

21st Century Career Success

By Michelle Casto

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When it comes to modern career development, one thing we can all count on is change. With the advent of technology, telecommuting, and E-commerce, how work is performed is in a state of reinvention. Self-employment and small business development will become more the norm than big business. And career changes will be more frequent due to rapidly changing organizations and industries. Finally, the line between one's personal and professional life will become even more blurred. Since the modern world of work is rapidly changing to keep up with the demands of our fast-paced lives and lifestyles, here are some characteristics of what the new work contract will look like:

- § Seeking more meaning from work.
 - § Equating "career success" with personal satisfaction over paycheck or status.
 - § Everyone will need their own "name-brand."
 - § Increased use of technology.
 - § Finding work that needs doing.
 - § Changing in the way management and leadership is conducted (less arrogance at the top level, more power on lower levels).
 - § Increased need for networking and self-marketing.
 - § Lifelong "trying on" of various roles, jobs, and industries.
 - § Creating a plan that is flexible, and continually assessing the "fit" of the work.
 - § Increased representation of women and minorities in the workforce.
 - § Changing career fields numerous times in a lifetime.
 - § Self-responsibility: Everyone knowing they have to chart their own career direction.
- However, the 21st century career also offers many advantages:
- § More career opportunities for everyone.
 - § Freedom to choose from a variety of jobs, tasks, and assignments.
 - § More flexibility in how and where work is performed, i.e. working from home or telecommuting.
 - § More control over your own time.
 - § Greater opportunity to express yourself through your work.
 - § Ability to shape and reshape your life's work in accordance with your values and interests.
 - § Increased opportunity to develop other skills by working in various industries and environments.
 - § Self-empowerment mindset.
 - § Allows you to create situations or positions where you can fill a need in the world that is not being filled.
 - § Opportunity to present yourself as an independent contractor or vendor with services to offer.
- How can you successfully navigate through the turbulent times of change and career uncertainty?

By developing resiliency, exercising proactivity, creating excellent self-marketing tools, keeping your skills up-to-date, and finding your unique life balance.

1. Develop resiliency (the ability to bounce back).

Having the right attitude about career change is imperative to your ability to bounce back from setbacks, sudden changes, and twists and turns along your career path. You will experience a lot of career change and transitions, so you may as well get comfortable feeling uncomfortable.

2. Take a proactive approach to your career development

You must constantly be on the lookout for new ways to apply your gifts and talents in the new economy. This requires thinking creatively, actively promoting yourself/business, and being actively involved in how your career progresses. Staying involved in professional associations, and continuous networking are excellent ways to connect with other like-minded professionals.

3. Create first-rate marketing materials

Always keep your resume current. You never know when you are going to want to share it with someone or pass it along. If you are in business for yourself, develop classy business cards and letterhead. Harness the power of the internet by developing an interactive website.

4. Commit to lifelong learning

To keep earning, keep learning. Do not wait until you lose your job or want to look for another position to gain new skills or training. Recognize the need to be open to learning and attend classes related to your area of expertise to keep your skills sharp and marketable. Keep in mind the top skills needed for career success include: Communication, Computer-knowledge, Creativity, Customer Care

5. Find your unique life balance

There are four dimensions to life: love, labor, leisure, learning. Remember that work is just one aspect of your life pie. Be sure to indulge in all of your areas. Because having an overall balanced life is what leads to the most fulfillment.

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