

Topic of this program: Perpetual Career Management

Session Four:

Career Development and Competitive Intelligence

Hello again! This is Ford Myers, welcoming you back to Career Success Audio. This is session number four of our program on the subject of “Perpetual Career Management.”

In the last session of this program, I talked about two very important aspects of managing your career. These two behaviors, so important to ongoing career success, included “Joining and taking leadership roles in appropriate associations and trade organizations;” and “Writing articles or doing presentations focused on your area of expertise!” In today’s session, I’m going to present two additional activities that Perpetual Career Managers should always do for maximum career success:

5. Continue your career education and maintain your industry credentials through seminars, academic classes, lectures, professional events, conferences, new certifications, degrees and the like. No one wants to hire someone whose base of knowledge isn’t current. Every professional should continually build his or her resume, which will make you more attractive and marketable as a candidate. Plus, in an information economy, the greatest asset you have to sell is your knowledge and intellectual resources.

6. Research and be aware of the competition – whether it be information about other companies or other professionals in your industry. Always know who they are and what they’re doing. Endeavor to “know the competition better than they know themselves.” This will greatly enhance your competitiveness on many levels, and it will also allow you to jump on opportunities that others might not yet be aware of!

Here’s an example of how important it is to be “plugged into” your competitors. One of my clients is the President of a small advertising agency. Her client base is solid, her creative work is excellent, and she makes a very good living in this role. But the thing that my client is most proud of is the fact that her firm is the envy of every small-to-medium sized agency in town. Not because of the creative awards my client has won, and not because of how impressive her offices are – although these are certainly noteworthy achievements. The reason my client is so envied is that she always seems to get the most prestigious accounts and the most interesting assignments.

Moreover, my client has a real knack for getting the best designers in the region to work for her. The other agency owners in the region just stand around, shaking their heads in disbelief and frustration. “How does she do it?” they ask themselves, repeatedly. Well, just between you and me – it’s not because my client’s work is so much better than the work of the other agencies. No, the way she keeps winning, over and over, is that her “investigative research” is superior to that of her competitors. She makes it her business to know what’s going on in her market – what company is doing what; which accounts are going where, who’s working for whom, what

challenges or trends are affecting local companies – and all the rest. The bottom line is simply that my client is far more “plugged in” – and she has used this knowledge to beat out the competition, project after project and year after year!

So what does this mean to you? It means you should start “plugging yourself in” for success! Read industry publications, trade magazines, your local Business Journal, your daily newspaper’s business section, Business Week, and The Wall Street Journal. Pay attention to other local, regional, and national sources of “business intelligence,” such as websites, newsletters, and radio or TV shows. Start to connect the dots and frame your expertise, your ideas, and your value in terms relevant to the current business landscape. Connect with people, companies, and groups that you read about. If you can move and shake with the movers and shakers, so much the better. If you can’t – you should at least know what they’re thinking, what they’re worried about, and what opportunities they see ahead. The more you know about these things, the more ‘plugged-in’ you’ll be in your career, which will inevitably lead you to better opportunities and greater long-term success!

Here’s what you can do to start leveraging success strategies number five and six:

- Dust-off your career and look for fresh, new learning opportunities in your field. Look at course catalogues, find industry seminars and workshops, study for a new certification or license, challenge yourself and expand your mind. Sign-up now for at least one or two such programs, and keep doing this for the rest of your career!

- Make-up your mind to get “plugged-in” to your professional community. Start reading the industry publications, attending the trade-shows, asking lots of questions, befriending people at competing companies. Within six months, try to become the most well-informed and well-connected local person in your industry.

In tomorrow’s segment of “Career Success Audio,” I’ll introduce you to two more innovative techniques that will literally propel your career to the next level of success!