

Advancing Your Career and Social Distancing



Life as we know it has changed quickly in the last couple of weeks. Your normal routine of going to the office Monday through Friday has been halted. With good reason. The need to socially distance ourselves from others in this time of crisis is real. With all the unknowns, there's no denying that the economic impact is going to be significant.

In a time of fear and not knowing, there's good news. As people are spending more and more time at home, that means they're spending increased time online. Virtual happy hours, shopping, and yes, networking are becoming the new norm. Just because it's more or less impossible to meet in person, doesn't mean that you still can't network and keep progressing in your career.

Catch Up

Reality as we knew it was abruptly stopped in its tracks in the last week or two. We're being asked to slow down. Sure, it's a tough adjustment. Fortunately, this time is a great opportunity to catch up with friends and former colleagues. Reach out to that old boss you haven't talked to in years. Ask them how they're doing and what they've been up to. Pick their brain about what's going on with their company and industry wide.

Increase Your Online Presence

This one is a no-brainer. With the sudden influx of people working remotely,

there's no time like the present to make yourself relevant on the Internet. How does your LinkedIn profile look? Have you updated your resume and professional summary? What about that profile picture from 10 years ago?

There's no time like the present to make your personal brand known. What are your strengths? How about passions? Do you have any unique skill sets that companies are looking for?

If you're not sure what the process of rebranding looks like, see what people you look up to are doing. What do their professional profiles look like? If you want to take it a step further, reach out to these people and ask for their advice. You'll likely find yourself surprised with how willing others are to help.

Keep Learning

With extra time on your hands, now's the perfect opportunity to learn and advance your existing skills. There's no shortage of accredited online sources to help you learn, earn a certification, and beef up your resume.

If you're not sure how to go about it, contact a professional recruiter. They're experts in not only helping employers attract top job candidates. They're also well versed in advising job seekers on how they can become qualified for the jobs they seek.

Become a Resource

Most of us haven't seen anything like this in our lifetime. No question, it feels weird to be asked to help by doing nothing. While that might be the case for public health, it's not for businesses. At a time where businesses are tightening their purse strings, there's an increasing demand for specialized skill sets to keep business going.

Now is a great time to consider offering your skills on a consultative basis. Consulting is a great way to not only offset lost income, but make a positive, meaningful difference in a time of need.

No one is going to argue that our realities have become vastly different than they were only a short time ago. Yes, times ahead remain uncertain. Yes, the economy

has, and will continue to slow. That doesn't mean that your career has to though. In fact, there's no reason you can't accelerate the progression toward your professional goals. With a little creativity and productive use of your time, you can come out of these difficult times more primed for success than you were before.

How to Productively Work From Home During the Coronavirus



What a week it's been. For many, the order to work from home can be a big bonus, and others dread the thought. Even those that enjoy working from home a day or two a week can eventually start to feel a bit isolated.

Having gone through the change from working in an office of over 400, to working remotely out of a home office, I know the transition can be difficult for many. At first it can seem new and fun, but then you realize you have a hard time focusing on what needs to be done because, well, you're home! Home is where you relax and try to get your mind off of work. Here are some suggestions to help bring a little structure to your workday when working from home:

- Try to set up a designated work room or area, even if it's just the other end of the dining room table from where you would normally sit. You want a zone that is your work focus zone. When you are in that zone, you are there to work. And to the best of

your ability, have family members understand that when you are in that space, you are “at work” and need to minimize distractions and interruptions as much as possible.

- For some (me included in the beginning) I had to stay with my normal morning routine and exercise, shower, eat breakfast and “dress for work”. It is very tempting to work on your favorite sweatpants and tee shirt, but for a lot of people that keeps them in the “I’m at home” state of mind and work gets harder to focus on. Put on the clothes you would normally wear to work. This, and having your work zone in the house, will help you mentally feel like you’re at work.
- Structure your day to simulate what you would be doing if you were at the office. Do you have normal times of the day where you check your emails, or dedicate to a project? Keep that same schedule and structure when working from home.

