

THE ULTIMATE CAREER STRATEGY GUIDE



WorkReign

25 TIPS TO HELP YOU REIGN IN YOUR CAREER

- 1. CAREER SUCCESS BOILS DOWN TO THREE THINGS:** (1) Personal relationships – build as many bridges as possible. Send thank you emails. Give hand-written cards. Remember to say thank you in person and let people know that you appreciate them (the opportunity to interview, the job lead, the internship, the volunteer opportunity, the compliment, the job, the promotion, whatever it may be...); (2) Preparation – is your resume up to date? Have you cultivated your references and are they ready to vouch for you or has it been years since you've made contact? Do you have a current course or certification on your resume? Have you interned or volunteered recently? Preparation is an active and continual process; and (3) Perseverance – job searches are tough, the workplace is tough and career advancement and satisfaction take patience and fortitude – accepting that there will be many rough spots and delays, will help you develop a warrior mentality to soldier through it all.
- 2. DEVELOP YOUR “REGAL” MINDSET** – your career is yours to reign over. You must develop a thick skin. The workplace is not high school or college or your tight knit unit; there will be fewer close relationships, fewer laughs, fewer compliments, and much less support. The workplace brings politics, stress, intense pressure, many foes and adversaries, fierce competition and gamesmanship, limited support and you may not know what you are doing much of the time. You must develop a regal or leadership mindset to get you through... Be strong!
- 3. DEVELOP YOUR SENSE OF SECURITY.** People defeat themselves in the workplace by giving in to their own

insecurities and fears of failure. Accept that you will not advance if you cannot develop enough strength to fail. Do all that you can to prepare and then learn to fail gracefully. If you are not making mistakes, you are not making decisions, and to be successful, you must continually make decisions about what actions to take, what questions to ask, who to communicate with, etc... Be the first one to speak sometimes. Raise your hand. Volunteer for assignment and ask for the support you need to give it your all. Be secure enough to put yourself out there. Embrace embarrassment. Embrace rejection by your peers- leading is not easy and you cannot reign in your career if you don't demonstrate leadership qualities and prove to yourself that you are strong enough – hardcore enough to take the heat. Put yourself out there – and recognize that you will be in the company of few people who are courageous enough to go for it, fail, and try again.

- 4. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE OR DISCOUNT** anyone you meet along the educational, internship, volunteer or employment way. You can never predict who might be in your corner, who might be a source for you in the future. Build, don't burn bridges.
- 5. DEVELOP A HABIT OF OPTIMISM.** People, including employers, gravitate toward people who are optimistic (or at least don't complain outwardly). The workplace is tough; learn to keep whatever frustrations you are feeling to yourself, and vent to family and friends only. Consistently project happiness and enthusiasm.
- 6. THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM.** Develop a habit of thinking two years ahead of where you want to be and backtrack to plot the relationships, education and activities that you will need to meet your goals and take the actions necessary to effect the bridges you need to build.



7. **EDUCATION DOES NOT STOP AFTER GRADUATION.** Continue to pursue continuing education in your field to develop new skills, meet new people and bolster your resume.
8. **VOLUNTEER AND INTERN** to develop skills, build relationships, and access professional opportunities, even if you have a job.
9. **SET LOYALTY LIMITS.** Today's workplace is a mobile one and employees have less corporate loyalty than they used to. Do not hesitate to move up elsewhere if an opportunity presents itself. Ask for a promotion where you are and when appropriate, but if none is forthcoming – jet! Stay put for no less than two years if possible, but after that period, be loyal to no one but yourself.
10. **BRANCH OUT AT WORK.** Once you have your job down pat and have earned positive reviews, proactively seek opportunities with higher ups who perform different job functions.
11. **HAVE A SOLID TOOL KIT.** Have your resume, references and LinkedIn account current and easily accessible to employers at all times. Keep your tools updated and current.
12. **ESTABLISH A SYSTEM** for continual career advancement and understand that your system should be fluid and adaptable, based on your needs and the workplace climate.
13. **GET ORGANIZED.** At your desk, take the time to simply organize your thoughts and assignments for the day. Give yourself 15-30 minutes of pure organizational, non-working time each morning. Don't rush. This will help you center and act according to your game plan. This may seem uncomfortable at first – just sitting at your desk planning and

thinking, but you will quickly see how much faster you can work when you are organized, calm and directed.

