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Chapter 12

From Job Search Success to Career Success

Overview

Getting a Job Is Only One Step to Building a Career

The first eleven chapters of this book are dedicated to getting you a job. The right job is critical to career success because it is the springboard from which you will learn important skills, develop key relationships, and demonstrate your achievements. Your career will include many jobs. Even if you stay at the same organization for the duration of your career until you retire, your job will change. You may take on more responsibility and start managing people and budgets. The company may change its focus and ask you to work on different projects.

Therefore, to build a career, it is not sufficient to know how to get any one job. You also must know how to do the following things:

- Succeed and do well in the job you have.
- Develop, expand, and maintain professional relationships.
- Steer your career advancement—ask for a promotion, a raise, and a performance review.
- Secure your job during difficult economic times.
- Manage work conflicts—difficult colleagues, privacy and confidentiality issues, and discrimination or harassment.
- Have a life as well as a career.
- Obtain your next job, whether in the same organization or outside it.

This chapter gives strategies and tips for you to manage your career once you get a job. To do well on the job, you need to make a strong impression in your first ninety days. You need to transition to your new workplace. You need be clear about expected results and how these will be measured. You need to establish good communication with your boss.



1. A wise and trusted counselor.
2. Provide products or services to an organization, for example, a software vendor might provide the inventory management system for a manufacturing company.
3. Work with an organization but not as an employee. They might be onsite and appear to do the same work as an employee, but consultants are not on payroll and have other clients.
4. An evaluation of your work performance. This can be done verbally, in writing, or online.
5. A new, higher salary.
6. A new, higher title that reflects more responsibility or increased influence.
7. When you are employed at will, you can be fired for any reason or no specific reason as long as there is no evidence of discrimination against a protected minority group or class. You can also quit for any reason or no specific reason.

You also want to develop, expand, and maintain relationships outside your immediate boss. You want **mentors**¹ other than your immediate boss. You likely will have colleagues in your department and outside it. Your boss has a boss, and there might be other people in senior management or leadership positions (you ultimately work for everyone in positions above you, even if not on a day-to-day basis). You may have customer contact. You may work with **vendors**² or **consultants**³ that work with or for the organization. You also want to have professional relationships outside your organization, such as other people who work in your functional area or industry.

You shouldn't assume that if you do a good job, people will know about it. You have to proactively manage your career with advancement in mind. Some organizations have structured **performance reviews**⁴, and you should know how to optimize these meetings. Some organizations do not have built-in ways for you to get feedback, so you need to learn how to ask for feedback. Some organizations have a well-defined process for granting **raises**⁵ and **promotions**⁶. Sometimes, however, you need to initiate a request for a raise or promotion.

Just because you have a job now doesn't mean you will keep your job. The United States has **employment at will**⁷, which means that organizations can hire or fire you for any reason or no specific reason as long as there is no evidence of

discrimination against a protected minority group or class. It also means that you can quit for any reason or no specific reason. Therefore, you cannot look to the government or some regulatory agency to secure your job. You need to make your organization want to retain you. You need to notice the signs of an impending **layoff**⁸ so you can protect yourself accordingly. You need to know what to do if you lose your job unexpectedly so you can get the most support possible from your employer during the transition.

An unexpected layoff is not the only potential challenge you will face. You will spend a lot of your time in your work environment, so problems and conflicts will inevitably arise. It is important to have a sense of some common workplace problems. While each case should be managed individually, we'll cover a general roadmap for dealing with some of the more common challenges that arise.

You will be spending so much of your time at your job that you may start focusing exclusively on your job. You might neglect your personal relationships outside work, your own health and self-care, and your personal life. It is important to maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities. You need to take care of friends and family, your health, your home, and your finances.

Sometimes, despite proactive career management, good relationships, and a healthy life outside work, you still need to leave your job. It might have been a great job when you started, but you have grown and your job hasn't kept up. Perhaps the organization has changed. Maybe you want to do something different. You want to manage your career such that you have choices when you look for your next job. You want to have a strong network that is willing and able to help you. You want to have strong skills and qualifications that are attractive to prospective employers. You want to be learning and growing so that you are valuable to more than just your current organization.

8. Termination of an employee due to reasons unrelated to that employee's specific performance.

12.1 How to Do Well in the Job You Have

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how to maximize your first ninety days on the job.
2. Learn strategies for developing a good relationship with your boss.
3. Understand what success in your current job really means.

Table 12.1 "Your First Ninety Days On The Job" gives an overview of some things you may want to address during your first few months of employment.

Table 12.1 Your First Ninety Days On The Job

Suggested Time	Items to Do
Before you start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return offer letter and work-related forms (e.g., I-9, W-2) • Confirm place and time to report on your first day
On your first day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your boss and immediate colleagues • Get security ID, computer passwords, phone and voice mail access • Find the bathroom, lunch spots, and other creature comforts • Understand your work deliverables for the short term
During your first week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete employment paper work • Learn company policies and regulations • Meet colleagues in different departments • Debrief with your boss on your first week

Suggested Time	Items to Do
During your first month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend orientation sessions • Have lunch with different colleagues in your department and outside it • Debrief with your boss about your first month • Confirm your work deliverables for the first quarter
During your first ninety days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get feedback from your boss • Look into training opportunities or other support from your employer • Confirm your work deliverables for the next quarter, half year, and year • Continue to debrief with your boss, network with colleagues

Make the Most of Your Onboarding Support during Your First Ninety Days

When you are new, it is a good time to ask questions and meet people. Unless you are coming into a leadership situation where people will be looking to you for guidance immediately, take advantage of your newness to collect as much information as possible. Introduce yourself to **human resources (HR)**⁹ and get their advice on where you should focus to get acculturated quickly to the new organization. Remember that HR has **onboarded**¹⁰ many people before you, so they should have some good advice about how to get started smoothly. Ask your boss to introduce you to the people you should know. It is ideal that people are aware you were recently hired and are starting that day, but sometimes it's a surprise, so be ready to introduce yourself and tell people about your background and what you will be doing.

You might be starting at the same time as several other people. Think of a school that has a well-defined academic calendar and therefore may have all the new teachers start on the same day. You might be offered specific onboarding training programs. One school sent its new hires the school newsletter for a few months before they started so they could feel they were a part of the school before they got there.

9. The department that is charged with the welfare of employees within an organization. Subsets of HR may include employee relations, compensation, benefits, recruiting, and training.

10. The process of bringing a new employee into an organization and integrating him or her to the new environment. This can be as simple as filling out paper work to get the employee paid or as involved as in-depth training and customized support to acclimate the new employee.

Learn How Your Employer Runs Its Business

In addition to meeting key people, you must coordinate practical logistics. Paperwork must be filled out, including tax forms (e.g., **W-2**¹¹) and work authorization forms (e.g., **I-9**¹²). You may have to sign a form that confirms you've read the company policy manual. Don't forget to consult the organization's policy manual regardless of whether it's required reading. By doing so, you know any specific rules around start and end time (continuing our school example from earlier, not every school starts and ends at the same time), breaks, dress code, access to computers and other supplies, and so forth. You may need to get an identification card or keys to the office.

You also want to get accustomed to the physical environment. Confirm where to go on your first day; don't just assume that area will be where you normally work. Sometimes large companies have several offices, and an orientation for new hires might be located in a different area. Know where the bathroom is located. Know where the cafeteria is located or get lunch spot recommendations. Know where to find office supplies. Don't underestimate the value of being comfortable. Some companies set up a workspace for you with computer, telephone, and other equipment you will need. If this isn't the case, arrange for these resources as soon as possible so you can start contributing on the job. Know whom to call for IT or telephone support; perhaps the organization has put together a list of frequently used phone extensions.

Remember the school that onboarded its new teachers by including them in the newsletter distribution list even before they joined? This school used particular grading software and an intranet to share lesson plans. If you are a new teacher there, you would want to make sure you have access to the system and will get training on how to use it.

Learn What Success on the Job Means

From day one, you need to get down to work. Get clear about what you need to deliver from your work that day, that week, that month, that quarter. Will you shadow another teacher first? For how long will you train, if at all, before taking over the job (or in this case, the classroom)? Will you use existing lesson plans—that is, how much structure will you be given?

It is best to ask your questions before you start or when you are new. Ask your boss rather than a colleague so you know officially what to do. Get specific recommendations from your boss about how best to learn about the work—for example, who customers are, how specific forms get filled out, what software to use.

11. An IRS form that determines how taxes will be withheld from your paycheck.

12. A required form that proves you have the proper work authorization to work in the United States. You do not need to prove citizenship, just that you have authorization to work.