You may also start to miss the interaction and social aspect of working with coworkers. You are probably already set up to join in on the virtual meetings, and that is an important part of staying connected to your team as well. But you may still feel a bit isolated from other coworkers you normally talk to during the day. Stay in touch with them. Send them an email or, even better, talk with them on the phone. There’s a high likelihood they are feeling the same way. Don’t afraid to reach out. You’ll both be glad you did.

This is a very unique and unsettling time and has many people feeling very anxious. Don’t fight it, it’s normal to feel that way. But also remember, this is a temporary thing and things will turn back to normal soon. We are taking extraordinary measures now to limit the impact of this virus. And once that is achieved things will turn quickly back to where they were before. Who knows, maybe your family will be a better understanding of what it is you do when you go to the office.

Take care of yourselves and each other (family, friends, and coworkers). The next few weeks will be an adjustment. But focusing on what you need to do for work so you’re ready when things get back to normal will also help you keep perspective on the bigger picture and hopefully keep you too busy to dwell on the doom and gloom that is on all of the news

updates. Stay informed, be safe and smart in your actions, but don't dwell on all of the negativity.

Job Interview Questions to be Aware of and How to Navigate Them



Interview techniques today are becoming more and more complex. It's very rare that hiring managers ask job applicants only the A, B, C questions anymore. Of course, there's still going to be the stock questions about your experience, challenges, and successes. However, the interviews of today are more complex and involved.

If you're finding yourself in a position where it's time for a career change or new opportunity, understanding the dynamics of the modern interview process, and how to handle them, is essential if you want to give yourself the best chance of advancing through the process. Below are some of the most common trick questions you'll face, and the best strategies for navigating them.

Tell Me About Yourself

This is one of those open-ended questions you're bound to hear in almost every interview. And, there are million ways you can answer it. The reality is, you're probably not sure how to go about "telling someone about yourself."

On the surface, this question probably seems like a friendly invitation. Don't be fooled, however. The question is designed specifically to catch you off guard.

When someone asks you this question in a job interview, what they really want to know is what you can do for them. In other words, how can your skills and experience be of benefit to the company?

The pitfall of most people when they answer this question is that they ramble on about all the neat things they've done and accomplished since birth. This is the worst thing you can do.

Instead, highlight some specific skills and real-life experiences that connect with the company and job you're applying for. The more you can show the interviewer how you can be of help and benefit, the better off you'll be.

What is Your Biggest Weakness?

Even though this question also seems straightforward, it's anything but. When an interviewer asks you about your biggest weakness, what they really want to know is how self-aware you are..

While a job interview is a place where you're trying to present the best version of yourself, interviewers are keen to know about your ability to identify your shortcomings and your willingness to admit them. You can show your willingness to learn or adapt by expressing a willingness to work on those weaknesses to turn them into a strength. Sure, you want to appear confident in your job interview. However, the last thing you want to do is come across as arrogant.

Tell Me About Your Favorite Boss

Everyone has bosses they've liked more than others throughout their careers. Yet again, this question seems pretty direct, and you might even be excited to answer it. However, before you go off rambling about the chill boss at your last job that let you skip out early on Fridays, take a moment to think a little deeper.

When you answer this question, you should highlight your favorite boss' professional strengths. Were they an expert communicator? Did they empower the people around them to do their jobs? What did you learn from them? These are the kinds of characteristics you want to talk about.

Your work isn't done though. The next question you're going to face is, "tell me about your least favorite boss."

Your immediate reaction to this question might be trash the boss that you just couldn't stand. This is absolutely the last thing you should do. Just like the previous question, you should stay away from personal attacks and highlight some things you thought that the boss you didn't care for, could have done better.

When you answer both of these questions, what you're really doing is telling your prospective employer what you will and won't tolerate in the workplace. You're providing critical insight into your ethics, values and work style, and your preference on how to be managed.

Here's Our Policy X... What do You Think About That?

Here again, it's easy to jump straight in and offer your opinion. Think before you speak though. What makes this question so tricky, is that it's riddled with incomplete information.

The best strategy for answering this question is actually by asking questions in return. Before you give an answer, you want to have know as much information as you can. You might start by asking what led to the

policy being structured the way it is? What problem is it designed to address?

