

Career momentum

A Tweet from one of our followers

@Brandyourself

Success is the sum of small efforts,
repeated day in and day out. -Robert
Collier #PwCPBW



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The New, New Thing: Top 10 Ways to Be Open to Opportunities & Change

Change is the only constant in life...and in your career. Never let yourself become too comfortable and complacent. Here are 10 tips to keep you on your toes.

Friday tips

1. Do one thing every week to advance your career

Spend some time each week (or each day if you're actively job hunting) reading a career advice blog, working on your public speaking skills, taking a new colleague for coffee or doing anything else to help your career prospects. Just like getting good grades or learning an instrument, being successful in your career requires daily commitment and daily action.

2. Cast a wide net

Think broadly about all the career paths that are open to you. Don't unnecessarily limit yourself to "rising up the ladder" at a big corporation or pursuing a career based on your college major. If you're willing to be flexible, there are endless career possibilities, and we don't even know yet what jobs will arise thanks to new technologies and new markets. Think broadly and keep your eyes and ears open for new directions.

3. Get in the know

Set up free, online keyword news alerts for employers, industries, products, events and people related to your current industry and any industries you want to explore. This will ensure that you're the very first to know about new opportunities. Plus, if you decide to make a career change, you'll have a head start on learning about that career direction.

4. Study the stars

Pay close attention to the people you admire in your industry or elsewhere. Scour their online profiles, read their articles, follow their tweets, watch what they wear and how they speak. You can learn a lot by studying and emulating the actions, attitudes and relationships of leaders and luminaries.

5. Be a leader

Of course you don't just want to watch the stars; you want to be one! Raise your hand for opportunities to join new projects, gain new experiences and meet new people. If you have an idea for a new solution to a problem, research it and share your findings. When you join a professional association, volunteer to lead a committee. Leadership positions are crucial to building experience, getting noticed and earning increased responsibility.

6. Keep in touch with the people you meet

Spend maybe 30 minutes a week sending a few "hello" emails to people you haven't spoken to in a while—friends at other colleges, former teachers or employers, family friends, etc. Ask your connections if there is anything you can do to help them, and ask them to keep an eye out for career opportunities that might be a good fit for you. Seventy to eighty percent of jobs are found through networking, so the more people you know—and who know you—the more opportunities you will be exposed to.

7. Pack your bags

Business happens everywhere, so don't limit yourself to one location or even one country. Many successful professionals will tell you that an overseas assignment provided their greatest professional development. Be open to relocation to another town, another state or another continent.

8. Visit (or revisit) career services

When in doubt, ask for help. There is no situation too small to ask a few trusted friends or advisers for guidance or reassurance. In particular, your college career services office has plentiful (and usually free) resources—exclusive job and networking databases, résumé critiquing, mock interviewing, personalized career counseling and more. Many even offer phone or online programs and support.

9. Be more than willing to learn

If people consistently tell you that you need a certain degree, a certain class credit or a certain skill set to attain the career you want, take the advice seriously. With online learning, community colleges and corporate training programs, you can find almost any course you need to fit your schedule and budget.

10. Don't be afraid to fail

Failures will happen to you during your career, and probably already have. Some employers won't hire you. Some "dream" internships will be disappointing. Some bosses won't promote you. Congratulations! Once you've got some certified failure experience, you'll be better at knowing how to recover the next time it happens. Failing isn't much fun. But real failure comes from never trying something in the first place.

Keeping Your Career Momentum: Ongoing Strategies for Success

**Friday
worksheet**

What are the keys to building a successful career over the long term?

A career is a marathon, not a sprint. So how do you stay on track through the days, months and years of your working life? You have to develop ongoing habits that will keep you moving forward one day at a time, while always keeping an eye on the big picture.

Here is an outline of activities you can pursue daily, weekly, monthly and yearly to keep the momentum in your career:

Daily Career-building Habits

Do your best in any job you hold

Sir William Osler, known as the “Father of Modern Medicine,” declared, “The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today’s work superbly well.” Keep that thought in your mind, even if you find yourself in a job that you don’t like. Doing excellent work always provides an opportunity to demonstrate your talent and to get noticed by important people. This includes excelling on whatever task is in front of you—when you excel at smaller tasks (like cheerfully photocopying documents for a client), people will trust you with the bigger ones. Always perform for the job or work you want, even if it’s not the job or work you currently have.

Consume important media, not just social media

As a professional in any industry at any level, you absolutely must be informed about current events in your profession and the world at large. This means reading qualified information sources and not just watching the videos your friends post on Facebook or re-tweet on Twitter. At the very least, skim the headlines each day and read the first few paragraphs of major articles. Examine the news more thoroughly when an article covers a topic related to your work. Note that reading the news doesn’t have to be time-consuming or expensive if you subscribe to a media outlet’s RSS feed or e-newsletter.

Clean your desk

Even if you’re not the most organized person in the world, end each day by setting yourself up for a good beginning the following day. You can’t really function at your highest capacity if your desk is cluttered with coffee-stained papers, your email inbox is overflowing and yesterday’s lunch is sitting half-eaten by the printer. Start creating good organizational habits while you’re still a student: As your last action of the day, unclutter your desk and take five minutes to write a fresh to-do list for the next day. You’ll thank yourself in the morning—and for the rest of your career.

Take time to recharge

Working hard is incredibly important and amazingly satisfying, but don’t let yourself become so over-worked that you neglect your own wellbeing. Take time every single day for a bit of relaxation, even if you can only fit in a 10-minute walk around the block or a quick phone chat with your best friend. Learning to manage stress is a crucial career accomplishment.