Confirm to whom you should go for questions. It may be your boss, but he or she may select a colleague to train you. Find out about upcoming deadlines or special projects that insiders might be aware of but that they may forget to mention. Maybe the school where you teach collects data on the students after the first thirty days of school, and you need to be tracking specific things more closely or in a format different from what you anticipated.

Learn How Your Boss Likes to Work

Once you know what you should be doing day to day and for the next few weeks, you want to confirm with your boss how to keep him or her updated. People like to communicate in different ways. Live, telephone, or e-mail are all possible forms of communication. Find out what your boss prefers.

Find out how frequently you should update him or her. Only when you have a question? Once a day? Once a week? After a project or task is completed?

Confirm what type of update he or she would like. A quick summary? A more detailed report? Do you need to send a meeting request in Outlook for a specific time each week?

Find out how you will get feedback. The company policy manual may have information about formal performance reviews, but these are typically done once or twice each year. You will want more frequent feedback even informally so you know what you are doing well (and continue doing this) and what you need to develop (so you can work on this). Check in with your boss after your first week to let him or her know how you are feeling about your job (e.g., workload, what you've completed, outstanding questions), and ask for feedback then. You can also confirm how often he or she would like to discuss your performance going forward.

Don't forget to bring paper and pen or an electronic tool for taking notes during meetings with the boss and others. A common newbie mistake is to try and retain all of the information from a meeting without taking notes. You will miss something. While it's fine to ask clarifying questions, it looks like you weren't paying attention if you ask about something that was already covered. You want to bring your own note-taking supplies because asking for a paper and pen, rather than bringing your own, makes you look unprepared.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Start strong by taking advantage of onboarding support new employees typically get, such as time with HR on new hire training programs.
- Take care of practical logistics, such as paper work and learning your physical environment.
- Get confirmation about exactly what you need to get done day one, week one, month one, and the first quarter.
- Develop a good relationship with your boss by being available for updates and asking for feedback.

EXERCISES

1. For the jobs that you are targeting, research if they provide new hire training or other onboarding support. Ask people who have worked at organizations in which you are interested. Try to get a feel for what you can expect.
2. If you have a friend who works in one of your target companies, look at the policy manual so you can get familiar with the workday, dress code, and so forth.
3. You know you will need to adjust your communication style to your boss, but you also want to be clear on what you need. How do you like to communicate? Think back to projects that you worked on—do you plan by the day, week, or longer? Are more or less frequent check-ins helpful?
4. Look at a job description for a job that you want. How would you translate this to specific actions you would want to do in day one, week one, month one, and the first quarter? If you are unable to outline specific actions (and for most job descriptions, you won't because they are written very generally), what do you need to know to confirm specific actions?

12.2 How to Develop, Expand, and Maintain Professional Relationships

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the three types of mentors to develop.
2. Learn how to find a mentor and be a good mentee.
3. Learn other relationships to cultivate outside your immediate boss and mentors.
4. Get strategies for relationship building.



Get a Mentor Who Is Not Your Boss (Get Several)

Most of you have experienced the value of mentors because you already have had someone in your life—a family member or a teacher—who has guided and supported you. While your boss can guide and support you professionally, it is ideal to get mentorship beyond your boss for several reasons:

- You want to be able to ask questions freely and share doubts and concerns. Sometimes it's perfectly fine to ask questions of your immediate boss, but sometimes you will want to test an idea or probe

an issue before bringing it up to the person who decides your next project, promotion, and raise.

- You benefit from multiple perspectives. Your boss's immediate concern is the performance of his or her team and area. You want to have someone who can be a more objective outsider and is not too close to the situation.
- You establish a relationship outside your immediate area and can therefore learn more about the organization and expand your reach. It's important to know what is going on in the organization as a whole, and a mentor can provide valuable information.

Don't try to develop a mentor relationship with your boss's boss. This can be awkward because your boss might think you are trying to leapfrog or exclude him or her. In addition, you lose the ability to talk more candidly. Regardless of how objectively you try to state things, if you are raising a concern or even a question about your boss, it denigrates him or her in the eyes of the person who assigns your boss the next project, promotion, or raise.

You do not need to have just one mentor. It is unrealistic to think that one person has the time or knowledge to provide all the coaching and support you need. Consider cultivating three types of mentors:

13. As used in this context, it is what most people think of when they hear the word *mentor*. Typically a senior person, at least two levels above you, your guardian angel supports and protects your career.

14. As used in this context, it is someone who knows the ins and outs of the organization and can serve as a guide. A shepherd can be your peer or even junior to you.

15. The body of advisers for a public corporation. The directors do not work directly for the corporation; rather, they are independent and represent the shareholders. In this context, board of directors is our term for mentors of different backgrounds and expertise who can advise you on different career areas.

- **Guardian angel**¹³
- **Shepherd**¹⁴
- **Board of directors**¹⁵

A guardian angel is what most people think of when they hear the word, "mentor." A guardian angel is your supporter and protector. Typically, a guardian angel is two or more levels above you to have the credibility and experience to help you. Your guardian angel looks out for plum assignments that might be beneficial to your career. Your guardian angel is experienced in how to be successful at the organization and can advise you on pitfalls to avoid or opportunities to take advantage of. If you have questions about troubleshooting a sticky office situation, your guardian angel will be able to help. For our new teacher in the earlier example, his guardian angel might be a senior teacher or even administrator. This person might propose learning tools or conferences the new teacher could use or attend. This guardian angel also might suggest the new teacher for a committee or other special assignment to raise his profile at the school.

A shepherd is typically not much more senior and may even be more junior to you. A shepherd knows the ins and outs of the organization and can guide you. We all know someone who is the social epicenter of a particular group. For your

professional workplace, that is a shepherd who can help shortcut your learning curve. The shepherd knows who is influential, who might be trouble, and who is the best person to talk to for a variety of requests. The shepherd would be a good person with whom to brainstorm about possible other mentors. For our new teacher in the earlier example, his shepherd might be another teacher at the school, who doesn't need to be of a similar subject or grade, but someone more connected to the culture of the school and who can share the inside scoop.

A board of directors for a company (or **board of trustees**¹⁶ for a nonprofit) is typically composed of people with different backgrounds and expertise—finance, legal, human resources (HR), operations, marketing, and so forth. The board provides a resource for advice and counsel to the company or nonprofit in a variety of areas. Similarly, you will need advice and counsel on a variety of areas—career advancement, communication and presentation, work and life balance, career change, and so forth. No one person will be an expert in all issues. Instead of relying on one person, it would be helpful to cultivate a board of directors, each with a specific area of expertise important to you. It is ideal to have mentors both inside and outside your organization and even industry. This way, you have a diversity of perspectives. The new teacher might get mentorship from another teacher of a similar subject or grade to provide pedagogical advice. If he has an interest in using more multimedia or innovative teaching approaches, he might ask for guidance from a teacher outside his subject area who knows a lot about audiovisual technology. Even a school operations staff member might be a member of this teacher's "board" to inform him how the school functions.

To Attract Good Mentors, Be a Good Mentee

Mentorships are close relationships, so it is ideal when they develop naturally. Sometimes, organizations have formal mentor programs, and these are great resources for meeting people and sometimes for establishing mentorships. But don't rely on a formal mentor program because your employer might not have one or the match you get may not be ideal. Instead, be proactive and use the following tips to help you seek your own mentors:

- Think about what you need and want in your mentors.
- Meet with different people who may fit your ideal to see if a relationship develops.
- Try to expand the relationship to meet more frequently or discuss things more deeply.
- Be responsive and helpful to your mentors.

16. An analogous group to the board of directors, but for a nonprofit. The trustees do not work for the nonprofit, but are a separate entity to provide outside advice and support, including financial and fundraising support.

When you are just starting in an organization, find a shepherd to give you a lay of the land. You need to get acclimated to your new environment. Then think about your goals for next year, two years out, and so forth, and think about what you need to know or what skills you need to develop. This gives you an indication of where you may benefit from mentorship.

Identify people in whom you are genuinely interested who might be able to provide advice and counsel toward your goals. Meet with them for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. If you can work on a project with them, that is another way to start a relationship. You should not automatically assume someone will agree to mentor you or would even be a good mentor. Right now, you just want to see who you enjoy being with and who can also provide the mentorship you seek.

For those people who might be possible mentors to you, you do not need to ask them as formally as you would a marriage proposal—that is, no bended knee before saying, “Will you mentor me?” Instead, let them know that their advice and insights in past conversations have been helpful and ask if you can reach out to them on a more regular basis to continue the conversations. Sometimes people will say they don’t have the time to commit to something regularly, but sometimes people will be flattered and enthusiastic. You will need to meet with many people before finding the right mentors, so don’t be concerned if your first efforts are not fruitful. At the very least, you are meeting people and practicing networking and relationship building.