The majority of people completely miss this question in job interviews. If you're able to ask questions and provide a reasoned answer based on the information you've compiled, the interviewer will see that you're level-headed and have the ability to think critically.

Job interviews are a nervous experience for everyone. No matter how many times you've been through them, you're still going to get butterflies in your stomach and have sweaty palms. If you remember to think of a job interview as a conversation, and keep your eyes and ears open for those trick questions that seem simple on the surface, you'll have a leg up on the competition. Responding thoughtfully and intelligibly just might be what makes all the difference.

Why a Recruiter Can Help You Find a Dream Job



At some point, you've probably been contacted by a recruiter. Maybe it's a frequent occurrence for people in your line of work. When recruiters come calling through email, LinkedIn, or over the phone, it's easy to brush them off. You figure, I really don't have time for yet another conversation with someone I don't even know.

But there comes a point when it's time for a change. You start doing some

research, polish up your resume, and hit the job boards. The problem is, most of the jobs you find, you're overqualified for or have already been filled. Perhaps you even send out a few resumes thinking there's a high likelihood you're going to hear something back. Crickets. After a while, you start to panic a little.

This is where a recruiter can help. If you're still not convinced, keep reading to find out the top reasons why working with a reputable recruiter, can give you a leg up on the competition.

Recruiters Help You Through the Process

Even though you think you've got the job hunting gig figured out, it's what professional recruiters do for a living. It's in their best interest to place the best candidates in front of hiring managers.

When you work with a recruiter, they'll be able to answer any and all questions you might have. Whether it's polishing your resume, or salary negotiation, they're in the job hunting and placement trenches on a daily basis. Have some anxieties about the job interview? No problem, a good recruiter will help you prepare.

Recruiters Have Huge Networks

Even if you think your professional network is substantial, it's nothing compared to that of a professional recruiter. Think about it. They don't have a choice but to have a wide and vast network of people they work with.

This one is pretty simple. The larger the network of people you can be introduced to, the more opportunities you'll have of landing the right job.

Recruiters Are Specialized, Just Like

You

Your experience, knowledge and skill set in life sciences speaks for itself. The best recruiters are niched as well. As a result, they know what to look for in certain candidates for specific positions.

Because of the fact that they're "in the know," they can give details about positions you might be interested in that you couldn't glean from a simple job description.

When you work with a recruiter that's versed in your specialized skill set, you'll be able to narrow down the job search to quality positions that require your unique experience.

You're Never Forgotten

We live in a day and age that operates on databases. You know those telemarketing calls you get on a daily basis? Guess what? You're part of the call list. Most folks take measures to limit the number of databases they're in because they're annoying.

When it comes to recruiting however, it actually works to your advantage. Let's say you're satisfied with your current job, but you want to keep your eyes open in case a better opportunity comes along. That's where recruiters give you an advantage. They know who you are and what you're capable of. Whenever an opportunity that requires your skills and experience comes along, a good recruiter knows where to find you.

Talk about having the hard work done for you!

Recruiters Save You Time

The job search can be toilsome at best. On top of the demands you have at the office every day, allocating the time to diligently pursue new opportunities is difficult at best. Between searching job boards, chasing down less than promising leads, and customizing your resume and cover letter for each job you apply for, the hours add up.

Recruiters know what jobs you're after and which are available. Even though there's going to be some work required on your end, a quality recruiter will do most of the leg work for you.

At the end of the day, the job market is highly competitive. Hiring managers pour over numerous resumes and cover letters as they try to fill positions. Even if you jump off the page, you're not guaranteed a job or even an interview.

That's why working with a recruiter that knows you personally, and professionally, is so crucial. It's their job to find the perfect match for both employers and prospective job hunters, and they can give the hiring manager a little background on why they think you are a good match for the job that might not be apparent on your resume.

Ever apply for a job and never hear anything back? It happens a lot. But if you're working with a good recruiter, they will not only make sure the appropriate people see your resume, they will also provide you some feedback. Even if you don't get the job, they can give you some insights as to why you were not chosen, and possibly help you to do better in the next interview.

