

Three Thoughts on Opportunities to Advance Careers in This Economy

By John Cox

Like it or not, the tight job market means most of us currently have limited alternative employment prospects. Some see that as a reason to put professional aspirations on hold. Others don't.

Our question: What opportunities does this economy offer people who want to advance their careers?

Some people see opportunity in a situation where others see only doom and gloom. Our present economic situation is no exception. There are opportunities in this economy for people who want to advance their careers; however, they need to be able to see the glass as half full instead of half empty. For example, those who are still employed following a lay-off often have to take on more responsibility at work. They can choose to see it as a burden or as an opportunity to learn new skills (which helps keep them marketable) and to demonstrate their value to their employer (which helps keep them employed). This economy is scary for everyone, and frightened people often become angry and resentful, which is a sure way to damage a career. Keeping a good attitude and letting their work ethic shine is the best way for people to advance their careers in times like this.

-- Robin Paggi, certified human resources professional with KDG Human Resource Solutions, a division of the Klein, DeNatale, Goldner law firm

What works when business is good will also work when things are slow. In fact, in many cases, it'll work even better.

If you want to advance within your existing employment I suggest you:

- * Be sure you are recognized for your deeds;
- * Understand that most small businesses are trying to survive. Determine ways to help your employer survive;
- * Be willing to take on other tasks within the organization, always showing a willingness to learn; and,
- * Actively pursue your advancement and benefits by talking with your employer.

This last point bears emphasis. One of the ways that the we at Around the Clock Cos. manage to reduce expenses, or at least hold the line, is by retaining good employees: reward them for their efforts, recognize their achievements and promote them up the ladder. An employee will have to take action, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt, to claim advancement or benefits. But

the best way to advance in your career is to keep reaching for the next rung of the ladder, and when you do, let your employer know what you did.

-- John Vasinda, co-owner of The Vasinda Cos., which has about 250 employees and consists of Around the Clock Home Health and Companion Care, Hallmark of Bakersfield and other health-care companies



In the current economy, people's first reaction to this job market is discouragement...

discouraged from even trying to advance themselves or their careers. I would argue workers are now presented more with opportunity than challenge. It truly is a time to shine.

Keep in mind companies are trying to do more work with fewer employees. As business increases, a person who wants to stand out should take the initiative. Look for ways to make whatever you do more effective, even though it may not mean any increase in pay. Such efforts will help make the company more competitive and can increase an employee's visibility and attract positive attention.

A lateral move can also be a good strategy for someone wanting to eventually advance. It allows employees to broaden their experience and skills, hone their expertise and ultimately increase their overall value to an employer. People perceived to have the most value will be sought out when there is a new hiring wave once again.

*-- Holly J. Culhane, certified human resources professional and president of P*A*S Associates*

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