

The Career Makeover: 7 Steps to Achieving Your Goals

Source: articlesbase.com March 2008

Makeovers on television shows and in magazines are enticing for women the world over. Of course the reason they are so popular, is because the idea of getting a fresh start in life is a golden key we have all dreamt about at one time or another. No matter what their lives are like, everyone has something they wish could be different – their home, their body, their friends, and even their career.

Career makeovers are not a new concept and if you think about it, making over your career will automatically set a chain reaction in motion that will affect all aspects of your life, particularly those that are unsatisfactory. If you've ever changed jobs or industries, worked with a recruiter, drafted a new resume or pursued additional education to increase your job prospects or opportunities, you've already taken steps to improve or "make over" your career.

Here are some ideas which can take your career makeover to a whole new level!

1. Look inside yourself. How do you perceive yourself? Are you confident? Do you like yourself? Are you proud of your accomplishments? What is your attitude to life, on working, on the value that you bring to your job? How do you feel about your career? Do you feel in control of your future? Working on your "inner self" is of critical importance when it comes to creating a career makeover. If your internal thoughts are not consistent with the actions that you need to take, you'll continually feel a sense of disconnect. Others will feel it too. All change starts on the inside. If you need support in this area, consider counseling or coaching, whichever is most appropriate for your situation. Until the inner issues are resolved or healed, it can be very challenging to take the necessary steps that lead to a fulfilling career.
2. Get balanced. A key component of effectively managing your career starts with managing your time efficiently. Do you keep your work life separate from your home life? Do you take work home in the evenings or weekends? Do you talk about work ALL THE TIME? Do you take time to recharge your batteries so that you feel refreshed? This is probably one of the most difficult areas when it comes to career makeovers. It takes a lot of courage to "draw the line" when it comes to balancing your life. Many women feel that if they don't give everything to their job, then they won't have a job, yet, the opposite is actually true. If you're working for a company which does not allow you to set boundaries around your time, you WILL burn out. Before this happens it is probably best that you start looking for a new position. It's a difficult choice to make, but ultimately it's up to you to set boundaries around what types of treatment you will accept from others – including your employer. If you can't achieve work/life balance in your current job, you will never be able to give it your best, simply because you will not be at your best which in turn will affect your future career prospects.
3. Get your relationships in check. They say birds of a feather flock together. Are your friends dragging you down? (I was told my friends were holding me back by a naturopath when I was in my early 20's I was VERY angry with him and protective of

my friends – but a year later when I had taken a grip of my life and moved on, I realized he had been completely right!) Is your network of friends and associates supportive of you and your goals, or are they constantly telling you that your dreams are too lofty? Do they drag you into their gossip or do they inspire you with thoughtful conversation? In essence your ambition can be affected by the people around you and because of this your personal and professional relationships will have a tremendous influence on your career success. Therefore, to get your relationships in check, evaluate your friendships and acquaintances. It might be time to start gently letting go of some of the relationships that aren't serving you, which will allow you to fill the empty spaces with new friends who will support you. Make sure you're forging relationships with the people who see your value, and surround yourself with mentors who are helpful in assisting you to move forward.

4. Begin with a vision. Having an idea of where you want to go is one of the most important steps in your career makeover. Until you know where you want to be or what you want to have, it's impossible to decide on the correct steps to get you there. How do you envision your ideal life? What type of job would make you happy? What brings you the most joy? What type of position would you like to see yourself working in 5 years time? Give yourself permission to think about what you really want, dare to dream a little. Remember what seems impossible today is only so because you haven't had the opportunity to break the journey from here to there down into manageable chunks – now you are ready to start working on your career makeover.

5. Be the change. Once you have a vision of what you think you might want. It's now time to assess where you are now. What are your strengths and your weaknesses? What skills do you have? Which ones will you need in order to achieve your career vision? You need to know where you are now versus where you want to be in the future. The rest is about managing the "gap" in between. Here is where the career makeover really takes place and this is the secret to making it possible...

6. Start at the end and work backwards. Imagine you have your dream job and are living your dream life. What was the final step you had to take to make this all possible, now what was the step before that? Work this process through until you arrive back at where you are today. Now you are aware of these steps, you know what you have to do to achieve your goals in manageable chunks. Your next course of action is to develop a plan for achieving these goals thereby giving each part of the process a timeline.

7. Now hone your skills. One of the most obvious ways to create a career makeover is to work on your skills. Whether you go back to school to earn an advanced degree or take training classes here and there, anything that you can do to improve yourself can benefit your career. Learn more about your industry; attend conferences where you can keep abreast of the latest trends. Network with possible mentors. Buy books written by leaders in your field. Read industry periodicals and other materials that deep your knowledge. Check with your human resources department to find out what types of internal training opportunities are available. Take advantage of your company's tuition reimbursement programs. Continuing your education is essential no matter how you do it. Studying will not be a chore. If you are doing work you love you will be passionate about absorbing as much information about your field as you can!

And finally plan for the future.

No matter who you are or whom you know, your career will have its ups and downs. These days it's unrealistic to think you'll have a job for life. You might be transferred, demoted, or get a new boss that you don't enjoy. You could even lose your job because of a downturn in your industry. These are realities of work life today. To lessen the possibility of your becoming an economic statistic it's always a good idea to have options. This means you need to think about your exit plan. What would you do if you wanted to leave, or lost your job for whatever reason? Even the people who are happy in their jobs today should have an exit strategy, so take my advice and start working on it now. Don't wait until it's too late and you're in panic mode.

In conclusion, always remember, no matter what career or life choices you make, ALL women need a strategic career plan. Your career makeover is ultimately your responsibility. You are the master of your life and it's up to you to make a plan. Once you have a clear plan, take the steps that lead you to fulfilling your ultimate vision. One powerful way of helping you stay on track is by working with a coach who can help you make the transition more quickly. A good coach gives you support you need, helps you to stay focused and on track. With proper guidance, you will quickly find yourself achieving your career goals.