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Advancing Your Career

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Is Technology Enough?

- Two avenues available for advancement
 - Technology and Engineering
 - Management
- Either way, just knowing technology isn't enough
- Even an engineer needs to know
 - Accounting and finance (or economics)
 - Marketing and sales
 - Interpersonal communications
 - Psychology
 - Political Science
 - more

Who will YOU be, when you grow up?

- Do you have a plan for your own career advancement?
- Who have you talked to about it?
- Is education a part of it?
- Is certification a part of it?
- Are there contingency plans?
- What are you willing to do to make the plan happen?
- When will you take the first step? Or have you?

What makes a good career advancement plan?

- Be REALISTIC and HONEST with yourself
- Find a MENTOR to help ▶
- WRITE IT DOWN and review it regularly ▶
- Be FLEXIBLE ▶
- Keep MOVING
- NEVER stop learning
- Maintain INTEGRITY
- NEVER put others DOWN to build yourself UP

Realistic and Honest

- Who are you now?
 - Your experience
 - Your education
 - Your performance
 - Your friends, managers, co-workers
- How different are you from what you want to become?
 - Identify the gaps and set a plan to close them

Closing the Gaps – REALISTIC & HONEST

- Experience
 - Ask for responsibilities that expand your experience
 - Identify small steps to earn respect and confidence from your superiors
 - Discuss what you are trying to accomplish
 - Be open to criticism and learn from it.

Closing the Gaps – REALISTIC & HONEST

- Education
 - What degree(s) are desired for the position you seek?
 - How do you stack up?
 - Enroll in a program that makes sense
 - Only 11% of employees take advantage of tuition assistance programs
 - Pursue certification
 - Recognition by an independent program confirms what you already know

Closing the Gaps – REALISTIC & HONEST

- Assess your own job performance
 - Do you give 100% all the time?
 - Are you a team player?
 - Are you willing to share what you know?
 - Do you accept criticism and praise well?
 - Do you understand and work the politics?
 - Can you say “no”?

Closing the Gaps – REALISTIC & HONEST

- What do others say?
 - What does your manager say about you?
 - What about your co-workers?
 - Friends?
 - Others you respect who will shoot straight?

Closing the Gaps – REALISTIC & HONEST

- Being REALISTIC and HONEST with yourself is difficult
- Listen to what you don't want to hear
- Take stock of the things you need to improve and set a plan to correct or improve those things that need fixing
- Take stock of the positives and look for ways to capitalize or expand on those.

Find a MENTOR

- What is a mentor?
 - Webster – “A trusted counselor or guide”
- Whom should you choose as your mentor?
 - Trust enough to listen to their criticism
 - Believe their advice and counsel to be honest and in your best interest
 - They won’t personally benefit from your success or failure but they are concerned for your success
 - Willing participant

Expectations of a mentor

- Do they need to know your business?
- Should they tell you what to do?
- Can they solve your problems?
- Are they responsible for coming to you with suggestions?
- Are they accountable for your follow-through on actions you discuss?

How do you ask someone to be a mentor?

- Set up a meeting – coffee, beer, lunch, phone
- Explain you value their judgment and honesty and you trust them
- Ask if they would be willing to be your mentor.
- When they say yes, discuss what you expect and need and get agreement on how you'll handle the relationship.

How often do you meet? What do you discuss?

- Once a quarter is probably the minimum
- More often if you jointly agree that it is appropriate

Discuss big picture goals:

What do you want to be doing in 5 years? How do you get there?

Identify short term goals that help work toward the 5 year target and discuss progress toward those at each meeting.

Readjust the 5 year goals as appropriate.

Write Your Plan and Review It

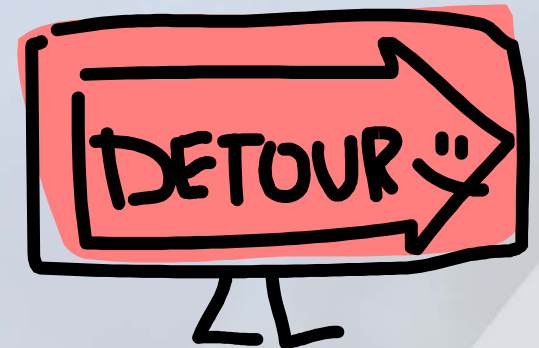
- If you write it down, you remember it and are committed to it.
 - Just talking about a plan doesn't have the same power.
 - How do you talk to others (mentor) about your plan if it isn't written.
 - The act of writing takes commitment and automatically forces you to consider the elements of the plan

Write it Down

- Use a template?
 - Not needed but it can help organize thoughts
- Key elements should include
 - Overall statement
 - Mile stones with timelines
 - Specific measurable/observable items

Review it

- Set a schedule for review
 - Monthly, quarterly, etc.
 - Stick to the review cycle
 - Include your mentor if appropriate
 - Pat yourself on the back for achieving milestones
 - Realistically re-evaluate where needed.
 - Plan “B” or “C” is OK



Be Flexible

- “When life throws you lemons – make lemonade.”
 - » unknown



Evaluate Opportunities

- Keep your sight on the long term goal
 - But change it if you want to
 - Don't change your long term goal just because a short term opportunity presents itself
- How does the present opportunity enable a path to the long term goal?
- Is it lateral, backwards or forwards?
- Does it satisfy some short term need/issue?
- Are you making a sacrifice that you'll later regret?
- What does your mentor think?

Outside Influences make a difference

- Sometimes an opportunity looks good because of
 - Family pressures
 - Location
 - Money
 - Travel
- These are all extremely important factors but don't lose sight of the career impact.

What is your tolerance for risk?

- Are you willing to take a chance and perhaps backtrack to recover?
- With a family, sometimes safety and security have to take the upper hand.
 - What is your families risk tolerance?
- As we get older we take fewer risks.
- Does a change in plan fit your risk tolerance?

Next Session

- Keep MOVING

Watch the Rocky Mountain Chapter Website for future presentations in this series.

THANKS and GOOD LUCK