PROACTIVE INSIGHTS

# Take Charge of Your Career - Invest in You!

You work hard and begin your career. You secure a job with a firm and you begin to use all the skills you have acquired. You are impressive and the boss considers you a good investment. That is how he began; he knew who to invest in and who would turn a profit for him and grow his business. That is how he sees you. But, how do you see you?

While you are investing in your career are you also investing in yourself? If not, you are making your first major business mistake!

This single error in judgment can cost you not only monetarily. This one mistake can delay your success and derail opportunities that may never be repeated. Why is that a big error?

Why does this single lapse in vision matter more today than ever before?

Look around you. We live in a world of constant change. Business is a digital work place. Computers are the largest and most important tool in the corporate realm. The status quo is no longer acceptable and if you cannot anticipate and adapt to change quickly, you become irrelevant. The rules of the game have changed, you cannot not be totally dependent on your employer for growth and advancement. You must take charge of your career and development.

Of course, working hard for your employer is important. Providing a quality service for reasonable compensation is honorable. However, when you cross into an area where growing your employer's business becomes so important to you that you forget to invest in your own future, honor has given way to foolishness.

Your first business priority must be you!

So, how do you grow your employer's business, while investing in yourself?

How do you take control of your own destiny from where you are right now?

## Invest in Your Career

Employers sometimes invest in their employees. The reason for that is the more knowledge their employee is, the more they are worth to the company. However, they are going to be selective in what skills they allow you to master on their dollar. Essentially, they employer wants to control your growth.

The employer wants you to stay where they place you to make them successful. While the basis of this business decision is sound, you also need to grow your knowledge and develop yourself professionally.

So it stands to reason, you should pick up where the employer leaves off, taking steps to learn skills that will benefit you now and your future.

*What are the benefits of taking charge of your career and enhancing your skill set?*

- Boosts your self-confidence. Whether the skill is for personal or professional reasons. We feel good about ourselves when we learn things that grow us as a person.
- Increases your value. Developing an expertise in an area that is in high demand, makes you more valuable in your current employment and secures your value in your future endeavors
- Keeps you on the cutting edge. Your skill can breathe new life into procedures in the business place that have become obsolete through complacency.
- Allows you to control you destiny. Your career development is in your own hands and you can use it as you see fit. You can use it to enhance your current situation with your employment or to propel you into a future where you begin a new chapter in your career
- Allows you to begin your brand with yourself. The focus becomes on who and what you are and what you and your brand can deliver.
- Demonstrates you are investing in yourself. Every skill you learn, whether acquired for personal or professional reasons are an investment in you. You become the captain of your ship, enriching the visions of yourself and your future!

# Career Development
## The One Thing

Whether it is now or in the future, most all employees want to advance. We want to advance in our careers and enrich our future. We want to advance as people, as employees and as business lynchpins. We want to be the best! We want success and we want more money.

That is why the workplace is the most competitive place there is. We all want to win! But the cold hard truth is everyone won't win. Everyone can't win.

There are the people who rise to the top and there are those who settle in to a life of mediocre for the rest of our career lives. There are people who will crash and burn and will fade away from memory. That is the ugly truth. It is not the person who held down the same desk and processed the same orders day-after-day and year-after-year that rises to the top.

To be recognized, and to stand out above the rest, one has to project forward motion! You must produce, grow, and evolve to grab the spotlight and it is those in the spotlight that increase their chances for success!

So, how do we do that? How do we project ourselves forward leaving the lesser ones behind? What is the strategy?

There is one fail-proof way to demonstrate forward motion! There is one absolute. There is one tool you must utilize consistently to achieve your dreams. Utilizing this tool will increase your chances of meeting and exceeding your professional goals. This is your one insurance policy of being that winner!

> *That single tool is "Taking Control of Your Professional Development and Continuous Learning".*

No matter where you are professionally now or where you are going, you should always be contributing in your professional development and career advancement. You can be like everyone else and only take on growth when required by your employer. By only doing what you have to do, you will never stand out.

You MUST be proactive! Any training or guidance that elevates your skills and improves your performance is professional development. And no matter the form it takes, it will make you more valuable.

## By developing your professional expertise and portfolio what messages are you sending?

1. You are taking charge of your career. You know there is always more to learn and you are always looking for that knowledge that will change your life. You thrive on challenge and are always staying mentally engaged.

2. You are showing innovation and creativity. You are willing to look outside the box and to try new things that will better your personal and professional life. Mediocre is not okay.

3. You are displaying commitment. You are demonstrating self-initiative by keeping your knowledge, skills and abilities up-to-date and cutting edge. Complacency sucks the life force out of any job. You are letting your employer know you are growing, and getting better and stronger.

4. You are signifying leadership. You are indicating what is required to become competitive in the business place...that you have the latest and the greatest information, and can be that "go to person" when staying ahead of the game is critical.

## How you can take advantage of this continuous development mindset, skill-set and tool-set?

# Get noticed!

It does you little good to develop professionally if no one knows about it. This is not to say become a bragger, but to allow people to know your level of commitment with grace and determination. Do not hide the fact that you are growing. Don't hide the fact that you are invested in securing your future and skill levels and that your value is continually growing.

Skills are of no use to anyone, not you and not your business associates – if those skills are not utilized. So use the skills you have learned. Do not be afraid to suggest new ways to more effectively complete a task. You are your brand and it is up to you to promote your brand and to be the best brand you can be!

Do not limit yourself to the standards of your current circumstances. Present yourself in the light that you see yourself in. Be willing to implement and be willing to share your knowledge.

# Build it and they will come.

*Be willing to show others what you have learned. You must present yourself as a working leader. You must show others that you are important and that you are in control of your future. Success will follow…you will be compensated. You will be rewarded and you will accomplish your personal, and professional goals. It is up to you where you take these skills. If you chose to work for someone else, be a lynchpin and a valued asset to those you allow to utilize them. If you choose to take your skills and knowledge and experience and begin your own company, you are in complete control of your success.*

*Finally, understand that knowledge and skills you have acquired are yours alone and no one can ever take them for you. You can allow them to benefit from them, but you alone control them. Therefore, you alone control you!*

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