When you do secure a mentor, you want to be a good mentee. Mentorship is a relationship, so you are equally responsible for its success. You are initiating the relationship, so be mindful of how the mentor likes to communicate and at what frequency. Is it better for him or her to meet at breakfast or after work, rather than during the day? Does your mentor want to have a sit-down meeting with an agenda or a quick conversation when you both have the time? Be proactive about scheduling the meetings so that the mentor isn’t doing the work to maintain the relationship.

Get to know your mentor as a whole person. Find ways to be helpful to him or her. Many mentors enter these relationships because they want to give back. At the very least, let your mentor know about the impact he or she is making by providing results updates—what happened when you took the advice they gave? If you know your mentor has a specific hobby or interest, find a helpful article or recommendation to support that interest.

Remember that your needs and your mentor’s availability change over time. Mentorships evolve, so if you find that you have less to discuss and the relationship

has run its course, schedule less frequent meetings. Turn the mentorship into a friendship, and steer the discussions more personally or outside the question-advice format. Treat your mentorships like two-way relationships with give and take.

Develop Professional Relationships with Different Companies, Departments, and Levels

A strong professional network is not just about mentorships. You also have colleagues who provide emotional support and more direct support, perhaps, on joint projects. You may be in a role that has customers. You may be working with consultants or vendors. Your job may require you to partner with other organizations. For your own knowledge and expertise, it is helpful to know about organizations and people outside your own employer. Organizations evolve over time, so it is helpful to know people at all levels—your peer could become your manager, or you may be asked to lead a team composed of peers.

Knowing people in different departments, at all levels, both inside and outside your employer, ensures that you have a diversity in perspectives about your role, your organization, and your industry. You may have a very specific role right now, but as your responsibilities expand, you will likely have to work with more and more people. It is helpful to establish relationships before you are forced to work together.

Our new teacher would want to know people in his school but also in other schools. If he teaches in a public school, it would be helpful to know people in independent, charter, and other schools. People in the school's administrative department or other school governing body would also be helpful contacts. Academics and experts in education, donors and supporters of education organizations, and parent organizers are other potential contacts for a teacher.

Be Proactive in Your Outreach, Communication, and Follow-Up

You need to be thoughtful and proactive about relationship-building to have quality relationships with mentors, colleagues in different departments, colleagues at different levels, and people outside your employer:

- Set aside specific time to expand your professional network.
- Work on your communication skills and style.
- Follow up over time to ensure relationships develop naturally and are not rushed.

People are busy, and you are busy. If you wait for an opportune time to start building your network, you will not find one. There is no urgency to day-to-day networking, so it will be set aside for a later time that never comes. Instead, schedule a few hours each week with the goal of expanding your professional network. You might set aside one lunch hour per week to eat with a different colleague. You might join a professional association and attend their meetings and mixers. One new teacher volunteered to be her school's union representative. She wanted to learn about the union, and though she was new, she was the only one who volunteered, so it was great exposure in her very first year. You might play on your employer's softball league. You might volunteer to organize the office holiday party. Many opportunities exist to meet a diverse mix of professionals both inside and outside your employer, but you have to consciously set aside the time to do this.

Are you comfortable introducing yourself to people and telling them what you do? Networking is one of the six job search steps, so you probably have worked on your networking pitch to get a job, but in the daily work context, your pitch is about what you do now. Plan and practice what you will say.

If the thought of joining a professional association and going to meetings makes you uncomfortable, consider joining with a more extroverted buddy. The softball league or a volunteer committee might provide a structured outlet for your networking. Find a colleague who isn't shy and ask them to introduce you to people. People are often very happy to help and may not realize you are shy. Let your boss know that you are trying to meet people, and ask him or her to introduce you to people.

Once you meet people, make time to maintain and expand relationships over time. It is impossible to schedule regular live contact with everyone in your professional network—colleagues, customers, vendors, management, former colleagues (as you progress in your career), and people in your related function or industry. However, you can keep in touch with phone calls and e-mails. The same spirit of generosity applies as you expand and deepen relationships—maintain contact without asking for anything in return.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mentors are an important part of your professional network to provide advice and a sounding board for ideas and concerns.
- Do not use your boss or your boss's boss as your mentor, so you can candidly speak about your issues and get an objective, outside perspective.
- Several types of mentors are available: guardian angel, shepherd, and board of directors. Ideally, you have several mentors.
- You develop strong mentorships naturally by meeting with people and letting relationships grow. Be a good mentee by being proactive and flexible about scheduling, and by being responsive to your mentor's needs.
- In addition to mentors, you want to develop relationships with people at all levels, in different departments, and inside and outside your company.
- Build relationships proactively by setting aside time to meet people and practicing how you will introduce yourself.

EXERCISES

1. Do you currently have mentors in your life? Pick one area of your life that you wish to improve, and try to find a mentor for that area.
2. Think about your one-year, two-year, and longer-term goals. What areas do you already know would benefit from some mentoring? Think about who might be ideal mentors for those areas. Can you start meeting these people now? Remember that you want to have mentors both inside and outside your employer, so you can start even before you are hired.
3. Look at the suggestions for building your professional network and decide which ones appeal to you. If the idea of a membership group appeals to you, can you join something now? Professional associations often have student chapters or other groups for people new to the career.

12.3 How to Steer Your Career Advancement: Promotions, Raises, and Performance Reviews

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn strategies to practice good career management while still focusing on your day-to-day job.
2. Understand the outline and learn how to maximize a performance review meeting.
3. Understand when and how to ask for a promotion.
4. Understand when and how to ask for a raise.



Career Management Goes Beyond Your Day-to-Day Job

Even from the earlier sections of this chapter, you can see that your day-to-day job is just one part of your work experience. Paper work, company policies, and physical environment also are a part of your job. You also have professional relationships. Even if you look only at yourself and what you do, you still are responsible for more than just your day-to-day job. You also are responsible for your overall career; these are two distinct entities.

Your day-to-day job is what you were hired to do now. It is meeting the success metrics that you confirmed in your first ninety days. It is having a good relationship with your current boss.

Your overall career is made up of your day-to-day job and your future jobs; therefore, career management means staying marketable and ready for future jobs that will be different from the job you are doing now.

To continue the schoolteacher example, his day-to-day job is teaching his students in the class he has now. Maximizing his overall career also includes staying current on pedagogy and his subject expertise. It also includes getting additional certifications. If he aspires to school leadership, teaching excellence will be just one part; he needs administrative experience in school operations; he needs to coach other teachers; he needs to stay abreast of the latest teaching innovations and challenges because as a leader he needs to guide his school through changes in education. This schoolteacher, therefore, needs to meet his day-to-day job demands, while fitting in the development of additional skills and experience required for his desired future job.

An accountant might be assigned a specific area of tax and a specific type of client. Her day-to-day job is about completing the tasks at hand. Later roles will involve overseeing an entire project and multiple accountants, who, like she once did, just manage certain tasks. Later roles might require overseeing entire client relationships with multiple projects. Finally, this accountant will be expected to bring in new clients; her primary focus becomes selling projects rather than managing projects or performing accounting tasks. This accountant, therefore, needs to perform her accounting tasks, while maintaining perspective on the overall project, developing management skills, and ultimately developing client relationship and selling skills.

The ability to manage both your day-to-day job and your overall career requires good time management and self-awareness of your dual tracks. It is a time management issue because you need to do the daily work of your job and still prioritize time for career-building. You also must have self-awareness of what you want to achieve, your ideal timetable, and what you need to meet these goals. When you are new in your career, your main priority should be to be the best performer you can be in your current job. As soon as you have acclimated to your environment and mastered your daily work, it is time to start proactively scheduling in the training, research, and relationship-building activities you need to prepare for your next role. Do not just assume that opportunities for career advancement will come to you.

Maximizing Your Performance Review Meeting

One way of knowing that you have mastered your daily work is by getting feedback on how you are doing at your job. Some organizations have formal feedback processes, where your direct boss and sometimes even colleagues or other people who work with you fill out a performance feedback form. These forms typically include criteria for the technical skills of your job and soft skills, such as communication skills and relationship skills with others. When you join an organization, find out if it has a formal performance review process. Find out its frequency—it could be annually or several times per year. Some organizations (e.g., management consulting firms) give formal feedback after every project. Ask to see the performance review form when you start because it is a great indication of the criteria by which you will be judged.

Unfortunately, not every organization has formal processes in place, or, if they do, not all managers actually give the review in a timely and thorough way. Your employer might have a formal process, but if no one follows it, you still don't have your review. In the case where you aren't getting formal performance feedback, you need to ask for it. In the first section on how to do well on the job, we covered the importance of regular updates with your boss. This alone should ensure that a formal performance review has few surprises. However, these shorter updates are not a substitute for a more thorough review of your performance. Schedule a meeting with your boss well in advance, and let him or her know you would like to discuss your performance.

