

High Impact Activities to Propel Your Career Path to Super Success!

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Are you managing your own career path success?

We often hear the term “It’s Up to You to Manage Your Own Career Path!” Or, “You create your own success!” This can be both an empowering and frustrating statement for many professionals who yearn for more from their career.

Many of you are sighing and thinking, “Yeah... I’ve heard that before but I don’t know what else to do. I feel stuck!” Or some of you are thinking, “I’ve tried everything but no one wants to help. I guess this is it.” And some of you may be thinking, “I feel like on the tip of success but I keep getting held back.” And so on. As Employees, we’ve all had times when we’re not sure what else we can do to help manage our career path and to keep advancing.

On the positive side of things, it’s empowering to know that you can make a difference in your career and life by doing some simple and high-impact activities to advance your career. This e-book outlines the major areas to evaluate yourself on and to consider as you take the reigns for your own career success.

As you come to each of the ten topics below, rate yourself on a scale of 1 – 5 as to how you’re currently performing in that area. This will show you which areas you may want to focus-in on first (the lower scoring areas) and which areas to

keep moving forward in (the higher scoring areas). It will also give you an overall score, which we'll provide some commentary on at the end of this e-book.

Ratings scale definition:

1 = I don't do this ever

2 = I may have done this once or twice before

3 = I do this sometimes but not all the time

4 = I try to do this but I slack-off from time-to-time

5 – I do this consistently and thoroughly

1. Consistent and Proactive Conversations with Your Manager

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I am having active, ongoing conversations with your Manager about my goals, performance, and overall career path (at least 1 - 2 times per month).

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Often times as employees, we assume that it is our Manager's responsibility to help us with our career, to make sure we get promoted, to give us exciting and challenging projects, and to know what motivates us. In today's environment, most Managers have too many day-to-day responsibilities of their own to be

effective Managers. The responsibility of 'Manager' is piled on top of all of the other responsibilities they had as an Employee. While this is not an excuse for all Managers everywhere, it is important for Employees to keep in mind; if they want good, quality face time with their Manager, it is up to them to make sure it happens.

Talk with your Manager about what you want to gain from your career, what sorts of experiences you're looking for, and how s/he can support you in the path. Make sure your Manager knows that you would like to talk to them about your career path. This may sound obvious but it's important to state, "I would like some time to talk to you about my career path, is this a good time?" or something to that effect. That way, your Manager knows you need their attention and not just a quick 5-minute conversation.

Be prepared for your conversation with notes. If your company has you write goals at the beginning of the performance review cycle, bring those out at least every other month to talk with your Manager about how you're tracking against them (make sure you have your own thoughts on the matter as well). And ensure the conversation is solutions-oriented. Do not expect your Manager to have all of the answers! Be clear in what you want, why you want it, and give suggestions on how you may be able to work towards those things.

2. Setting 6-Month to 1-Year Goals and Objectives

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I take advantage of the opportunity to set 6-month to 1-year goals and objectives

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Many companies ask you to work with your Manager on goals and objectives for the upcoming year after your performance review is complete. This is your opportunity to sit down and get clear with your Manager about how you contribute to business success and the bottom-line. Even if your company doesn't ask you to do this, it's a critical step for your own self-clarity and to ensure you are on the same page with your Manager.

While many Employees see this as a necessary evil, see this as an opportunity to raise your hand for the types of projects and areas you want to be involved with and have influence over. Not only will your Manager be impressed, but you will also benefit by ensuring that your Manager supports you in doing these things.

Make sure your goals are a combination of training & development for yourself, contributing to projects and responsibilities, mentoring and training others, and extra/additional things you may want to take in order to do new things. All of them should be a bit of a 'stretch'. In other words, they shouldn't be the obvious

every day things you need to do. They should help advance your skills and experiences without overwhelming you. All of your individual goals should also help accomplish the company goals. If you don't know what those are, ask your Manager. If your Manager doesn't know what they are, consider what you know about where the company is heading.

Remember, you may have to make some concessions if your Manager feels you're taking on too much, you're too focused in one area or in too many areas. Just make sure you feel there is a two-way conversation and go into that conversation knowing what you would most willingly make concessions on so you are prepared if that discussion comes up.

3. Long-Term Goals and Objectives

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I know what my long-term goals are (2-year, 5-year, etc.) and they are documented somewhere.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Just like we expect companies to have clear goals and vision for their future, over a 5-year period (at least), we must also take responsibility for our own long-term vision for our career and our life.

