

Intelligent Career Management

The Right Job

Guidelines to consider when looking for a job that is right for you:

- [Company name matters.](#)
- [Know whose wishes you are fulfilling and do not neglect your own needs.](#)
- [People matter.](#)
- [Have a plan.](#)
- [A few final words.](#)

Company name matters. Just as your college education by name and reputation of the school carries weight so do the companies that you choose to work for. It's all reflective to your judgment and decision making abilities. Many interviewers will ask why you chose the college and degree and the same for the companies that you worked for to understand your thought processes. You want to have good logical and sound answers to those questions that demonstrate good judgment and decision making competence. Being able to explain how your education and career choices fit in to your overall career plan speaks volumes about your organizational, planning and decision making skills.

Working for a name recognized company that is highly regarded in its industry can open doors for you well after you are no longer working for them. You get associated with a great performance when you work for these select companies. Future interviewers will view you as someone who is good enough for the top companies. Larger more established companies usually have greater resources when it comes to entry level and advanced training and development of their employees. These programs are great foundation builders for careers in any industry and will be perceived as a great added value to future employers. In sales and marketing companies like Microsoft, Xerox, IBM, AT&T, Sprint, Lanier, Pitney Bowes, P&G, Black and Decker, Gallo, G.E., Armstrong, Dow Chemical, and other fortune 500 business to business products/services and consumer packaged goods companies carry this type of reputation. There are many others specific to their vertical markets or industries. Do your research and found out who they are so you can target and approach them.

This is not to say that you should not work for small companies. Not everyone has the opportunity to go to work for the brand recognized companies for a variety of reasons. In a smaller business you get exposed to more management functions and broader scopes of responsibilities. You will get to work more closely with higher level executives, and generally get to run your own projects a lot sooner or a lot more often. Even though the company name will not have as much weight as more prestigious companies, you possibly will have more varied experience and sooner developed management skills. In these situations it is YOUR PERFORMANCE and CONTRIBUTIONS that needs to speak loudly.

Regardless of which company size you choose as right for you, it is always important to do your research into the company's stand in the market. You should only get involved in a company that has a good foreseeable future. You want the company to grow fast and steady while you are employed there. By proxy you will get associated with the companies success later in your career.

Know whose wishes you are fulfilling and do not neglect your own needs. Passion is critical to optimum career achievement. You can only fake it for so long if the true love and passion for what you are doing is not there. The tough times and increased challenges that arise in any career will only seem larger and often time insurmountable if the true passion is not there. Avoid the traps of getting involved a career for other peoples wishes for you or for purely the money alone, or for other reasons that do not meet your highest values. Pick and industry and company that is closest to what you are passionate about as your chosen field. You spend at least 40 hours a week at your job and most likely 50 to 60 to really excel. It needs to be meaningful to you. It needs to excite you on some level. Otherwise those hours will be painful. If you like your work, it is much easier to give it your all and to be good at it.

Everyone knows that pay matters, however, so there is no need to pretend otherwise. Come up with the terms of how much it matters to you before you start looking for a job. Money is not everything in your career, and you should certainly take a job you would want to go to 5 days a week. It is easy to say that money does not matter, that is until the bills come in. Be honest with yourself and look ahead. Make sure you weigh the salary aspect of the job against its personal value to you sufficiently enough that you will not doubt yourself later in life.

Then there are instances in which you just cannot avoid taking a job for reasons that are not completely yours. Unique personal and family circumstances may dictate or limit your best immediate options and therefore your choices. Whatever the situation is, make sure you recognize the real reason for your decision and come to peace with it. If you fail to do that, you run the danger of becoming resentful of your close ones in the future

People and Values Matter. The job can seem fulfilling, and the money may be great, but you might still be miserable at work if your coworkers are not in sync with you. When you are offered a job, take a little time looking into the atmosphere of the office. Are you able to relate to the way the people there work? What are the company's values and behaviors? How do they match with your own? A good cultural fit is critical to job satisfaction and optimum professional development. If you work on a different wavelength than your coworkers, you will be stuck translating your habits to theirs. Their personalities may be drastically different than yours, in which case you might not be able to communicate easily. In either case, the work process slows down. Make sure the people and shared values are right for you. They're work habits and values are just as important for your productivity and habit creation as your own.

A few final words.

