

Career Resilience

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Layoffs, layoffs, layoffs – consistent headlines for the first quarter of 2009! Not great news for many of us, but a reality that requires a strategic look at career resilience. Resilience refers to the ability to withstand change and remain focused, purposeful and engaged with the world around us. Resilience is the ability to adapt and evolve through change resulting in our ability to discover new opportunities to do what we love.

Managers can find themselves in one of two situations that may test the resilience of our careers: our organizations are changing and so must we; or, we have had to leave our employment and need to evolve our career in another organization. In both of these situations there are a number of tactics that we can use to ensure that we remain focused, purposeful and engaged in our careers.

Below are a few key points which, when done well, can help us to enhance the resilience of our career:

1. Know who we are and what we love to do. Have a clear definition of our purpose, passion and goals in life and work. Good marketers call this 'defining our product'!
2. Clarify the impact you want to have in the workplace. What are your aspirations; how do you want to contribute, what do you have to offer? What is your value proposition?
3. Understand the type of organizational culture that brings out the best in you.
4. Communicate with your network. Talk to your current boss. Find out the issues facing the organization; the opportunities to fill a gap; the challenges of change. Talk to perspective employers. Find out the gaps in their organization, understand how they function, the qualities of their culture.
5. Target, target, target. Seek an alignment between your goals and the needs of those within your present organization or future employer.
6. Develop a circle of support. Ensure that you have a network of people who can speak to your competencies and value, and know the impact of your work. Engage a mentor to help you navigate through change, keep you focused and to challenge your view of yourself and others.
7. Understand how your employer or future employer makes staffing decisions. What are their needs, processes and accountabilities? How can you interact with them not only to provide a synergy of competency but to make it easier to become engaged with them, helping to provide solutions to their problem? Prepare for every encounter with a decision-maker.
8. Learn about the processes followed by recruiters, head hunters and agencies. Understand how you can work with them, the limits of their interaction with you and their ultimate goal.
9. Maintain a balance in your life. Make sure that you get enough rest, proper nutrition and appropriate exercise. Keep a network of social contacts who are not consumed by your career anxieties, but who can provide you with healthy outlets for your stress.

10. Keep your glass half full! Even though there will be setbacks and disappointments stay focused, strategic, prepared to move forward.

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