At a formal performance review, you want to cover four topics:

- A summary of what you are working on and have accomplished since your last review
- Confirmation of priorities and expectations for what you will be working on in the next few months or year
- Specific things you did well or qualities that are your strengths
- Specific areas you need to improve, including suggestions for how you can develop these areas

17. The person you manage directly, including delegating assignments to that person, giving feedback and being responsible for the direct report's development, and determining raises and promotions.

Don't assume that your boss is aware of everything you are working on and have accomplished. Some jobs have narrowly defined tasks, but many jobs have ad hoc projects that arise. Sometimes you take over the duties of a colleague if your area is restructured or the colleague is assigned to other things. Your boss may lose track because he or she might have other **direct reports**¹⁷ and his or her own responsibilities and daily work. The new accountant, for example, might have been expected only to be a junior member of a project team, but maybe the manager got

called onto another project for a few weeks, and the new accountant stepped up. She needs to make sure her boss realizes that she went above and beyond on a project.

Come prepared to your performance review with a list of your current responsibilities and past accomplishments. Listen closely to what your boss sees as your responsibilities and past accomplishments. Make sure you are on the same page—maybe you are prioritizing a part of your job that your boss sees as trivial. Maybe your boss highlights a win that you overlooked or dismissed as unimportant. The new accountant might be spending a lot of time formatting specific client reports rather than talking to the client and getting verbal input on what they're thinking. Maybe the firm would prefer that she get in front of the clients more, rather than focus on the written correspondence (or vice versa). Come to agreement on any gaps between how you evaluate your performance and how your boss evaluates you so that you know the criteria on which you are judged for the future.

In the spirit of agreement, confirm priorities and expectations for the upcoming months or year (depending on the frequency of when you get a performance review and how quickly your duties typically change). Make sure you are working on the tasks and projects that matter to your boss and to your department. Be prepared to discuss what you plan to work on, but be open to the possibility that your boss might reprioritize your work. Having a prepared list of upcoming tasks and projects also makes your boss aware of everything you are doing—remember, he or she has other direct reports and responsibilities and may not realize all you've been assigned.

Ask for feedback on your strengths and what you did well. Don't assume that a performance review is just about improving and therefore discussing your weaknesses. Knowing your strengths is equally important so you know what to build on and do more often. Continuing the example of the schoolteacher, many schools observe teachers in the classroom and give instructional feedback (this is done by the principal and possibly dedicated instructional coaches). A new teacher might not realize how effectively he is engaging his students by mixing up the lesson into lecture, small group, and independent work. Once that is pointed out in a performance review, the teacher knows to build this into future lessons.

However, you also want to address any weaknesses or areas to develop. Don't get defensive; just listen and schedule another meeting after this review if you still disagree with the feedback once you've had time to absorb it. Ask for specific examples so you are clear on what behavior isn't desirable or how your skill in a weak area is deficient. Get your boss's recommendation for how you can address

these weaker areas. Do you need to get on a project to hone these skills? Is there any training you can attend at the organization or offsite? Can your boss give you more regular coaching on a day-to-day basis? Continuing the example of the new accountant, she might have struggled on a project that required a specific industry expertise or area of accounting. Her boss might recommend a training course to develop this expertise, or she may be placed on another project in the same industry or accounting specialty so she can get more exposure to that area.

If a number of weaknesses are revealed, or if there is a wide disagreement between what you and your boss think (in terms of what you accomplished, your future priorities, strengths, and weaknesses), you want to get agreement on the next steps to fill this understanding gap. You probably want to schedule another meeting in the not-too-distant future to check in or at least step up your regular updates. It is important that you know how your job performance is being perceived and that you build on your strengths and improve your weaknesses.

When and How to Ask for a Promotion

Your main priority when you are new on the job is to master the job. You will learn from your performance reviews how you are doing and if you are ready to take on more responsibility. Some organizations have very specific career tracks with well-defined schedules for when the typical employee progresses to more responsibility and a formal promotion in title. As with performance reviews, however, not all organizations have a formal or well-defined process. Over your career, you may be in situations where you need to ask for a promotion.

You need to have a good understanding of your organization's culture to know the best timing and case for a promotion. In a **flat organization**¹⁸, where there are few titles, the chances of a promotion are fewer due to the flatter structure. Even where a range of titles exist, if you see that people with the more senior titles have many years' experience, then you can approximate that the track to each promotion requires many years. There are always exceptions, so you want to look at individual cases in your specific organization, but the flatness of the organization and the title track of people already within it are two good indications of how promotions are viewed.

It is ideal to already be doing a bigger job before requesting a promotion. You want to have earned your promotion. It will not be given on promise or potential. In this way, you want to structure a promotion discussion much like the performance review meeting. You want to itemize your current workload and past accomplishments, which should demonstrate that you have taken on more than your current title suggests. You want to confirm your future projects, which should

18. An organization with few or no titles to differentiate employees. An organization might opt for a flat structure to strongly encourage teamwork.

indicate a bigger role with more responsibility. You want to highlight your strengths.

Know the exact title you want and what you plan to do in the role. If your boss agrees, get confirmation of when the promotion will take place and ask for something in writing documenting your new position and responsibilities. This way, you ensure that everyone has the same understanding and that your promotion has officially gone through the proper channels of approval.

If your boss doesn't agree, get a clear understanding of why so you can plan your next steps and manage your career accordingly. If the timing is too soon, find out when you can revisit getting a promotion. If promotion approvals occur only during certain times of the year, mark your calendar so you catch the next decision process. If your boss disagrees about your achievements or skills, ask for recommendations on how to improve. You are not entitled to a promotion, but you also don't need to sit idly by and just wait for one. Document your achievements, make your case, and act on feedback that you receive.

When and How to Ask for a Raise

A promotion and a raise are different, although they sometimes go hand in hand. As with promotions, some organizations give raises on a regular schedule, typically annually either at your start date anniversary or at the same time every year for the whole organization (in which case, the raise is prorated for your start date in your first year). Sometimes raises are pegged to inflation; this raise is known as **COLA**¹⁹, or cost of living adjustment. Sometimes raises are performance based, in which case strong feedback or specific results (e.g., sales) determine the raise.

As with promotions, you want to know what is customary for your specific organization. This doesn't mean that you can't ask for an exception, but you will at least know what to expect and to brace yourself to make a case if what you are asking for is exceptional. You might consider asking for a raise if your job has changed dramatically and you are taking on more tasks and responsibilities. Another reason to ask for a raise outside the yearly increase is if you have new market information that shows salaries in similar positions are dramatically different from your own.

A raise implies a permanent adjustment to your salary. Your employer may not want to do this if your additional responsibilities are temporary. In this case, you might ask for a **spot bonus**²⁰, or one-time bonus, to compensate you for your extra work. Remember that going above and beyond your daily work is how you distinguish yourself, so in and of itself that is not enough to justify a raise or bonus.

19. A specific raise that is indexed to inflation or a cost-of-living adjustment, hence the acronym COLA.

20. A bonus that is not paid on a regular schedule (e.g., annually) but rather paid out for an extraordinary accomplishment or extra work above and beyond the day-to-day job.

A raise or bonus is warranted in extraordinary cases, and the measure of what is extraordinary varies by organization.

As with promotion requests and performance review meetings, you want to come prepared with your accomplishments as evidence you deserve a raise. The raise meeting is the time to share any market data that you learned. Be informative, but not threatening. You don't want your employer to think you are giving an ultimatum that you get the raise or else you will quit. They may call your bluff. Instead, reiterate how excited you are about your position and affirm that this is the right organization for you, but make your case why a raise may be merited for what you have done.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Doing well on your job is but one part of overall career management. You also want to look at your future goals and make sure that you develop the training, experience, and relationships necessary to reach these goals.
- Some organizations have formal processes for giving performance reviews, assigning promotions, and granting raises. You want to know what is customary for your organization.
- If your organization does not have official processes for performance reviews, promotions, or raises, you will want to schedule time to discuss these with your boss.
- Regular performance feedback is critical to ensure you are doing a good job and are on track for your career goals. Promotions and raises are not a regular occurrence, but are for extraordinary contributions, such as if your responsibilities increase or you have exceptional results in your work.

EXERCISES

1. Aside from doing well in your first job, what are your career goals? Write your autobiography from the point of view of twenty years from now. Yes, you will have to make assumptions and outright guess for some things, but let your imagination explore what you'd like to say you accomplished. Then work backward to explore how you might get that career. When did you get your first promotion? How is a promotion defined—a bigger role, managing people, better scores, higher sales, or some other measure? Do you go to graduate school—for what and when? Look at the profiles for people who have the career you want and see what their career trajectory looks like.
2. If you have a sense of your long-term career goals, plot out what you can do in your first year to move toward these goals. If you know graduate school may be in the future, set reminders for yourself to check on the status of recommendations—are you working closely enough with people who can provide recommendations down the line? What professional organization might you want to join?
3. For the jobs you are targeting, talk to professional associations and people who have those jobs about what is customary regarding performance reviews, promotions, and raises.