So, instead of toiling away on the Internet and looking at job boards, do yourself a favor. Do some research and find a recruiter that you can trust and knows your industry. Even if it takes a while, chances are you'll be glad you did in the end.

How-To Get the Promotion You are After



You've been at your current company for a while. That enthusiasm you had for your job on day one hasn't wavered. In fact, you're more excited about the work you're doing, and the people around you than you've ever been. You've been a model of consistency meeting deadlines, leading teams, and tackling big projects. Your hard work hasn't gone unnoticed either. Your diligence has been lauded by your superiors. Maybe you've even received a bonus.

But now, you want more. More responsibility. More influence in decision making. More money wouldn't be the worst thing either. We're talking about a promotion. You feel like you're on the cusp of receiving great news but, the days, weeks and months seem to pass by.

The truth is, while you're doing an exceptional job, there's probably more to the equation. We polled the experts about what it takes to secure that promotion you're after. Here's what they had to say.

Offer Solutions

Take a quick minute to think about someone in your organization who constantly complains. In their eyes, this person doesn't make enough money. When they make a mistake, they always place the blame on someone or something else. This mindset is the surest way to NOT get promoted.

Instead, be a catalyst for solutions. You're going to make mistakes every now and then. The key is to learn from them and deliver solutions that can be put into action. Share these ideas with your boss. Not only does it show that you're humble enough to take ownership of your mistakes, but that you have the capacity to be proactive when things don't go according to

plan.

It Actually IS Your Job

There's nothing a boss hates hearing more than the words, "that's not my job." Just because something isn't in your job description, doesn't mean you can't lend a helping hand elsewhere when needed.

There's inevitably going to come a time when you're asked to perform a task outside your normal responsibilities. Instead of loathing this opportunity, look at it as a chance to make your organization better. Sure, your "job" might be outlined in the description from your hiring packet. However, your real JOB is to do everything you can to contribute to the greater good.

To go a step further, actively look for ways that you can help those around you without being asked or told. This type of behavior won't go unnoticed. In fact, it shows your commitment and dedication to the greater success of the company and everyone around you.

Find a Mentor

The reality is that most of your coworkers don't actively seek out a professional mentor. Sure, they might be great at their job, but they don't make the effort to find someone they can learn from. Seeking out a mentor is one of the best things you can do if you want to move up.

Not only does it show that you're hungry, and don't want to remain stagnant, it puts you front and center in the eyes of your superiors. When the time comes, which it will, for someone to take the lead on an important project or department, you'll be in prime position.

Become a Problem Anticipator, Not a Problem Solver

There's no question that your ability to remain cool under pressure is going to serve you well in your career. When things go awry, maintaining

a level head, and thinking clearly, are essential skills.

You know what your superiors love even more, though? Someone who can spot problems before they arise. When you're able to think strategically, and enact a plan of action, you demonstrate one of the most critical skills a leader can possess.

How Do You Spend Your Free Time?

Take a look around and ask yourself how many of your colleagues are pursuing continuing education or attending industry workshops and networking events. Probably not all that many.

It's one thing to go through the mandatory compliance and professional development training. Improving your skills on your own volition is another matter entirely. The best part, it doesn't take all that much effort. A good strategy is to set aside some time once or twice a month to immerse yourself in a setting where you're surrounded by industry leaders and learn.

If you don't have time for that, try reading an industry publication or book in your spare time. Whatever you can do to advance your skills and knowledge is only going to be of benefit.

There's more talent in the workforce today than ever before. If you want to move up, you've no choice but to separate yourself from the status quo. If you make the effort, and employ some of the strategies above, your chances of getting that promotion you're after increase exponentially. The good news might even come faster than you think.

Best Strategies to Keep

Yourselves from Burning Out



You've got an important job. You love what you do but the demands can become a little much at times. The pressure to perform and be everything to everyone, feels overwhelming. Whether it's a deadline you have to meet, a superior's expectations you have to live up to, or a team of people you can't let down, there's no room for failure.

After a while, you feel stressed. Your hair's on fire at the office. You develop a mild case of road rage on your daily commute. You can't sleep at night...