No job is perfect. You are very unlikely to find one that will excite you and pay you well at the same time that will look good on your resume for decades after you start, and that will have people who work exactly like you. The key to finding a job that is right for you is to have your priorities set out before you look, so you can accept trade offs in personalized proportions. Find a job that keeps these important aspects in a balance that is right for you that keeps you on track for you long term career goals.

Of course MOST IMPORTANTLY good references are essential no matter where you have worked. ALWAYS optimize your experience through YOUR STRONG PERFORMANCE and contributions to the company's objectives; and the great RELATIONSHIPS THAT YOU BUILD with your superiors and coworkers to have multiple good references no matter where you work. Maintaining good contact information on these references and keeping in touch with them through out your career is very beneficial to you in maintaining your professional network and effectively managing your career.

At the Job

A few rules to follow at work:

- [Have a plan.](#)
- [Never stand still and give them more than they expect.](#)
- [Seize the opportunity.](#)
- [Do not neglect the relationship with your subordinates.](#)
- [Seek mentors.](#)
- [Do not make your boss defend you.](#)
- [Bad bosses happen.](#)
- [Be positive and do not give up.](#)
- [Appearances matter.](#)
- [Cut-throat ambition will not get you far.](#)
- [Do not gossip at the office.](#)
- [A few final words.](#)

Have a plan. Having a specific goal to work towards gives you a direction for your decisions. If your long-term goal is to move up to an executive, you can develop short-term goals to put you on the right track of becoming an executive. With a specific goal in mind you can research the steps you need to take in order to move up in the ranks. For example, you might need to switch departments as one of the steps. The steps will allow you to gain experience necessary to make it to the middle management, which will give you a chance to show your ability to handle personnel to move up to further. So, not only does the number of steps matter, but which direction they are in, and what your expected benefit from them is. Having a plan will make every decision you make count. But do not forget to update your plan often in accordance with new developments. If you original goal was to head a department that is now promising to have slow growth, you may want to look into departments with higher growth potential.

Never stand still and give them more than they expect. Great performance does not mean consistently doing what you are told on time. Great performance means going beyond your job description to include activities that will benefit your company, your boss, and even your coworkers. Try to increase company productivity and make your boss look better in front of his superiors. When you surprise everyone by doing your job better than they expect, you draw attention to yourself in a very positive way. This kind of attention is what will get your name on that promotion list.

Also, try to not to live by the clock at work, it can put you at the danger of thinking of work as the time before lunch and then the time before going home. Instead you should think of work time as a way to get the most you

can accomplished. When your own work is done, do not take it as an excuse to idle. Write up unsolicited reports, research ways to improve work for everyone, further your knowledge of the company –basically, do anything that will get you noticed and surprise your boss.

Seize an opportunity. Careers can be made because of luck. Sometime luck works for you completely. Your cousin marries a CEO of a company of your dreams and you get a high level job out of it. That is an unlikely situation, however. Usually luck only gets you half way to your goals. You have to always be on the look out for opportunities. You must recognize an opportunity when it arises and most importantly you must move to use it immediately since most opportunities are fleeting. For example, you might be seated at the same table as your boss at a business dinner. So, instead of worrying about eating your food with the right fork in front of the boss, realize that you have this personal alone time with him. This can be your chance to pitch your boss the idea you had on improving work productivity, or it can simply be your chance to make a personal connection with your boss. You can drastically improve your likelihood for a promotion by impressing your boss in this setting.

If you do in fact find yourself in this situation there are a few things to remember: To impress your boss you have to keep his interest. He is probably used to having people flattering him on everything imaginable while shamelessly pitching him ideas. He can smell a fake a mile away and they usually tune them out. A better way to approach this situation is to give honest and specific complements that have to do more with the company than him personally. You want to impress your boss with your knowledge of company values, not your sense of fashion by noticing that his tie matches his belt. You want to conceal your personal agenda. You should outwardly treat the conversation as if it had no long term opportunities for you. Be confident and cool. Avoid getting panicky or pushy. Bosses are usually on guard around employees. Get your boss to listen to you as if you are on their level. Your goal is to impress your boss with your commitment for the company's welfare and your strong character. You have to give him a reason to move you up in the ranks.

Luck is rare and you have to take advantage of the opportunities that luck can throw your way. If you hold off, they might be gone a mere minute later.

