

- Determine Career Goals – The advantage of establishing a career goal is that it enables you to focus your efforts on behaviors and actions that support your goal. I recommend both a conceptual goal (for example, becoming a manager) and an operational goal (for example, a specific job or title).
- Develop a Career Strategy – The strategy is an action plan that supports the attainment of your career goal. It should include a timeline for accomplishing your objectives. I recommend a written document that is comprised of specific action steps to achieve a short-term, as well as a long-term career goal. The strategy should also include the identity of people who can support your efforts along the way, including a mentor or coach.
- Implement the Strategy – In my experience, implementation is the stage of the process where most people encounter difficulty. The key is to take a proactive approach and be disciplined in following your plan. I recommend focusing on achieving specific action steps each month as you build momentum, push forward and attain your goals.
- Monitor Your Progress – As your plan unfolds, it is important to receive feedback from trusted advisors and / or your manager. This can take the form of a performance appraisal or informal constructive feedback from a colleague or peer. Based upon the feedback, adjustments can be made to your plan to ensure that you are on the right course. I also recommend a simple monthly scorecard that can be utilized to measure progress vis-a-vis your career strategy.

What are the benefits of a Career Plan?

In my experience, some of the key benefits resulting from an effective Career Plan include the following:

- Better Decision Making – An up-to-date plan enhances decision-making since you are aware of your goals and your strategy for achieving them. Thus, when career opportunities arise, you can better assess whether they support your short-term and long-term career goals.
- Sense of Direction and Control – A plan provides both a sense of direction and control as you navigate your career journey and encounter hurdles and impediments that stand in your way. It also gives you confidence that you have a “plan of attack” that has been well-crafted if the unexpected happens.
- Supports Networking – The Career Plan helps guide your networking efforts by identifying the people you need to connect with / socialize with while you are gainfully employed and advancing in your career. This is preferable to beginning to network when you have lost your job or are starting your career transition.

In conclusion, having an effective Career Plan is not just a useful tool, it is a necessity in a fluid business environment where jobs are eliminated every day, and where career transition is becoming the norm. It should also be a companion to your ongoing personal growth and development as you mature, acquire new skills, and advance in your career.

If you are having difficulty developing a Career Plan that can support the achievement of career goals, please contact us so we may partner with you to create a plan that paves the way to career success.