If any of this sounds familiar, there's a good chance you're suffering burnout. Burnout can have some serious implications for both your career, and your health. This kind of prolonged stress is closely linked to heart attacks, depression, and decreased productivity.

If you find yourself feeling burned out, it's something you need to deal with right away. Next time you sense it coming on, try some of the strategies below.

Look Around

Before you do anything else, take a step back, and look at your surroundings. Are you getting the support you need from the higher-ups at work? Is there little or no value placed on culture? If so, it's time to start seriously considering some other options.

However, if you like where you're at, and feel you have the support you

need, there are some steps you can take to combat that burned out feeling.

Own Your Schedule

The reality is that most people don't have full control over how and where they spend their time in the workplace. With that being said, there are probably pockets of time throughout the day or week that you can block off for yourself. If a particular day is packed, give yourself a small buffer of time between activities or meetings. Even just five minutes goes a long way in helping stay composed mentally and emotionally.

Be Kind to Others

When you're feeling low or burned out, one of the best remedies is helping others. Praise others for a job well done. Encourage them to take a break when they seem overwhelmed. Say something that makes another person laugh or smile. Hold the door for a coworker on the way to lunch.

When you practice even the smallest acts of kindness, it immediately makes you feel better.

Believe it or not, you actually have the power to impact your entire team or organization. It only takes a single person, to spread positive vibes and turn things around when they don't seem to be going well. Be that person. When you are, the results can be astounding.

Be Kind to Yourself

After you start being kind to others, you'll eventually be okay with being kind to yourself.

When you're experiencing burnout, it's all too easy to listen to your inner critic. Negative thoughts and self talk become your language.

The key is recognizing this behavior when it crops up and, having some strategies in place to reverse the trend. Positive affirmations are a great place to start. Write down some traits you're proud of. Even sayings like "I am kind," or "I am capable" will work. Put these notes some place

where you're going to see them on a regular basis. Your nightstand or bathroom mirror are good options.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

Because you're in a position of leadership, chances are others come to you for help a lot more often than you seek help yourself. You're human, just like everyone else though. Eventually, there's going to come a point when you just can't handle the stress, depressive thoughts, and lack of sleep anymore.

When you get to this point, do yourself, and everyone else, a favor and ask for help. It might be in the form of a trusted colleague. Perhaps, it's your spouse, or a close friend. Maybe you need the help of a counselor. Whoever you turn to, there's no shame in asking for help. In fact, asking for help is a sign of strength.

Make Sleep a Priority

When you're experiencing burnout, quality sleep can be hard to come by. From the moment you wake up, until you go to bed, your head is spinning with stressful thoughts about work.

There are a few small steps you can take to make getting to sleep easier. The first is going to bed earlier. If you normally go to bed at 10:00, make it a point to have a pillow under your head by 9:00.

Unplug well before you go to sleep. Turn off your computer, silence your phone, and allow yourself some time to be in the moment, and unwind. Meditate. Read a book. Listen to soothing music.

Once you find a routine that works, stick with it. Sleep is the most important ingredient to performing at your best.

The stresses of your job aren't going away anytime soon. You're going to feel stretched thin and overwhelmed to the point that you get burned out. The good news is, there are some simple steps you can take to get through these difficult episodes and come out stronger on the other side. The next time you sense burnout coming on, try some of the strategies

above. You just might be surprised with how well you're able cope and, move on to bigger and better things in the future.

How-To Quit Your Job the Right Way



People are changing careers more often now, than ever before. It's said that the average American worker will change jobs four times before they retire. The model of working for the same company baby boomers are accustomed to still exists, but it's become less and less the norm.

Considering this trend, you're going to quit your job at least a time or two during your career. It's never a fun, or easy process but, it's inevitable for most. The key is going about it the right way. The last thing you want to do is leave a bad taste in anyone's mouth or, burn any bridges. We talked to the experts and they offered up their best advice which we've shared below.

Tell Your Boss Before Anyone Else

This probably seems pretty obvious but it's amazing how often it doesn't happen. The reality is you probably have colleagues you trust and confide in. They're the people you vent to, go to for advice, and who lend you an ear when you need to talk.

