The Five Most Effective Ways to invest in Your Career. *Forbes Magazine* www.danielgoleman.info

Gretchen Rubin (2010) *The Happiness Project*
[Life Reimagined Institute](http://LifeReimaginedInstitute.com)