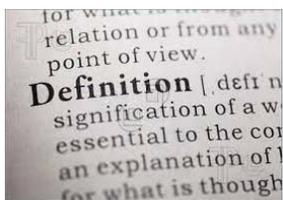


# CareerIQ

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## Career Management



*Lifelong process of career planning that involves choosing and setting personal and professional goals, and formulating strategies for achieving them. (adapted from business dictionary.com)*

Managing your career is essential, since success and happiness are rarely achieved by chance. Taking a proactive approach will help you realize your ambitions along your career life journey. Year after year, there have been continuous changes in the workforce, but something that has never changed is the need to take control of your own career. While it may seem logical enough, many people don't know what managing their career really means, or they assume their employer will do it for them.

Here at McMaster University, we believe that Career Management is a shared accountability. It is employee driven, enabled by managers and supported by the organization. Since managing one's career involves specific skills and ongoing activities, it's important for you to be aware of what you need to be doing on an on-going basis. Openness to learning new skills, networking, paying attention to workplace changes, and engaging in career conversations with your manager are just a few examples.

In a culture where people and learning are at the heart of organizational strategy and business processes, taking ownership of one's career, engaging in important career conversations with your manager and setting realistic goals and development plans is essential to employee and organizational growth.

## Guidelines for Good Career Management

- ➔ **Notice what you like doing.** – Pay attention to achievements that give you a sense of pride.
- ➔ **Revise your view of career progression.** – Career Progression is no longer linear, it may entail moving up, across or down, depending on your interests, skill demands and the employer's needs.
- ➔ **Keep your network alive.** – Expand your existing network by intentionally seeking out people who are involved in activities and roles that interest you.
- ➔ **Be committed to lifelong learning.** – Stay committed to refreshing your skills by taking courses to be current in the job you hold now. At the same time, explore learning opportunities outside of your area of expertise. This diversifies your portfolio of skills.
- ➔ **Extend your timeline.** – Personal and professional priorities are likely to change so when establishing your goals be willing to flex your timelines and commitments.
- ➔ **Keep a balanced view.** – Take actions to balance your personal, social, and professional life.



# Keeping Your Network Alive

Ron McGowan, author of *How to Find Work*, reminds us that everyone has a network of “promoters” and “supporters” in our lives. Supporters are typically friends and family or those you have worked closely with in the past. Promoters are people who you know are well connected to what is going on. Both types are important but the more promoters you get to know, the more success you will have.

Here are a few other Quick Tips:

- ➔ If you’re having a conversation with an individual who you know is well connected, ask them how they would go about networking if they were in your shoes. They might be able to offer a new perspective or strategy.
- ➔ Make sure you have your business card ready and be able to give a well-rehearsed, proactive description of what you are doing and what you are looking for.
- ➔ First impressions. You want to make yourself stand out. 93% of people’s focus is on voice tonality, pitch, rate of speech, body language. Only 7% is on your words during this first impression. Make sure to use energy, passion, and good body language.
- ➔ Third-party endorsements are significant too because they are objective sources. If you’re not sure what you do for your clients, customers, or employers, ask them. What specific results or benefits do they highlight?

## Open Lines of Communication with your Manager

The tips and advice you get from managers, mentors and coaches throughout your career will contribute to your personal and professional development along the way. In the workplace, your manager is often your first – and most important – coach, offering feedback about your performance to help refine your skills and target areas for development.

The following tips will help you get the most out of the coaching opportunities available to you:

1. To determine how best to help you, your manager needs to know what you want to accomplish. If you’re not sure, take time to do a self-review, and then discuss your thoughts with your manager. This will help you gain clarity, articulate your objectives and ensure alignment with department goals.

2. Don’t hesitate to ask your manager for information or to be pointed to relevant resources. Your manager is a storehouse of knowledge, wisdom and expertise. Your manager can be invaluable when facing challenges, or making important decisions.

3. If you are preparing for a big meeting or other stretch assignments, ask for a quick “coaching conversation” to talk through your strategy and pick up last-minute tips that lead to the winning outcome you want.

4. At times, your manager may give you constructive feedback or offer on-the-spot coaching. Rather than becoming defensive or resistant, be open to your manager’s observations. Seek input about your observable strengths and weaknesses, discuss the lessons and be willing to take the necessary steps identified.

For more tips on how to have a coaching relationship with your manager, visit:

<http://employeecareers.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Make-yourself-coachable.pdf>

Many individuals view career development as a formal activity, where you set aside time to learn a new skill or receive formal feedback. But it’s the day to day learnings acquired from interacting with others and how you approach work, that provides self-awareness about areas of strength and skilling-up that informs your career development activities.

### Resources

1. McGowan, Ron. (2007). *How to Find Work*. Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford
2. Watters, Marge. (2004). *It’s Your Move*. Toronto, ON, Canada: HarperCollins Publishers
3. Michel, Sarah. (2004). *Perfecting Connecting*. United Kingdom: Telos Publications

## What Resources are Available?

Discovering Your Personal Assets.....[employeecareers.mcmaster.ca/category/personal-assets/](http://employeecareers.mcmaster.ca/category/personal-assets/)

Types of Career Conversations  
[employeecareers.mcmaster.ca/career-management/your-future/career-conversations-2/](http://employeecareers.mcmaster.ca/career-management/your-future/career-conversations-2/)

Self-Promotion for Introverts by Nancy Ancowitz  
[www.amazon.ca/Self-Promotion-Introverts-Quiet-Guide-Getting/dp/007159129X](http://www.amazon.ca/Self-Promotion-Introverts-Quiet-Guide-Getting/dp/007159129X)

Career Services.....[employeecareers.mcmaster.ca](http://employeecareers.mcmaster.ca)