

By Joan Runnheim Olson, M.S., ACC

If your goal is to climb the career ladder, you need to continuously market yourself. Successful marketing is necessary during networking, interviewing, and moving ahead in your career. Never stop selling your skills, abilities, and accomplishments once you land a new job. Keep learning new skills to maintain your marketability.

Lifelong learning

Moving ahead in your career requires you to continually update and enhance your skills. Be sure you keep a record of what you've accomplished. Research indicates that 50% of our skills become outdated in three to five years. With technological advancements growing by leaps and bounds, lifelong learning has become extremely important in maintaining your marketability in the workplace. Today's fast paced technology requires you to keep your computer skills current. With downsizing, companies have removed their hierarchical layers. No longer can managers expect access to an administrative assistant to type their correspondence.

Take advantage of training that may be offered through your employer or take classes or seminars through a local technical school or community college. Volunteering is another good way to learn new skills, and it doesn't cost anything. Perhaps you would like to gain some skills in the fundraising arena, consider volunteering on an election campaign. Maybe you would like to acquire some training experience, offer to teach a workshop at a non-profit agency. Document your skills so you can add them to your resume.

Getting Noticed

Once you are settled in your new position, get noticed by offering to work on a special project or volunteer to work on a committee. Demonstrating effective leadership skills can help you up the next rung on the career ladder. Offer to chair a special committee or identify and fill a need that is not being addressed. Keep your manager apprised of your accomplishments. Don't be afraid to "toot your own horn." If you don't, who will?

Due to downsizing and restructuring, companies must now rely on teamwork to get the work done. To demonstrate you're a team player, determine what contributions need to be made and how you can support the group in achieving its goals. During interviews, be prepared to give examples of when you demonstrated effective teamwork.

Show It Off

Showcase your accomplishments in a career portfolio that contains a sample collection of past work and achievements. Consider including in your portfolio, documentation of leadership experience, agendas from committees you've served on, and certificates from classes you've completed. Use your portfolio during performance evaluations and interviews. The career portfolio is a powerful tool, offering current and potential employers proof of what you've accomplished. This strategy can be more powerful than just telling them.

You won't climb the career ladder by merely performing your job description duties. To get ahead you need to go the extra mile, displaying initiative and competence. Today's marketplace requires you to think of yourself as a business. To be a successful business, you need to continuously market yourself. Actively promote yourself throughout your career by selling your skills, abilities, and accomplishments to current and potential employers. Start climbing the ladder!

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Joan Runnheim Olson,
joan@workplacecoachinstitute.com

Workplace Coach Institute, Inc.
Admissions: 800-691-2553
www.workplacecoachinstitute.com