12.4 How to Secure Your Job during Difficult Economic Times

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn the signs of a potential layoff.
2. Get strategies for how to handle a layoff and move on to a new job.



The recent high unemployment numbers underscore that an important part of career success is staying employed even when the economy is difficult. The first three sections we covered in this chapter all contribute to securing your job:

- Doing well in your daily work increases your value for that job.
- Maintaining open communication and a good relationship with your boss ensures that you stay positively in mind if layoff decisions need to be made.
- Having a broad professional network means other people may support your case.
- Being mindful of career advancement helps because organizations like to keep strong performers.

However, sometimes even good workers get laid off. Companies buy or merge with other companies, and this often means there will be overlap—for example, two human resources (HR) departments, two accounting departments, and so forth. The new company may not need or have a place for everybody. Organizations may close their doors altogether. Enron, Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, and several nonprofits with money invested with Bernie Madoff closed quickly, without any warning in some cases. Therefore, knowing that layoffs can happen through no fault of your own, you want to be able to see the warning signs (so you have more time to react) and manage a layoff so you get the most support and momentum to move on to a new job

Watch for Warning Signs before a Layoff

It's hard to predict the exact timing of a layoff, but certain events indicate that you should start paying closer attention to the health of your organization and the security of your job:

- Changes in the economy
- Changes in industry
- Changes in an organization's financial standing
- Changes in management
- Changes in behavior of managers, coworkers, and subordinates
- Changes in job responsibilities
- Changes in performance feedback

If the overall economy is stagnant or depressed, repercussions are felt throughout many industries. Public schools are impacted by state budget cuts. Hospitals face shrinking federal funds. Nonprofit **endowments**²¹ decrease and, subsequently, so do their operating budgets. Consumers spend less, so retail stores have lower sales and lower revenues. Businesses have less money to spend on advertising, technology, consulting, and other business services. If the economy takes a hit, your employer likely takes a hit. If the economy suffers a deep blow, it might be enough to threaten your employer's ability to maintain its workforce.

Sometimes specific industries are hit especially hard. Housing has undergone a recent contraction, so mortgage services, builders, housing-related equipment and supplies, and other real estate-related companies are struggling. If you hear that your employer's competitors aren't doing well or that your broader industry isn't doing well, follow the news more closely. If an industry your employer serves isn't doing well, that impacts you just as directly. For example, when car companies were having financial trouble, the advertising agencies that relied heavily on automotive company business also were hard hit. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* produced

21. Pool of money set aside by a nonprofit to be invested and drawn upon for its operating expenses.

by the Bureau of Labor Statistics tracks hundreds of different jobs and gives estimates on future job prospects for that role.

You may be tempted to disregard your organization's internal memos, newsletters, or even annual report, but it is a good idea to stay current with your organization's health. Is it profitable? Does it have a **diversified**²² customer base—that is, a lot of different customers, so you are not relying on any one group? Is your employer growing? Is the growth related to your job, or is it in a different geography or different functional area?

If your organization's management changes, that is a sign to follow your work environment and prospects more closely. It is customary for a new executive team to want to bring in their own people. If you are new to your career and many levels below the executive team, this may not affect you now, but it's something to remember as you advance upward in your career. In addition, if your immediate boss changes, the new boss may want to bring in his or her own team, and that does affect you, regardless of how junior you are.

Earlier in this chapter, we talked about keeping open communication, developing relationships, and getting feedback. You want to do this on a regular basis because changes in the behavior of your boss or colleagues (or team when you start managing others), as well as changes in your responsibilities or your performance feedback should be watched closely. You want to have time to turn things around if you discover people are not happy with your work. If you can't ameliorate the situation where you are, you want to have time to look for your next opportunity and leave on your own terms.

Improve Your Situation If You Do Get Laid Off

A layoff doesn't have to mean you did a bad job. If you are let go for performance-based reasons, by all means learn from that. If you are fired because you didn't get along with your boss or coworkers, try to establish better relationships at your next job because professional relationships are important. If you were laid off due to a bad economy, restructuring, or other external reason, let the job go and focus on moving on to your next job.

To make the most out of a layoff situation, you can take action steps at different stages:

- During the termination process
- Before your final day with the organization

22. High amount of diversity. A diversified customer base could mean you have several customers, so business is not concentrated in any one customer. It could also mean the customers are in different industries or sectors, so business is not subject to the financial health of any one industry or sector.

- After you leave the organization

Manage the Termination Process

Layoff scenarios will vary based on how much lead time the organization has to prepare and how many resources it has to support the layoff. A small business with few employees will handle layoffs differently than a large, global company with thousands of affected employees. The following is a roadmap for managing the termination process in a large organization that has resources to provide support for laid-off employees.

Once a layoff is announced, you will meet with HR to discuss the terms of your **severance**²³ and your end date. Prepare for this meeting by reviewing your organization's manual and any information about the severance policy. Some questions to consider include the following:

- How is severance pay calculated (typically by years of service, but additional compensation is sometimes given after long tenure, if little warning is given, or if many employees are affected)?
- What happens to bonuses or other compensation that haven't been paid yet?
- What happens to retirement benefits that still need to **vest**²⁴?
- What health coverage and other benefits are available?

Ideally, you have a friend in HR who can explain the policies to you before the termination meeting so you know what to expect and what you want to negotiate if you need more than the policy dictates. Severance packages are negotiable.

During the termination meeting, listen closely and take notes. Fully understand the severance package being offered. Ask questions if anything is unclear. Agree to get terms of the severance package in writing. Schedule a follow-up meeting for after you have a chance to review these items. Do not negotiate yet because you want to take time to prepare.

Remember that the organization probably regrets having to lay you off and wants to help you. Once you have received your offer, check what is customary for organizations similar in size and in your industry. You might want to negotiate for some of the following items:

- More severance pay
- Longer health-care coverage

23. Money you are paid after a layoff. This might be in a lump sum, or the organization might keep you on payroll and continue your salary even when you are not working there.

24. To be eligible for something. Your retirement benefits have vested when you are eligible to draw on them.

- Payout for bonuses accrued up to your end date
- Immediate vesting of your retirement benefits
- **Outplacement**²⁵ or career coaching to help get your next job
- Payouts for unused vacation, sick, or personal days
- An end date further out (Your end date may determine things like bonus pay, retirement vesting, and even accrued vacation days, so the further out your end date, the more you might accrue.)

Secure Your Relationships before You Leave the Organization

Collect contact information for the people with whom you'd like to keep in touch. Don't forget to share your personal contact information because most of your colleagues are used to reaching you at your work e-mail. Arrange with the IT department to have an automatic reply to your work e-mail that enables people who are trying to reach you specifically to have access to your personal information. If you do not want to share your personal information with everyone who may contact you at work, create a temporary account on Gmail or Yahoo! specifically for this forwarding purpose. Have the temporary Gmail or Yahoo! account forward to your primary personal e-mail and then you can decide if you want to share your information at that time.

Thank your boss, management, colleagues, and direct reports. Even if you are not personal friends with all these people, you may need them for references or job leads. For people whom you know you want for references, ask them while you are still on staff so you can do so personally. Get their personal contact information, in case they get laid off, too, or otherwise leave the company. Collaborate with your boss on what details of your layoff will be distributed both inside and outside the organization. You want to make sure you have a consistent and positive story.

Check with HR to see if there are consulting opportunities within the organization or openings at **subsidiaries**²⁶ or partners of the organization. Find out if a formal process is necessary to submit your résumé or arrange interviews.

25. Career coaching and support for workers who have been laid off to help them secure their next job.

26. A subset of the organization. An organization might split into subsidiaries so that each subset can focus on a different product or service, or otherwise remain separate from other subsidiaries but still be connected to the whole organization.

Some organizations require that you leave your office the same day you are laid off. You may not have time to take all the preceding steps. If you know this is a possibility where you work (check what is customary for your industry and also how your organization handled layoffs in the past), make sure you have personal contact information well before any danger signs are visible. Make sure you can quickly pack your office and take what you need. Do not keep your personal contacts only on your office computer or office phone because you might not have enough time to pull these contacts off before you lose company access to this information.

Get Ready to Start Your Search Right after You Leave the Organization

It's fine to take time off to recharge, but don't mistake your severance period for a paid vacation. Use that time to start your job search while you still have a cash cushion. Don't wait until you are running out of money and then cram in an anxious and desperate job search.

