

Prevent Your Career from Being a Series of Accidents ***By Linda Ginac***

Are you in control of your career – or is your career in control of you? If you are one of the many people in this world who think their career is one big series of accidents or mishaps, then this article is for you. This article shows you how to prevent your career from being accidental and to reinvent yourself to keep pace with change.

Recognize Your Career Patterns

For most of us, we move from job to job without much forethought. When we experience career stagnation, anxiety rises to the surface and it ignites our need for a job change. The routine is the same. We update our resume, send it to a few friends and employers, interview for a job and negotiate a win. After a few months on the job, we ask ourselves, “What have I done, again?” We took another job that we weren’t really interested. We end up staying in the job (*again*) because we fear that short tenure will impact our next job. We are miserable again! The cycle never ends. It repeats itself over and over until we are at our wits end. To end the cycle, you must recognize your patterns, break the pattern and put some thought into your future career path. If you don’t, you may end up with a lifetime of misery.

Take Stock of Your Investment - You

Rarely, do I see people plan the direction of their career. It takes so little effort to facilitate thinking about your career roadmap. The first step toward becoming career resilient is to take stock of your career decisions and risks to date. I’m not talking about the types of decisions that involve signing up for a communications course or changing jobs for more money. I’m referring to the peak experiences that help you to re-invent yourself. It includes invested time and/or money to make consistent or drastic improvements in your career. Some examples include a CIO retraining to become a public speaker, an engineer learning how to become a marketer or a nurse doing part-time work to become a full-time forensic investigator.

Assess Your Career Decisions

Ask yourself some simple questions to assess your career development:

- How much money have you invested in yourself to enhance your current skills in that past 12 months?
- How much money/time have you invested in yourself to gain new skills for future work?
- In what ways have you exposed yourself to opportunities to enhance your knowledge or experience beyond current job expectations?
- What risks have you taken related to your career development?
- How are you preventing your career from being a series of accidents?

If you are like most of us, your answers are limited. This is a good eye-opening experience to demonstrate how so few hours are invested in your most important asset—you.

Develop a Career Plan

It is time to make an investment in yourself. Let's create a plan. I'm not referring to a 12-step plan that outlines exactly how you are going to improve your career. Write a 14-word personal mission statement and then jot down a few goals on how to achieve your mission. Begin by asking yourself, "Who do you want to be?" Then determine, based on your mission, what is really important right now. I always ask my clients to follow this up with a clear definition of what has to happen to achieve a positive outcome. Below is an example to follow:

My mission is to make incremental investments in my future to become an entry-level forensic investigator within two years. I will invest \$500 per year or 15 hours in my future to increase my marketing and research skills.

Goals:

- Sign-up for a 2-year certification/degree program.
- Develop a study schedule that doesn't interfere with work and family.
- Find volunteer work within forensic department and contribute 3 hours a week of my time.
- Enroll in minimum of 2 courses per year to update my skills, abilities or knowledge in key areas related to my field.

Avoid Drastic Actions

It is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day operations of the job, put our feelings aside and shelf re-invention for another day. Overtime, your feelings will emerge stronger than before and they may push us to take drastic measures to protect your sanity. It is not advisable to simply wake up one morning and quit your job. It doesn't have to get to this point, but people are at a loss for how to make positive career change happen.

Start by making the choice to re-invent yourself now. Don't brush off this article and say to yourself, "this stuff doesn't work." It works the same way evolution works; one day at a time. You need to take responsibility for the changes that happen to you. Develop a plan and measure your progress against your goals. If it is difficult for you to get or stay motivated, hire a career counselor who can help you stay on target.

Become Resilient

Don't make another mistake by adding another job to your resume. Take the time to proactively manage your career from one professional status to another. Assess your current situation, make decisions about future skills or careers, market yourself effectively and become change agile. Do this at least once a year. These are not strategies that you should expect your employer to do for you, especially if you are changing careers. You need to do them for yourself. Be the one in control of your career.

Linda Ginac is a certified coach and career counselor. With more than 13 years experience in career counseling, marketing and staff development, Ginac owns and directs a private practice, [The Ginac Group, Inc](#) located in Austin, Texas. Ginac supports individuals and corporations in developing, planning and managing a range of career management and worklife issues. Particular areas of expertise include

change management, career transition, professional development coaching, and career exploration.