Do not neglect the relationship with your subordinates. It is natural to work towards pleasing your boss and to getting along with your coworkers, while using your subordinates to reach these goals. Boss-subordinate relationship is very important because your subordinates are asked about your leadership when you are considered for a promotion. What they say could mean the difference between you getting the promotion or not, regardless of your numbers. What you want them to say is that you were considerate but firm. There are common mistakes in managing your subordinates that you must avoid. Make sure you do not spend all of your time managing up. Make sure you give enough attention to those who under you. On the other hand, do not become too close to them. If you are their buddy rather than a boss will become difficult to assert your authority. Being considerate but firm are the characteristics your boss will likely look fondly on when looking into your relationship with your employees.

Seek Mentors. Do not waste your time looking for that one perfect mentor. Mentors are all around you. They might even be your subordinates. Learn as much as you can from everyone around you. Be careful not to sound incompetent, however. Wording is key. Ask for guidance, advice, information, an opinion, but not help.

You can always count on one mentor to be available for you. This mentor is Media. Newspapers, magazines, internet, all have tons of information about your industry. Whatever the decision before you is the chances are someone else had to make that choice before and you can look at their circumstances and results. Why learn from your own mistakes when you can use someone else's.

Do not make your boss defend you. You should do everything in your power to make your boss's life as easy as possible. When your boss is forced to defend you to his superiors, it shadows your performance. One of the ways you might unknowingly make your boss defend you is by misunderstanding the company values. A company might put a lot of weight on team performance, while you are more concerned with your own. While your numbers might be the highest in the department, your boss might have to work hard to excuse your lack of cooperation to his superiors. In an opposite case, your company might value numbers above all. And while you work hard to please everyone on the team your numbers slip. Either way, you have to understand what matters most to your company. And most importantly, you should use these values to fit in and get ahead in the company. Having to defend you makes your boss look weak, so he will eventually stop helping you.

Bad bosses happen. If you have a boss who is making work unbearable for you, you cannot let yourself drown in the victim mentality. If the boss is awful to you individually, ask yourself if there is a reason behind the boss's negativity towards you instead of falling into a pattern of complaining to your coworkers. Although there is a chance that your boss just does not like you personally, usually their reasons are rooted within your performance. Perhaps you are not doing your job as well you have thought you were, or perhaps you are just not doing it in the way the boss likes it done. Do not be too proud to ask yourself these questions. You have to be honest with yourself in order to make improvements. It is very common to overrate your own work performance, so take the newfound knowledge as a chance to fix your performance and not as a failure. Perhaps it is your attitude that is putting you in a bad situation. Are you sure you do not simply have a problem with authority? Most bosses can smell this kind of an attitude a mile away, so eventually they give up on trying to appease you.

If you are convinced that it is not your shortcomings that are making act awful to you, you might have to ask him yourself. This is risky, however. Be prepared to hear an answer you are not expecting and to have to react to it on the spot. Try not to be defensive in this situation. You want to come off as if you are open to making necessary improvements to better the situation. Hopefully the boss will respect your willingness to change for the company, and your relationship with him will recover. Also, you may want to look into new employment options before you go to this talk, just in case the boss have been looking for an excuse to let you go and this conversation finally gave it to him.

Sometimes the boss is a jerk because he knows he is irreplaceable. Leaders who are horrible to their subordinates but deliver great numbers can last a long time at the company. There is no use going over the bosses head to complain about his behavior. The company probably knows he has bad attitude, but they're sitting it out because of his great performance. In fact, going over the boss's head is extremely dangerous. It diminishes everyone's trust in you and is actually more likely to get you fired in the end than your boss.

Regardless of the reasons for why your boss is so awful it is a choice about your own career that you ultimately have to make. Besides improving your own performance there is nothing you can do to make your boss relationship better. The best way out of this situation is to work hard. If you deliver amazing performance you are likely to gain more say in your situation, such as pushing for transfer to a department that "you feel your performance will serve best." With great numbers backing you up you are also likely to get better job offers if you do decide having to deal with your awful boss is not worth the job.