Run your numbers on how much cash cushion you have (given severance, savings, and so forth) to give you a timetable for your job search. A proactive job search typically takes three to six months. If you need money coming in sooner, you might want to build in time for temporary or consulting work in addition to your job search.

Your job search is now your full-time job. Schedule time for specific job search activities. Prioritize your job search so you are not tempted to spend this new "free time" reorganizing your house or doing non-career-related projects.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Changes in the broad economy, your industry, your organization's financials or management, or the feedback you are getting may signal a potential layoff.
- If you do get laid off, manage your termination process to get the maximum support to which you are entitled.
- Before you leave an organization, collect contact information and say thank you. Relationships with your former employer are still important.
- Don't wait too long to start your job search, so you won't feel rushed or pressured to land a job right away.

EXERCISES

1. Start the habit of following the broad economy and your target industry. Add *The Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *Fortune*, *BusinessWeek*, or other general business publications to your reading list.
2. Compose a checklist for yourself with what you need in a layoff situation so that when you start your new job, you have it as a reference tool. Remind yourself to keep personal contact information somewhere other than just on your professional equipment. Remind yourself to review your organization policies and build relationships with HR before you need them.

12.5 How to Manage Work Conflicts

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand potential challenges you may face in the workplace.
2. Get strategies for how to handle problems and when to use formal channels, such as human resources (HR).
3. Learn how to avoid burnout and maintain work and life balance.

Day-to-Day Workplace Conflict Is Often about Managing Relationships

When you work side by side with people, many different people and personalities are interacting, so conflicts inevitably arise:

- A talkative colleague interrupts you when you are trying to work.
- A teammate on a project isn't pulling his or her own weight.
- A competitive colleague takes credit for your ideas.
- A person from whom you need information is unresponsive.

These examples present challenges in day-to-day relationships. Relationship management is a key skill to mitigate common workplace conflicts. Your mentors, especially your shepherd, can help you by forewarning you of colleagues who might be problematic and advising you how others have learned to work with those people. You might simply need to set boundaries and establish a working relationship for the future.

If a colleague interrupts your work, don't continue the conversation. If you engage her in conversation, she might think you welcome her interruptions. Let her know you have a deadline and ask if you can come by at a set time. Make sure you schedule a time that is specific and limited. She will likely get the message—though it may take a few times—and stop interrupting you. You have set a boundary and a standard for how you wish to be treated.

If a colleague isn't pulling his own weight, your strategy will depend on his seniority to you (if you are peers, it's less complicated than if he's senior), your working history, and whether you expect to be working together in the future. React more carefully if your lazy colleague is senior, in case he has more influence

with your boss. If your working history has been good in the past, you might decide to give your colleague the benefit of the doubt or reach out and candidly offer your help. If you expect to be working together on an ongoing basis, it is more important that you first establish a good working relationship. Get help from your mentor on how to deal with the situation in a way that reflects the culture of the organization as well as the relationship and power dynamics.

If a competitive colleague takes credit for your idea, make sure you document your ideas and speak up so that she is unable to do this. She might not realize it's your idea and is merely repeating what she heard. She might do this intentionally, but once you stand up for yourself, she'll move on to others. This underscores how important it is to have regular updates with your boss where you can let him or her know firsthand what you are contributing.

If a colleague is unresponsive, recognize that there will be many situations where you have to influence people to help you, even when it is someone over whom you have no direct authority. This is a great skill to learn. The causes as to why someone may be unresponsive differ widely, but you can help the situation by making clear requests with specific deadlines. People are busy, and if you don't get what you need, rather than assume someone is deliberately being unhelpful, be clear and help people help you.

These are just some examples of workplace conflicts, but others will occur because your work environment combines many different personalities, roles, and cultures. Good communication and relationship-management skills will help you tremendously. If you have mentors who can provide a sounding board, as well as the cultural and historical context for people's behaviors, that will help tailor your good foundational skills to your current environment.

Workplace Issues Sometimes Are Complex and Require Assistance from HR

It is always a good idea to work with your mentors to help manage workplace conflict. Depending on the seriousness of the issue, you may also want to call on HR, which includes people specifically trained in employee relations, employment law, and other areas helpful to mediate workplace conflict.

In the "Learn How Your Employer Runs Its Business" section of this chapter, we recommended you read the company policy manual within your first ninety days. Often, you are required to sign confirmation you have read and are familiar with the policies. It's important to keep the manual handy so that you know how to

manage some of the following uncertainties or conflicts beyond daily relationship struggles:

- Can I check my personal e-mail and online sites during work hours?
- Can I pursue a job on the side?
- Can I date a colleague?
- Can I take or e-mail my files with me if I want to work from home.?
- Is it harassment or discrimination when I'm offended by something a colleague said or did?

Technology policies evolve quickly because of the increasing importance of social media. By the time this book is published, standards likely will have changed. Currently, some employers monitor all employee e-mails sent on office equipment, whether from a personal e-mail account or not. Some employers block access to sites like Facebook or LinkedIn. Be careful if you have a personal blog. Your employer may still consider that what you say reflects on them. You want to check what is allowed and customary at your own workplace.

Generation Y (born 1980–1995, so they are today's entry-level workers) is an entrepreneurial generation. It is not unheard of to find people with a side business, perhaps a website or a consulting business. This could be a violation of company policy, so even if you do the extra work on your own time and don't think it interferes with your work, you want to make sure it is not a violation. A conflict of interest might occur, and working another job could be grounds for dismissal.

Similar to a job on the side, office dating may be explicitly covered in company policy. Even if it isn't, weigh the decision carefully to date a colleague. If the relationship doesn't work out, you still have to see this person. In addition, even if you and the colleague you are dating are both fine with the decision to date, other colleagues may react differently. When you are early in your career, you have a short track record, so your reputation is built with what you do every day. Weigh possible adverse perceptions carefully.

Don't assume you can just e-mail or take your work files out of your office. If you are dealing with customer data or information that must be kept confidential, taking information offsite may be against company policy. Your home office equipment may not meet security requirements. You might have to log into a specific server to access your work files so that security is maintained. Again, don't just assume. Check your employer policy.

If you think a colleague is harassing or discriminating against you, this is a good example of when you might want to speak with HR. When you bring issues to HR, they need to start an official investigation, so make sure before you do this that there really is a problem and not a misunderstanding that you can handle on your own. Maybe the boorish colleague does not mean to discriminate, but just has terrible judgment or poor taste. Your mentors can help you assess the situation based on exactly what happened, what they know of the colleague in question, and any other nuances specific to your employment situation. You should never tolerate harassment or discrimination, but use good judgment on the best course to pursue.

Workplace conflict can be tricky and varies widely, so it's impossible to cover every scenario or make very specific recommendations. Some good rules of thumb include the following:

- Focus on maintaining good relationships with open communication and clear boundaries.
- Know your company policy, and check to see if answers to your questions are readily available.
- Use your mentors as a sounding board and information source for nuances and historical examples you can't readily research.
- Use HR for support. It is always helpful to have a friend in HR who can share information and counsel outside of official meetings.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many workplace conflicts can be minimized with good relationship management—open communication and clear boundaries.
- Do not assume that you can do personal work on office equipment or take work home on your personal equipment. Check company policy on personal e-mail and social media policy, confidentiality, and any other issues about which you have questions.
- Use your mentors for advice and information.
- Use HR as a resource if a serious office situation occurs, such as harassment or discrimination.

EXERCISES

1. How good are your relationship skills? Many of the scenarios listed can happen in school or another nonwork environment. Think about where you have had difficult relationships in the past, and think of helpful strategies you used. Think about areas you may need to develop, and plan how you might work on these before you start your job.
2. Try to find a company policy manual for the industry or type of company in which you are interested. What are the policies regarding personal e-mail and social media, working a side job, and so forth? Talk to people in the jobs you are targeting to find out what is customary.

12.6 How to Have a Life and a Career

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand why quality of life outside work contributes to career success.
2. Get strategies for how to maintain a healthy life outside your job.



Personal Finances Impact Career Success

Some employers check credit history before extending offers. One of the reasons for this is the notion that a person's ability to handle money responsibly is a signal of overall responsibility. This is a well-defined example of how your life outside of work (in this case, your finances) impacts your career success. When you transition to your first job, you have a number of financial issues to manage:

- If you borrowed money for school, you may have to start loan repayment.
- You may need to secure your first off-campus residence.

- You won't have health insurance through your school, so you need to secure medical coverage.
- You have your first significant paycheck and need to understand **withholdings**²⁷, taxes, and perhaps **retirement plans**²⁸.

Even if this isn't your first job, financial transitions will occur throughout your life—for example, buying a home, getting married and commingling finances and legal obligations, and having children.