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Even if your Manager doesn't ask you to set longer-term goals, it's a great thing to do for yourself. I've talked to many people who cringe at the word 'goals' so don't get overly hung-up on that. This should be fun! This is your opportunity to get creative. You can write (or draw!) your goals in any way that works for you. Write them out, get the crayons out and draw pictures, create a list of feeling words (how you want to feel in 2 years, 5 years, etc.). There are many ways to approach this project of clarifying your longer-term vision.

Before you give up and say, "I have no idea where I'll be in 5 years," just take a few minutes to visualize, imagine, and dream-up some of the things you would like to create in your career and your life. How would you feel at work? What sort of work environment do you want? Do you want to be around a lot of people or working at a computer all day? What salary do you want to make? Do you want to be the boss or have a great boss or both? How does your career impact the rest of your life? Etc.

The saying goes, 'If you don't know where you're going, how are you going to get there?' That's why it's so important to have some sort of longer-term vision for what you want to create. Whether it's a list, pictures you cut out magazines, something you draw, written goals, take the time to do this. You'll be amazed and what you'll accomplish when you're clear vs. 'fuzzy' about your future.

4. Training and Development; Mentoring and Coaching

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I am obtaining active and ongoing training and mentoring to help me manage your career path and to achieve my career goals.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Many people will gain skills and knowledge just by taking on new responsibilities and projects at their job and by being around others who are more senior and experienced than they are. That's great! Surround yourself with people who have the experience you want and observe them, ask for help from them, ask questions, take what you like and leave the rest behind. Soak up what you can from the environment around you.

In addition to this more informal method of learning, it's important to also engage in formal education, training, coaching, and/or mentoring. For example, if you know you want to manage people, your company may offer a management-training course or may have training dollars you can request. Or, if you are a software developer and want to work with a more cutting-edge technology, research some training and certificate options and then talk with your Manager to let them know why you want the training, how it will benefit the

company, what sort of research you did, and which class you want to take and why.

Employees can also benefit greatly by working in a one-on-one relationship with a Mentor or Coach. If there is someone you know who you admire and/or has the skills and experiences you want to obtain, initiate the mentor relationship by asking them if they will mentor you. This could be someone within your company or outside of your company. Many people would be flattered and will say 'yes' if they have the time to spend with you. Take responsibility for keeping this relationship alive and thriving by calling them from time-to-time to check-in and/or ask advice, go to lunch or coffee, and ask for their active feedback and mentoring for your career on an ongoing basis.

You or your company may also decide to invest in a professional Coach for you. Coaches are hired by individuals or companies to coach professionals in a variety of areas. Things do not have to be going poorly to hire a coach. In fact, hiring a coach when things are going fairly well will likely propel you to the next level of success even faster than doing it on your own.

Coaches will help you to learn more about who you are, to achieve your goals, and to contribute to the company's goals in a more successful and high-impact manner. Coaches specialize in different niches and usually work with the

individual one-on-one over the phone. There are a variety of programs offered via coaching businesses, schools, community groups, etc. [Career Max Group](#) provides Career Path Coaching for individuals and groups to help propel professionals to their next level of success.

5. Proactively Seek-out and Volunteer for Projects

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I proactively volunteer and 'Raise My Hand' for projects that will benefit me (and me career path) and the success of the team and company.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now that you're clear on what your short-term and long-term goals are, you're going to be more likely to notice opportunities to work on projects that will help you reach those goals. Be aware, look for opportunities to contribute, and volunteer whenever possible.

Your Manager and others will be impressed when you proactively 'raise your hand' to participate in a project, to lead it, to do some more research, etc.

Additionally, you will benefit from the experience and will be able to learn and grow in a career direction that is crafted by you.

It is important to note that you should try not to overwhelm yourself. Take on new roles and responsibilities in a thoughtful way that supports your career path and growth but also respects your own overall health, wellness, and balance. If you volunteer for *everything*, you'll soon grow tired and probably won't be effective at managing anything. Be thoughtful about what you say you'll do above and beyond your normal responsibilities.

6. Proactively Seek-out New Career Connections and Networking Opportunities

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I proactively seek out connections and networking opportunities with other people inside and outside of the organization.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Within your various jobs, you'll be surrounded by a core group of people who you'll probably spend 80% of your time with. Successful employees who are managing their own career path will also seek out new connections, business relationships, and networking opportunities inside and outside of the company.

If you work within a larger company, make sure you introduce yourself to senior directors and executives when they come to your office to speak at a company

meeting or to meet with other people. They will appreciate the effort and will remember you.