Be positive and do not give up. Negativity sucks the energy right out of everyone you work with. If you are negative, no one will want to work with you. Positive thinking spreads just as easily, on the other hand. So try your very best to stay positive even when your work situation is turning against you. If your work atmosphere is miserable or if you were passed over for a promotion you deserved, you must hide your anger at the office. When you are negative and complain a lot at the office you are likely to get a reputation of someone who has little practical value to offer to the company. Once you start being negative it is easy to fall into the habit of whining about everything else. People who whine are seen as wasting time even if the actual work done is satisfactory. If you just have to get these negative feelings out of your system make sure to do it anyplace but work.

If the job is bad enough that you are thinking of leaving the company your best chance at getting a good job is to work hard at this one. If you are thinking of staying in the company but want to move up, your best choice is still to work hard and show your boss how wrong he was to not promote you. Either way, you must stay positive and work harder than ever. Your boss, as well as people outside of the company, is likely to notice your efforts, and opportunities will open to you. At the very least positive attitude in the face of a set back will show off your strong character, and people everywhere respect that.

Appearances Matter. Doing a good job is of most importance at work, but it is human nature to make subconscious, or sometimes even outright, judgments about other people based on their presentation of themselves. To get ahead at work you should take great care in presenting yourself in a right light. You have to look good. This does not mean to have natural beauty. It just means you should

- Dress well and tend to personal grooming. This means you should appear as professional as your office requires and then some. Make sure you appear sharp by ironing your clothes and making sure your shoes are free of dirt, for example. Comb your hair. Try not to slouch.
- Exude positivity and confidence. This can be attained by keeping a smile on your face, by giving firm handshakes, and by putting an optimistic twist on team work situations.

- Conduct yourself in a sophisticated manner. Speak and write simply and to the point. Do not overdo it with unnecessarily complicated words. Do not swear.

Looking and sounding sharp gives you the image of being on top of everything, work related items included.

Cut throat ambition will not get you far. Very few people got on top by burning bridges along the way. It shows when you destroy everyone around you to make yourself look better, when you take the credit for teamwork, when you hog all the attention around your boss, and when you spread rumors about your coworkers to eliminate competition. No one will trust you if you are this self-involved. With no trust or strong recommendations it is nearly impossible to move up.

Do Not Gossip at the office. Gossip travels fast at the office. Eventually it will get to a person you do not want to hear what you had to say, and most likely it will be blown out of proportion. Even if the content of the rumor is not enough to hurt your chances at advancement in the office, gossip has negative effects in the act itself. People who gossip quickly get the reputation of being unproductive, wasting company time on the office drama. Even if your coworkers do enjoy it when you tell them a few juicy rumors, they will not trust you because of it. It can become tempting to gossip at the office because it does make you fit in easier at first, but there is high hidden cost of losing true respect in the eyes of your coworkers and bosses. You must keep a distance from the office drama in order to preserve your strong character. In fact, you should not get too personally involved with your coworkers at all in order to avoid getting sucked into the office drama in the first place. Some tips:

- When put in the middle of a quarrel between two coworkers stay out of it as much as you can and be firmly in the middle of the issue. When forced to take a part in the argument see it from the company's point of view. Through all this, make sure to remain completely calm.
- If your opinions are of personal nature, keep them to yourself. Do not criticize anyone if it is not about job specifics. You can say things like "You have to do 10 more sales a day to meet our goal." Never say, "You need to stop being so lazy and make more calls." Attacking your coworker personally will not improve his performance any more than the professional approach, and you will quickly become an outsider at the office with demeaning attitude like that.

Worry more about being respected in the long run than being liked in the short term.

A few final words.

Business can be looked upon as a sort of a game. There are definitely official rules to follow and unspoken strategies to use in getting ahead. While it is important to keep close attention to following this game, do not spend all of your time and energy on strategy. Playing the game can get distracting to the actual work, and can even take you away from what you love about your job. Playing the game correctly should make you presentable to your superiors, well liked by your peers, and respected by subordinates and onlookers. However, it will not get you ahead alone. You cannot reach your top goals without having actual talent, great work ethic, and drive. Make sure to balance game strategy with actual commitment to hard work and you will get ahead.

You also have to remember that your job is just a job. It may be very important to you, whether it be because of money or personal reasons. But do not forget about your health, your spouse, your children, and your soul. Very few jobs are worth losing even one of those. So, work hard at your job, but learn how to switch off the work mode sometimes to take care of your life matters.