14. **COMPLETE EASY TASKS FIRST.** Put the easy stuff at the top of your daily to do list. It gets those tasks out of the way, creates your positive momentum and helps you relax. Leave larger, more challenging tasks for immediately after lunch if possible and learn to focus on one or two more challenging tasks for the remainder of the day.
15. **DEVELOP A COLLABORATIVE WORKSTYLE** and keep in mind that you are judged by the people you associate with. Identify your allies and influencers and surround yourself with these people. If possible, sit near these people. You will feel a sense of security, be present in their minds and have easy access to the people who can teach you, advocate for you and make your work-life easier.
16. **AVOID LUNCHING** too often with the same person. Spread the love and avoid becoming the office social butterfly.
17. **SET ASIDE TIME** each month to check-in formally with... yourself. Grab a drink and your favorite snack, silence your phone and review the progress on your career plan.
18. **NEVER COMPROMISE YOUR INTEGRITY.** There are job and career moves that you will regret. People you might mistakenly treat poorly. Work assignments you completely miss the mark on. Careless actions that embarrass you. These things you can get over – you can always apologize or hit the ball out of the park on the next assignment. Never do what you cannot recover from, things that will disturb your soul. It's never worth it!



- 19. SOUNDS SIMPLE, BUT WORK HARD.** Give them no reason to criticize you and you will be criticized less.
- 20. BRING YOUR ETIQUETTE A-GAME.** “Please” and “Thank you’s” are golden in the workplace and you will be surprised by how many of your coworkers don’t practice this.
- 21. GO WITH THE FLOW.** Be adaptable and accept that there are things that happen in the workplace that you will never understand but be asked to. Understand that much of what happens in the workplace, who gets promoted, the bigger desk, fired, transferred, etc... is due to politics that perhaps your boss is not privy to. Ask yourself whether the change or circumstance helps, hurts or is of no consequence to you. As long as there is not a negative impact on you, use the changing tide to your advantage by not complaining, being flexible, and sending an email asking how you can help. While others complain (and they will), set yourself apart by working hard under the radar to offer your leadership and support – higher-ups will notice and it will pay off for you in the long run.
- 22. KEEP TRACK** of any success and compliments that are documented – you will need these for your next resume update.
- 23. BE SMART ABOUT HUMAN RESOURCES (“HR”).** If you have a workplace problem, know that you can and must solve it. Human Resources is busy protecting your benefits, protecting your retirement account and most importantly, protecting the employer (i.e. not you). HR is your employer, not your friend or “safe place,” regardless of its assurances of availability and confidentiality. HR is structured to protect the institution, not you. When you think of HR, don’t think of Human Resources, think of what you must do - Hang in there and Ride it out!
- 24. IF YOUR WORKPLACE ISSUES HAVE DETERIORATED** to the point where you are considering going to HR, don’t, but consider whether it is time for a new position. HR is your employer and your employer is interested in profit and protecting itself. Sure, there are workplaces that pride themselves on treating employees well and will take certain steps to respect you and respond to your concerns, however 99% of the time, an HR complaint does not change the situation and will cause significant stress on your part. Again, forget about HR to solve your workplace problems!
- 25. LEARN TO IDENTIFY “WHITE NOISE”** and focus on why you were hired. Develop a strong sense of professional maturity. Don’t sweat the small stuff, as you will find most of your coworkers will be overtaken by small, petty and insignificant nonsense that is not helpful for career advancement. Reign in your career by being smart and filtering out the white noise in the workplace to focus on getting the job done and being a rock star for your employer.

Do you have a system for continual career advancement? Need help developing your career strategy? Try the interactive career ladder at WorkReign.com.

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