

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Re-Energizing and Re-Focusing Your Career

Satisfaction, security and fulfilment can at times be difficult to achieve in the fast-paced work world of the 21st century. Fortunately, for those willing to work at it, there are tried and true ways to a more satisfying career.

Do you find yourself suffering from any of the following? If so, it could be high time to re-evaluate your career goals or look into new ways to enhance your position:

Stunted problem solving. Is identifying creative solutions to common challenges becoming more difficult? Are you feeling more and more isolated at work? Meaningful and constructive contact with others keeps your mind active by constantly providing new ideas and perspectives. If you're not feeling that your workplace encourages creative discussions, support for new ideas, and contact with new people, something might need to change.

Poor concentration. Workers who are isolated and experiencing job stagnancy are easily distracted and often have a hard time sticking to one task. If you're not making headway on projects or if you frequently start and stop work, you may be in need of some more effective career management.

Stilted perspective. Within the workplace, trivial matters can occasionally take on huge proportions. This happens most when resources are stretched thin. If you're experiencing sensitivity to criticism and routine feedback, or feel irritable or resentful over small matters, it might be time to tune-up your career.

Managing Your Career

Successful career management is a life-long process. It means taking charge of your career growth and direction. It involves actively learning about yourself, exploring all of your options, setting goals and developing yourself in a structured, organized way.

Here are some valuable tips for propelling your career forward:

- Take some time to review your job history, skills, strengths, weaknesses and goals.
- Formulate a comprehensive description of your abilities and what you bring to the table—and be able to articulate this well.
- Actively gather information and network within the company. Request a meeting with managers in departments you are interested in to get answers to the questions you have, including how someone with your background might fit in.
- Review current openings within your company. If they match your interests, apply!
- Find someone in the organization at a more senior level than yourself, to mentor you. A mentor can be a sounding board and advisor at every step.
- Contact a career counselor to help you assess your strengths, determine your occupational goals and help you prepare for the next steps.

Protect and enhance your employability by:

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Brushing up on your skills. Is there some technical or other skill that would help you gain confidence or new credentials? Almost all jobs these days require a certain level of computer skills, for example. Further training—from a weekend course to a new diploma or degree, can help you bring more energy to your current position, or give you the boost you need to move on.

Renewing your résumé. By taking the time to update your résumé, you'll keep track of the growth you've experienced in your current position, and be ready for anything that might come your way.

Mixing and mingling. It's not just what you know—it's who you get to know and who you stay in touch with. Make as many professional contacts as you can. Make it a daily priority. Collect business cards from everyone you meet. Talk to each of your contacts at least once a year just to stay in touch and see how things are going. You never know how you might be able to help them—or how they might be able to help you.

Although there are no guarantees for advancement, by remaining devoted to ongoing learning, you will maximizing your opportunities for personal, social and professional development. If you begin to tap your networks and take action on your goals, you'll be motivated to move forward. If not, it may be time to see a career counselor for a review of your accomplishments and goals.