

## Assess Your Career with Confidence

*Many people are passive participants in their career. They go along in their jobs whether they love or hate them until an event forces them into change. True career management requires you to play an **active** role. Read on to learn when and how to assess your career with confidence.*

Are you wildly, madly, over the moon in love with your job? Okay, maybe that's a little over the top, how about reasonably satisfied? It comes as a surprise to most that simply being in the right job at the "right" time does not guarantee success or happiness.

The worst days of those who enjoy what they do, are better than the best days of those who don't.

**E. James Rohn**

Working at your career involves more than putting in the hours and impressing the boss. Balance and harmony at work are also things that require work. When work's not working for you, it's time to identify and resolve the problem.

## Stuck Between Fear and Unhappiness

As a career marketing professional I encounter a fair amount of people who are unhappy with their jobs. Their titles, industries and level of success vary widely but most seek me out for surprisingly similar reasons.

The typical "job seeker" is propelled into action by a change in the industry that impacts their company/salary/stability, a change in the company that impacts their salary/stability, a change in their personal situation driving a need for more stability/money/time. Many have been unhappy for some time but needed a dramatic event to compel them to act.

The job market has changed significantly in the past decade. We compete on a global basis and the only thing that is certain about work is change. People have this notion that jobs are scarce, and competition is fierce so they put up with Monday Morning blues that last all week just to hold on to their income. Big mistake!

## You are the Boss of Your Life

The happiest and most successful people are those that manage their career. It's important to do a career check up at least annually. Maintaining the

health and wealth of your career requires your active participation. In the same way that you review your finances and health annually, you should review your career.

Is your current career and career path still aligned with your overall goals? Success is very individual. To some it means a certain salary and a corner office. To others it's a 30 hour work week. And still to others it is doing work that feeds their passion. By your own definition have you attained success in your career?

### Am I Where I Need to Be?

When you have taken the step to review your overall goals, you must then determine if your current position will lead to achieving them. If not, what changes can you make to get you back on the right path? Or is this an interim path that is necessary for other reasons?

For example you may need a flexible schedule at this time in your life because you have young children. Remember that you define what success looks and feels like to you. At this time in your life, this may be success for you.

As you perform your career check up you must also consider the company and industry. Is your company stable? How about your division? Is the industry going through a period of change? Are there rumors of a merger or acquisition? If there is instability, you do not have to rush out and change jobs but you should begin preparing your Plan B.

Is this a good time to update your resume and begin networking? Should you spend some time developing new skills or refreshing existing ones? Are your contacts updated? Preparation is critical to remaining in control of your career destiny. I have seen far too many people hit with layoffs that simply sat waiting for the train to literally run right over them.

### The Big Question

Are you happy in your current position? So many people are surprised by this question. Especially baby boomers. Unlike younger counterparts, boomers were taught to work hard, make a good living and care for your family. You were happy to have work but never thought the work should make you happy. Some people may not be wild about the day to day duties, but they do enjoy the company, their co-workers and the other perks. Remember it's up to you to determine what constitutes success for you.

These are just a few of the things that you should consider when managing your career. The key is to be an active participant in your career and not an innocent bystander. Ride the train, choose your own stops but please don't stand in the middle of the tracks paralyzed with fear.

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