If you're thinking about quitting your job, you might be tempted to tell someone you trust, who isn't your boss. You trust them not to say anything. This is hardly ever a good idea, however. What happens is, the person you tell will likely share the news with someone they trust. Before you know it, the office rumor mill starts to churn, and your boss finds out you're planning to resign from someone else.

The consequences can be far reaching. At the very least, you'll leave a poor lasting impression for your lack of professional courtesy. The worst-case scenario is that your boss feels slighted. When the time comes for your new employer to check references, your old boss might give you a less than glowing reference.

Have the decency to tell your boss you're planning to resign before you tell anyone else. It's the professional thing to do and, you won't risk any bad feelings down the road.

Give Ample Notice

One of the worst mistakes you can make when you're quitting your job is not giving enough notice. This can cause all sorts of problems for your employer and sends the message that your only concern is what's next for you.

If you plan on quitting your job, give plenty of notice. Even though the standard is two weeks, higher profile jobs might need more time.

Whatever you do, don't make your resignation too abrupt. It's only fair to your employer and your colleagues.

Come Up with a Transition Plan

Giving ample notice of your resignation is only part of a sound exit strategy. The next step involves giving status updates on important projects and, presenting a plan of action to keep things moving along in your absence.

If you have the time, offer to help train your replacement.

Providing your employer with a transition plan is a win-win for everyone. First, your boss and colleagues will truly appreciate your concern for creating as few waves as possible. Secondly, you virtually assure yourself a positive reference when the time comes.

Write a Proper Resignation Letter

Chances are you probably spent some considerable time writing a cover letter when you applied for your current job. The truth is, you should give just as much attention to your resignation letter.

This will be the last document that goes in your employee file so make it a good one. Writing a good letter of resignation shows your employer that you respect them and, have the professionalism to do things the right way.

The best resignation letters are brief, show genuine gratitude, provide a transition plan and are submitted well in advance of your final day.

Believe it or not, quitting your job the right way is a necessary skill in the modern workplace. You'll probably have to do it more than once. While it's never fun, and certainly not easy, it's something that can be done with grace and class. If you follow the steps outlined above, you'll not only ensure a smooth transition for your entire organization, you'll have a quality reference moving forward.

Best Strategies to Build the Confidence You Need to Succeed



At some point in your career, you've dealt with self-doubt of some sort. Am I good enough for this job? Do I deserve this promotion? What if I fail? If any of those questions sound familiar, you're not alone. Everyone goes through times when their confidence is in crisis and fear takes over. Maybe it's something you're struggling with right now. The good news is that these thoughts of self-doubt don't last forever, and your worst fears rarely come true.

However, if you're going to succeed in the long run, you need to believe in yourself and your abilities. Even though it's not easy, it's a skill that can be learned. This week we talk about the best strategies to help grow your self-confidence.

Remember Your Accomplishments

This is a great place to start if you're working on building your confidence. In times of fear and doubt, it's easy to forget all that you've done. But remember, you didn't get to where you are today without doing some pretty amazing things along the way.

Find a quiet place where you can be by yourself. Write down a list of ten things you're most proud of. They don't even have to be related to your career. Maybe you ran a marathon. What about that time you got a promotion when you least expected it? Put this list somewhere you can see it daily. Tape it to your bathroom mirror or put it on the nightstand next to your bed. After you start seeing your list of accomplishments enough, you'll start to think of yourself in a more positive light and begin silencing your inner critic.

Inner Critic

Speaking of your inner critic, everyone has one. And, it's almost always your worst critic. Unfortunately, your inner critic rarely, if ever, does you any good. Sure, it's an admirable trait to be humble but, your inner critic can be flat out mean.

To silence your inner critic, Dr. Lisa Firestone has some great advice. Start by acknowledging its presence. Trying to suppress it won't do any good.

Next, listen to what that evil voice inside your head is telling you. Write those thoughts down in second person. If the thought is "I'm not good enough," write it down as "You're not good enough." This helps your brain see these thoughts from an outside perspective.