Weekly Career-building Habits

Keep adding skills and knowledge

While there are no final exams in the “real world” (thank goodness!), there are unlimited opportunities to continue learning after graduation. Learning is truly a lifelong experience, especially for ambitious professionals. Even the smallest learning opportunities have big rewards: Look up a word you don’t know in an online dictionary. Watch a five-minute tutorial to discover how to better use a computer program. Read an article about a country you’re unfamiliar with. You never know what you might stumble upon or

how the information you learn could benefit you in the future. Every few months, it's a great idea to dedicate several hours or a full day to a training session, workshop or class to further develop a new skill or delve deeply into a subject that interests you.

Stay in touch with your network

Since the best networking relationships develop authentically over time, dedicate some energy to checking in with a few people in your network every week. Send a few hello emails, comment on the status updates posted by contacts on your social networks or stop by the desks of a few people in your office whom you don't see frequently. You might even schedule a 30- to 60-minute block in your calendar each week dedicated to keeping up with your network. Otherwise you'll blink and realize you've barely spoken to any of your professional contacts in months or even years.

Keep up with industry media

Just as it's important to read or watch the news every day, you should also subscribe to "must-read" media for the industry in which you work (or an industry in which you might want to work someday). Subscribe to e-newsletters, blogs, Twitter lists or other information sources that will keep you up-to-date on issues related to your field. If you're not sure what to read, ask successful people in your profession what media are essential parts of their reading and viewing routines.

Add to your online presence

To keep your online professional image thriving, take action on the Web in a professional way. This might include commenting on a LinkedIn group discussion about a topic related to your industry, commenting on a former classmate's new job announcement, sharing your expertise by answering a question posted on Twitter or commenting on a blog post related to your career.

Monthly Career-building Habits

Google yourself

In addition to diligently building your online professional presence, keep an eye on your overall Internet persona to be aware if someone else is posting anything about you. Even better than checking your online presence manually, set up email news alerts for your own name. That way, if your name appears anywhere online, you'll receive an email with a direct link to the mention.

Schedule time to attend live networking events

Take a look at your calendar each month and see if you have any upcoming plans that involve professional networking. If not, scan your social networks, association calendars and other event listings for one or two opportunities to connect with people in person. Try to attend at least one face-to-face networking event every month, such as a professional association get-together, library lecture, college alumni association event or casual one-on-one coffee date. If you're shy, it's especially important to keep getting out there. The more you interact professionally, the more comfortable you'll become in live networking situations.

Volunteer

Besides the good feeling of helping others, volunteering has many tangible career benefits. Donating your time once a month (or more!) will keep you in a positive frame of mind, plus you will meet new people and potentially develop career-related skills such as leadership and teamwork. Don't be shy about asking for specific responsibilities when you are volunteering—most organizations are delighted for you to share your professional skills. If you're strapped for time, ask organizations about opportunities to volunteer virtually through computer and phone-based work.

Yearly Career Habits/Best Practices

Review your résumé

Your résumé is always a work-in-progress, developing alongside your career. Take a peek at this important document every few months or at least once a year, even if you are not actively job hunting. Make sure that you are recording your accomplishments, experience, volunteer activities and new skill sets. (p.s. Whenever you update information on your résumé, update your online profiles at the same time).

Set goals

New Year's resolutions don't have the greatest record of success. The real way to improve your life and achieve great things is to set clear, specific, action-oriented goals that will carry you through all 12 months (or longer), not just the first 12 days of a new year. In fact, there's no reason to wait until December 31 to set goals. At any time you can analyze where you are and where you want to be in the next year, three years, five years or whatever time frame feels comfortable to you. What's important is having tangible goals and a clear idea of what you're working towards. That way, you will know that your daily tasks are building to a larger vision of success. Be sure to write all of this down in a place you can refer to often for motivation. Note that these goals can be your own personal career goals in addition to whatever annual review process might exist at your company.

Make every communication personal

Because there are so many ways to communicate these days, it's easy to forget that communication is meant to be personal. When you send someone a birthday note on Facebook, do you add an extra sentence beyond "Happy Birthday"? If you mail or email holiday cards, do you personalize each one with a thoughtful note? Every time you send an email, social networking request, e-card or anything else, take time to think about the other person's needs. No one likes a form letter or mail addressed to "Occupant." Remember that networking is only valuable when it's authentic and mutually beneficial. Small gestures make a big difference, even if you only connect with someone once a year.

Reflect

As a new professional, you are no doubt busy and have a lot on your mind. Relax for a minute; take a deep breath. It's important to stop every once in a while and reflect on your life and career. At least once a year or so, take some time to check in with your goals, assess your values and skill set, evaluate your appearance (including your wardrobe, haircut, briefcase or tote bag) and revisit your personal marketing materials (business card, social network profiles, etc).. If you're not sure how to assess yourself, ask a trusted friend, relative or mentor to provide some honest feedback. If necessary, save up and invest in some coaching, training, new clothes or whatever else you believe will help you to be your best professional self. Above all, make sure you are building a career that contributes to your health, happiness and fulfillment.

Additional Resources

- www.pwc.tv – don't miss the rest of our Personal Brand Week Worksheets and Top 10 Lists
- *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be* by Jack Canfield
- *Becoming the Obvious Choice: A Guide to Your Next Opportunity* by Bryan Dodge and David Cottrell
- *Your Best Year Yet! Ten Questions for Making the Next Twelve Months Your Most Successful Ever* by Jinny S. Ditzler