For both the entry-level and the experienced worker, your financial situation dictates how much risk you can take, which may limit your opportunities. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, you might need to tolerate a less-than-ideal work situation. You might not be able to take a chance on a new business or a job change.

Personal finances matter. You can start some good habits start early in your career:

27. The amount of taxes set aside from your paycheck and sent to the IRS as prepayment for your taxes.
28. Financial structures set up so employers or employees can set aside money for retirement. Examples of retirement plans include IRA and 401k plans.
29. Reimburses you financially for medical care, sometimes including preventive care, but especially care due to illness and hospitalization.
30. Reimburses you financially for dental treatments.
31. Reimburses a person or people you designate in the event that you die.
32. Reimburses you for loss or damage to your home or apartment; also typically includes coverage for the contents of your residence.
33. Replaces a portion of your income if you are unable to work due to becoming disabled.

- Check your credit annually. You can get a free credit report at each of the major credit bureaus at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp>.
- Manage your debt. If you have student loans, get confirmation about when you need to start repaying and how much. With other debts, make sure you pay at least the minimum on time. Late fees and penalties for underpayment can add significant amounts quickly to your original debt. Don't forget to consider future graduate school plans as you review and organize your debt load.
- Get adequate insurance coverage. You want to be able to focus on your career and not have to worry about unexpected medical bills or something happening to your home derailing your focus. Types of insurance that most people need include **medical insurance**²⁹, **dental insurance**³⁰, **life insurance**³¹, **homeowners or renters insurance**³², and **disability insurance**³³.

Health and Well-Being Are Important to Your Career

In addition to good finances, good health is part of the foundation for career success. You physically can't do the work if you don't take care of your health. Once you know your typical work schedule in your new job, schedule time for exercise. Some workplaces have gyms, or you might look at nearby gyms as an option to make time for exercise.

Schedule your annual physical, dental appointments, and other routine medical care. Put these appointments into your professional calendar so you don't schedule meetings on top of these and push them off to the side. Try scheduling as many routine checkups as possible before you start your job so that you can focus 100 percent on the new job.

Make time for breaks, eat lunch, drink water, and practice good health habits even during the workday. When you are new, you have a lot of information to process and you may be tempted to work through breaks or lunch, or never leave your desk. Set your Outlook calendar to remind you to stretch. Block off your lunch hours and make dates with colleagues so you keep the time free. You need to replenish your mental and physical energy so you are able to focus and do good work.

You might be tempted to work past the regular day, or do career-related activities after work (e.g., professional networking, training). While this is admirable, you also want to pursue hobbies and personal interests outside work. First of all, personal hobbies make you a more well-rounded person, which helps your career. Second, focusing on personal hobbies gives you a more diverse network, which also helps your career. Finally, pursuing personal interests gives you a much-needed mental break, which should help you be more focused and possibly more creative in your job.

Personal Relationships also Need Attention

Not every relationship needs to contribute to your career success. Consider involvement in your community. Don't forget your social circle from college and other non-work-related situations. Similar to personal hobbies, personal relationships outside work make you more well rounded and give you a diverse perspective. It is easy to overlook these relationships, so schedule time on your calendar on an ongoing basis so that these relationships are not continually pushed aside for work reasons.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Life success contributes to career success, such as the areas of personal finance, health and well-being, and relationships.
- Schedule the time and specific activities for each of your nonwork areas so that they are not forgotten in the immediate pressures of work.

EXERCISES

1. Go to <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp> and order your credit report. Fix any errors, and read it thoroughly to understand the current state of your finances.
2. Itemize your current financial responsibilities. Make a list of bills you need to pay. Make a list of action steps before your next job, for example, if you need to find a place to live. Check your insurance coverage.
3. Schedule routine medical checkups. Set your calendar for when you need to make your next appointment so that when you are busy on the job you can be assured that your calendar will remind you to make appointments.
4. Pick which personal hobbies and relationships you will prioritize. Make specific plans with dates, times, and activities and how you will incorporate these interests and relationships once you start working.

12.7 How to Get Your Next Job

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn the signs of when you might want to start looking.
2. Get strategies for how to look for a new job while you still have one.

Your Career Is a Succession of Jobs

In the beginning of this chapter, we introduced the notion that your career is a succession of jobs. So you should start your career fully expecting to hold multiple jobs. Even if you stay at the same organization, your job within the organization will change:

- You may take on increased responsibility. The schoolteacher becomes a grade or department chair, then an instructional coach, and then perhaps an administrator. The accountant becomes a project manager and then a client relationship manager.
- You may change focus on a different specialty or area of expertise. The schoolteacher moves from an elementary grade to middle school, or from one subject to another. The accountant who worked in the financial services practice moves to the technology practice and works with different clients.
- You may work for a different part of the organization. The schoolteacher at a public school may decide to work in the Department of Education (effectively school headquarters). In this way, he is still in education but working centrally across schools on operations, curriculum design, or another central role. The accountant may move from client-facing work to a central role helping the overall firm. She might focus on marketing, using her firsthand accounting knowledge to get published and speak at conferences as a representative of the firm. She might focus on human resources (HR), becoming a recruiter for the firm.

Your own organization is a possible source of future jobs, so you should know your organization much more broadly than your current job. Know the different departments. Know the different clients and constituents your organization serves. If your organization is part of a larger group or has partners or subsidiaries, get to know these as well. You want to know the structure, what types of jobs are

available, and the protocol for moving from one part of the organization to another. Some organizations have very clear rules about applying for internal jobs—for example, you need to get your current boss’s permission before applying; you need to apply through HR or use another special application.

Multiple Options Exist If You Want to Change Organizations

Staying in your current organization is not your only option. Keep in mind, however, that in the beginning of your career, it is valuable to establish a track record. Staying at a job for one year or longer has value in the duration itself because you show that you have staying power and can follow through. People change jobs more frequently now, so prospective employers are not as critical when they see various employers on a résumé. However, multiple short stints of two years or fewer raise a red flag for employers that you might leave them just as quickly, or are otherwise unable to last. Recruiting and onboarding is expensive and time consuming, so prospective employers shy away from candidates who might be a flight risk.

That said, several signs might show that you have outgrown your current organization:

- You are no longer challenged, and your organization is too small for you to make a **lateral move**³⁴ into other areas.
- You want to focus on a different specialty or skill set than you can in your current organization.
- You want to relocate, and the organization is not present in your new geography.
- You have a business idea and decide to work for yourself.

Each of these options represents a different type of opportunity and therefore a different search.

If you are leaving for a challenge, then your search needs to focus on jobs with broader responsibility or expertise requirements than you have now. Be clear on how you will measure the amount of challenge: Are you looking to manage a team? Are you looking to have responsibility for a budget or finances? Are you looking to learn a specific skill? Your ability to define specifically what you want in your next job will enable you to search for those opportunities in a targeted way.

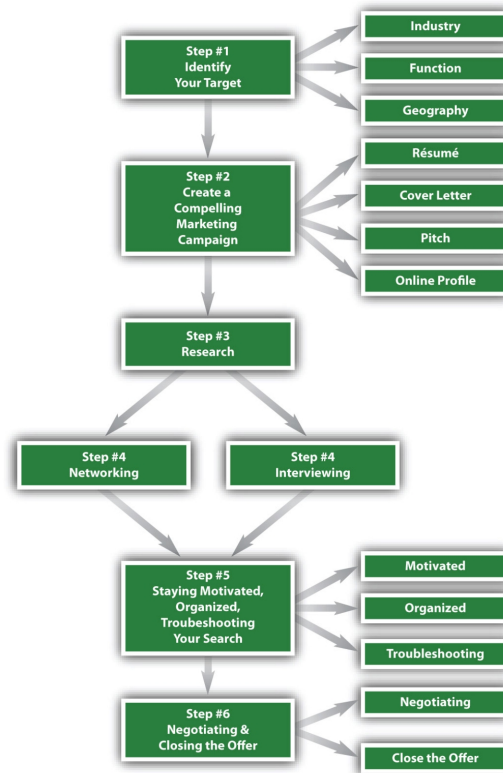
If you want to focus on a different specialty, skill, or geography, then you want a career change. You are not just taking the outline of your job and moving it into the

34. Refers to moving within an organization into a different department or function and often without a promotion or raise. In this way, it’s like moving sideways, or laterally.

context of another organization. Rather, you are changing a fundamental piece of it—industry, function, or geography.

If you are leaving to go into business for yourself, this is also a career change from traditional employment to entrepreneurship. You will have the day-to-day job as well as sales, marketing, operations, finance, and all functions of running a business. The schoolteacher who decides to open a tutoring service will still be teaching but also will need to market his services, sell to prospective parents, bill his hours, collect money, balance his books, and so forth. The accountant who opens a private practice similarly has to market, sell, and run operations of an accounting firm, in addition to accounting.