Now, write down constructive responses to these thoughts using "I". "I might be having a tough time, but I know I have what it takes to get through it."

By practicing this simple exercise whenever your inner critic rears its ugly head, you'll start to show yourself some compassion, which is critical if you want your confidence to grow.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

It's a habit for people that are struggling with confidence to compare themselves to others. They look at everyone else's accomplishments and think they don't deserve the same for themselves. This kind of destructive behavior is poison for your confidence.

The key is to train your mind to think of others and what they have as equal to you. Yes, this is easier said than done but, it CAN be done.

Social media is a great example. When you find yourself scrolling through Facebook or Instagram, you're looking at everyone's perfect little life. That's what they want others to see. The reality is what people post is a far cry from reality. Status updates get blown out of proportion. Pictures

are photoshopped to look perfect. The list goes on.

When you can stop comparing yourself to others, you're on the verge of realizing the self-confidence it takes to succeed in your career and, as a person.

Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

It's human nature to want to be comfortable. It's safe and predictable. Unfortunately, there isn't much room for meaningful growth unless you put yourself in uncomfortable situations.

Think about it in the context of a high school dance. A boy has his eye on a girl but he's too afraid to ask her to dance for fear of being rejected. The reality is, the only way he's going to get the girl to notice his existence, is to risk being uncomfortable and asking her to dance.

The same goes for your career and life. If you want to grow and achieve your goals, you have to take some risks and be uncomfortable.

Contrary to popular belief, confidence isn't something you're either born with or without. It's a skill that can be learned and, it's necessary for your growth, success, health and happiness. If you're struggling to believe you have what it takes to accomplish whatever it is you're after, know that it won't last forever. If you employ some of the strategies above, you might just be surprised by how much your confidence grows in a short amount of time.

Getting the Most Out of LinkedIn



Chances are, you have a LinkedIn profile. Like any other kind of social media, it's something you check when you need a mental break from whatever task has your attention. Over the years, you've updated your professional summary with educational achievements, jobs, and promotions. You may notice that there are folks writing intriguing content. Maybe you decide to even join a few groups specific to your industry. Unlike other social media like Facebook and Instagram, the groups you belong to on LinkedIn can help you grow your network. Doing so can even highlight you as a viable candidate in the job market. If you're considering looking for a new job, or even just to grow your network, there's some do's and don'ts you should follow in order to get the most of your time and presence on LinkedIn.

Investigate

Just like any networking event in real life, you probably wouldn't just walk in and start spouting off your accomplishments and unfound knowledge. The same goes for groups on LinkedIn. You need to get a feel for what's happening within a group. What types of things are being discussed? Who's posting the content that's the most engaging? What's their background? Are they someone you should connect with? Read the comments. That's often where the richest ideas and discussion take place. What's the tone of the group like? Is it casual? Or, is it strictly professional? How does the group fit with the type of culture you're accustomed to?

If one group isn't a good fit, don't fret. There are plenty of other groups you can research and join.

Participate

When you join a group on LinkedIn, you need to understand that there's a certain decorum that's expected. Believe it or not, life in the virtual world isn't all that different from life in the real world. When you first join a group, don't come in guns-a-blazing. Even if you're an expert in your field, people are put off if you jump in with both feet and start preaching.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't participate though. In fact, that's exactly what you should do. Like and comment on other posts. This shows that you're engaging and can add value to the conversation.

If you come across an article, YouTube video or something else that pertains to the group, feel free to share and comment on how it's beneficial to you or why you think it's relevant. Trust in these groups is something that has to be earned.

By sharing relevant content and engaging with others, you make the point that you're in the group to learn and share ideas, not promote your own agenda.

Think Before You Post

You're to the point that you want to start posting regularly. It doesn't matter if it's someone else's content or your own. Before you pull the trigger, ask yourself if what you're about to share is relevant to the group. Does it add value to the greater conversation taking place? Is it something that can be beneficial to other people?

Something else to keep in mind is posting too often. This habit does two things. First, it makes you look desperate for attention. Second, you come across as a know-it-all.

There's a balance and art to posting. The key is to make what you're sharing is worthwhile and, the frequency with which you post isn't so high that your content ends up as spam.

Don't Troll

In the age of technology, cyberbullying is a real thing. And it's not just high school kids on Facebook. If you've ever read a political editorial and read the comments, chances are you've seen this type of behavior.

The last place you want to be disrespectful is LinkedIn. If you disagree with what someone has to say, ask meaningful questions and be professional. Or, don't say anything at all.

LinkedIn can be a powerful resource if you use it the right way. Joining and participating in groups is a great method for growing your network and learning about industry trends and happenings. You need to go about it in the right way, however. If you take the time to investigate what's going on, participate and post content that's engaging, you might just surprise yourself with what you can get out of LinkedIn.

How-To Make a Career Decision You Won't Regret



Even though the modern job market is more competitive now than it's ever been, there's no shortage of resources to help you make the right career decision. Between coaches, training courses, online job boards, and advice from everyone in your professional and personal circle, logic

would dictate that finding your dream job shouldn't be all that hard. Believe it or not, there's an argument to be made that it's actually quite the opposite. The information age has people so inundated with data and advice, and the opinions of others, that thinking for oneself becomes next to impossible. With all these fancy tools and resources, there are often lots of career paths to choose.

For this reason, it's easy to make important career decisions for the wrong reasons. It could be advice from a colleague. Maybe you even make a choice out of fear or desperation. Unfortunately, these choices that often lead to shoulda-woulda-coulda's down the road. That begs the question, how do you go about making career decisions you won't regret?

Expertise and Purpose

A great place to start the process is identifying what you're good at and the impact you want to leave on the world. Sure, this sounds a little cliché. But, it's grounded in fact. When you get crystal clear on these factors, the decision-making process becomes pretty simple at its core. Does taking that promotion align with your values? Will staying in your current position allow you to perform at your best and grow? If you can't feel challenged and fulfilled, it's not the right fit.

Get Clear on What's Most Important to You

In order to eliminate all the outside noise regarding your career choice, get clear on what's most important to you. Start by writing things down. What does your dream job look like? How will it fit with your dynamics at home? What goals do you want to accomplish? What does your plan look like to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? The vision you create should be one that gets you excited. If it scares you a little, all the better. Now you share it with others.

Support is Better than Advice

When you start sharing your vision with other people, they're going to be quick to imply their wisdom. In most cases, that wisdom is anything but ill-intended. However, you need to make it clear that you're clear on the direction you're headed. Let them know that the best thing they can do is offer support with whatever decision you make and not impart their fears and biases.

Filter all the advice you hear. Just because it worked for one person in a specific situation, doesn't mean it's the best advice for you. Ask yourself if the advice you receive makes sense for you. If it doesn't, let it go in one ear and out the other.

What's Popular isn't Always Right and What's Right isn't Always Popular

You got me. I stole that one from my fourth-grade teacher. But it's something that's stuck with me my whole life.

The urge to conform is all around you. There's a human need to be part of a group. It gets back to that whole safety in numbers thing. Whatever it takes, you have to do what's right for you. That takes confidence.

Be Confident

Speaking of which... Whenever you're in the process of figuring out the next step, you're going to experience moments when your confidence is in crisis. It's important to remember that everyone has confidence issues. It isn't some elusive trait that some people have, and others don't.

You also have to realize building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. As silly as it might sound, positive affirmations do wonders for your confidence. Whether they're something you tell yourself or, notes you post on your bathroom mirror, self affirmations work to rewire your brain in a beneficial way. With a little practice, you can develop the unwavering confidence to make difficult choices.

Everyone says they want to live without regrets. Sadly, the number of people that actually do, is pretty small. When it comes to your career, you're going to face crossroads and difficult decisions. The last thing you want is to look back and say, "I wish I would've taken that chance when I had the opportunity." The good news is that important career decisions are your choice to make, not anyone else's. They're going to be uncomfortable. You're going to second guess yourself at some point. But, if you're clear about what you want and keep the noise from others at bay, you'll arrive at the right choice for you. With no regrets.