Revisiting the Six Steps Will Help You Launch a Thoughtful, Proactive Search



The job search always starts with targeting so that you can customize each subsequent step to your target. Once you have determined how your next job is defined, you can move through each of the same six steps you used to get this first job.

Remember to update your marketing materials to reflect everything you have accomplished in this new job. It is good practice to update your résumé on an ongoing basis even when you are not considering a new job. Whenever you complete a new project, take on additional responsibility, or learn a new skill, add it to your résumé. This way, you are not scrambling to remember everything you accomplished (you can always edit it). Another benefit to frequent updating is it is a built-in check and balance that you are accomplishing, progressing, and learning in your job. If six months have passed and you have nothing to update, look into opportunities for training or taking on additional projects to stretch your skills and experience.

Networking is another job search step that will have changed from your first search to this current job. Your network has grown since your first job search. It now includes people you have met in your current job, as well as any professional groups you might have joined. It also includes people you met as a result of your first search. Don't overlook helpful people from your first search.

Obligations in Your Current Job Must Continue to Be Met

The six-step job search is effective because it is thorough and enables you to retain control of your search. Because it is thorough, it takes time. You must be able to spend time on your job search without compromising your ability to do your current job. From an ethical standpoint, you have committed to this job, so you need to produce. From a practical standpoint, you need to have good references from your current job for your next job, so you must maintain good standing with your current organization.

You will be able to do a lot of your job search outside normal business hours. You can update your marketing materials, research new possibilities, and reconnect with your existing network on evenings and weekends. Once you start networking outside your immediate circle and interviewing for specific jobs, you will start to intrude on your normal workday. Save your lunch hours, vacation days, and **personal days**³⁵ in anticipation of using them for your job search.

35. Paid time off that is separate from your vacation days. Some organizations break out personal days from vacation days because they might have different requirements for claiming these (e.g., less advance notice, ability to use a few hours at a time, rather than just whole days).

Another area for preplanning is your appearance! If your organization does not require formal business attire, then you will stand out in your interview suit. You might consider dressing more formally on regular days so that your interview clothes do not diverge so far from your daily wear. You also might consider not wearing a blazer at your current job, but then adding it once you are offsite.

Plan ahead for if and when you will let mentors and your boss know about your job search. You will want references from your current job, ideally from your direct

supervisor. In some cases, you want to keep your job search confidential, so you can refer prospective employers to a customer who knows your work, a senior colleague who has worked with or directly supervised you, or a former colleague who could speak more freely. Check your organization's policy regarding references. Some strict organizations do not allow employees to give references. Find out what is available to you because the reference-checking process is critical to the job search process.

Finally, plan for how you will leave your current job gracefully. Two weeks' notice is a national standard, but this varies by industry, company, and job. If you have a specialized function, a senior role, or are currently on a long-term assignment, it might be expected that you will give more notice than two weeks. You might be expected to train your incumbent, or even help find this person. Unless you have an employment contract (rare and typically reserved for the most executive-level jobs), remember that most jobs are employment at will, so you can leave at any time with no notice. However, you want to exit gracefully so you maintain good relationships with your organization and colleagues. People move around in their careers, and in the future you may find yourself working with some of the same people.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A career requires a succession of jobs, which can be within the same organization.
- You may want to leave your organization if you are no longer challenged, need to change your industry, function, or geography to something your current employer cannot accommodate, or to start your own business.
- Use the same six-step job search process you used to get your current job, but update your marketing materials, network, and references to reflect your new experience.
- Make sure to meet your obligations in your current job while making time for your job search.
- Make sure that you leave your current job in good standing with your organization and colleagues by giving enough notice and helping with the transition, if needed.

EXERCISE

1. If you are reading this and haven't even started your first job, career planning may seem premature. Imagine your future and think about what you'd like to be doing in ten, twenty, and thirty years—even if you have to guess. What skills do you want to be using? What people do you want to be serving? Toward what objective or mission are you working? List the skills you want to learn and the experiences you want to have in your early jobs to prepare you for this career future. You now have an outline of what you want to accomplish in your first job and what signs to look for to see if you need to move on from that job.

12.8 Chapter Review and Exercises

Getting any one job is only one step to building a career. Your career is made up of many jobs where you will add to your skills, experience, and relationships. At the same time, your career is built one job at a time. You need to do well in the job you have currently, not just look to more responsibility before you have mastered the current ones. Focus on doing your current job well. Cultivate mentors and professional relationships with people who are knowledgeable and supportive. Be proactive about steering your career forward by getting regular performance feedback and asking for promotions and raises when warranted.

Know how to continue to do well on the job, even in difficult economic times and through challenging work situations. Lean on your professional relationships, but also do your own research on company policy and talk with human resources (HR). Doing well in the work environment depends heavily on your ability to manage relationships, so focus on your communication skills and ability to set boundaries.

Remember to have a life outside your professional work. Do not neglect personal relationships. Take care of your health and personal finances. Pursue hobbies and interests that don't have to benefit your career.

Finally, building a career isn't just about getting a job, but you also must know when to leave your job. Be clear about your objectives for your next position. Don't forget to explore opportunities within your current organization, but don't be afraid to revisit the six steps of the job search and find another position. Remember to maintain your obligations in your current job while you are looking and to exit gracefully. Then start identifying your target, create a compelling marketing campaign, conduct in-depth research....

Chapter Takeaways

- Start strong by taking advantage of onboarding support new employees typically get, such as time with HR on new hire training programs.
- Take care of practical logistics, such as paper work and learning your physical environment.
- Get confirmation about exactly what you need to get done day one, week one, month one, and the first quarter.
- Develop a good relationship with your boss by being available for updates and asking for feedback.
- Mentors are an important part of your professional network to provide advice and a sounding board for ideas and concerns.
- Do not use your boss or your boss's boss as your mentor, so you can candidly speak about your issues and get an objective, outside perspective.
- You can choose from several types of mentors: guardian angel, shepherd, and board of directors. Ideally, you will have several mentors.
- You develop strong mentorships naturally by meeting with people and letting relationships grow. Be a good mentee by being proactive and flexible about scheduling, and by being responsive to your mentor's needs.
- In addition to mentors, you develop relationships with people at all levels, in different departments, and both inside and outside your company.
- Build relationships proactively by setting aside time to meet people and practicing how you will introduce yourself.
- Doing well on your job is but one part of overall career management. You also want to look at your future goals and make sure you develop the training, experience, and relationships necessary to reach these goals.
- Some organizations have formal processes for giving performance reviews, assigning promotions, and granting raises. You want to know what is customary for your organization.
- If your organization does not have official processes for performance reviews, promotions, or raises, you will want to schedule time to discuss these with your boss.
- Regular performance feedback is critical to ensure you are doing a good job and are on track for your career goals. Promotions and raises are not a regular occurrence, but are for extraordinary

contributions, such as if your responsibilities increase or you have exceptional results in your work.

- Changes in the broad economy, your industry, your organization's financials or management, or the feedback you are getting may signal a potential layoff.
- If you are laid off, manage your termination process to get the maximum support to which you are entitled.
- Before you leave an organization, collect contact information and say thank you. Relationships with your former employer are still important.
- After you leave, don't wait too long before starting your job search, so you do not feel rushed or pressured to land a job right away.
- Many workplace conflicts can be minimized with good relationship management, open communication, and clear boundaries.
- Do not assume that you can do personal work on office equipment or take work home on your personal equipment. Check company policy on personal e-mail and social media policy, confidentiality, and any other issues about which you may have any questions.
- Use your mentors for advice and information.
- Use HR as a resource if a serious office situation arises, such as harassment or discrimination.
- Life success contributes to career success, such as the areas of personal finance, health and well-being, and relationships.
- Schedule time and specific activities for each of your nonwork areas so that they are not forgotten in the immediate pressures of work.
- A career requires a succession of jobs, which can be within the same organization.
- You may want to leave your organization if you are no longer challenged, need to change your industry, function, or geography to something your current employer cannot accommodate, or to start your own business.
- Use the same six-step job search process you used to get your current job, but update your marketing materials, network, and references to reflect your new experience.
- Make sure that you can meet your obligations in your current job while making time for your job search.
- Make sure that you leave your current job in good standing with your organization and colleagues by giving enough notice and helping with the transition, if needed.

Chapter Review

1. How is career success different from job search success?
2. What is the significance of the first ninety days on the job?
3. What different types of mentors and relationships do you want to cultivate?
4. What ways can you proactively focus on career advancement?
5. What key things should you do before, during, and after a layoff?
6. What are some work conflicts and possible solutions?
7. Why is your personal life important to career success?
8. What are some reasons you may want to look for another job?