When working with vendors and contractors outside of the company, take the time to get to know them and when the contract or vendor relationship is over, keep in touch with them and maintain a connection. You never know when they will help you with your career path in the future.

Ask new people within your office to go to lunch, coffee, etc. Or, at the next company party or gathering, make it a goal to meet 2 – 4 new people. When new employees start, go over to their desk and introduce yourself. The more connections you have in business, the more people you have as your advocate, which will help propel you in your career path.

Additionally, seek out opportunities to be an industry expert. Colleges, universities, associations, conferences, etc. are always looking for presenters, people to be on panels, people to write articles for publications, etc. Your efforts will keep you on your game, will allow you to be well known in your community and industry and will likely be welcomed by your company.

7. Self-Promote: Make Sure People Know About Your Accomplishments

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Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I make sure people around me know about my accomplishments, achievements, and results.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Depending on your personality and what you're used to, self-promotion is easier for some and more difficult for others but it's important for everyone. In order to better manage your career, make sure you're aware of your own achievements. So often we are running a million miles a minute that we don't pause to be aware of when we finish something, make someone's life easier, make a process better, accomplish one of our goals, going above and beyond, etc. Be self-aware and create a list of all of the wonderful things you have accomplished.

During one-on-ones with your Manager, look for opportunities to let your Manager know what sorts of achievements you have had since your last conversation, how you're tracking towards your goals, and how you're helping out the project and/or the team. Statistics tell us that your Manager is only aware of approximately 40% of what you do overall (not to mention your shining results and accomplishments) so it's up to you to let them know.

Rather than seeing self-promotion as selfish bragging, see it as an opportunity to manage your career and to make sure others know what you're doing throughout your day. If you're worried about seeming boastful, look for opportunities to mention your contributions while also acknowledging the team, talk about your accomplishments relevant to how you're tracking towards your goals, tell your Manager you just want him/her to be aware of what you've been working on, and look for ways to insert these achievements into normal conversation.

8. Keep an Active Pulse on the Job Market and Your Industry

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

You keep on ongoing, active pulse on the job market and what other companies are doing

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are thrilled with your current job and company or if you are ready to move along to something else, it's important to keep an active, ongoing pulse on the job market in the areas you would consider living in. Even if you feel like you don't want to change jobs for many years, it's important to know what's going on in your industry. Managing your own career path means knowing what's available in the job market.

Even if you're not actively seeking a new job, you never know when you're going to find the perfect opportunity within your own company or at another company that will match your longer-term goals and vision for your career and life. And when you are ready to start actively looking for a new job (whether by choice or because you have to), you'll be more prepared versus starting from scratch.

Some ideas for keeping a pulse on your industry and the job market: Hop on job boards from time-to-time and/or set-up email alerts on the job boards to be notified of jobs that may be in your area of interest; Read online and print industry publications to see what's going on with other companies around you; Set-up a Google alert with key words involving your career (www.google.com/alerts); Take an active participation in networking events for your industry or job niche.

If you have a good relationship with recruiters at your current company or prior companies or recruiting agencies, maintain these relationships so you are top of mind for them when an exciting opportunity pops-up that they may want to call you for. You don't necessarily need to call them to ask about jobs. Just stay in-touch and be interested in what they do and they will remember you.

9. Proactively Ask for Feedback on Your Contributions and Performance

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I proactively reach out for formal and informal feedback on my contributions, results, and performance.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Professionals who are managing their own career are actively seeking out feedback from others on their contributions and performance. Feedback can come from anyone around you: peers, team members, your Manager, other managers/directors, executives, sales people, clients, vendors, etc.

Often times, professionals expect that other people will give them feedback if they have feedback but this is not usually the case. Whether positive or negative, many people in the workplace hesitate to give feedback because they are not the person's Manager (so they think it's not their place), because they're worried how the person receiving the feedback may react, because they feel too busy to slow down to give the feedback, or because they just don't think about it.

However, most people are willing to give feedback when they are asked for it.

For example, if you give a presentation and are wondering how you're doing,

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take the opportunity to follow-up with people who were there to ask how you did. Tell them not to be shy! Let them know you want their honest feedback on what went well and what you could do better next time. Remember, some people need time to collect their thoughts so if they seem flustered because you just 'popped-in' to get their feedback, ask them if this is a good time and let them know you can stop by later or the next day to get the feedback (assuming they're willing).

It's important to get feedback from a variety of people at all levels of the organization. Getting this feedback will help you to see if your own self-reflection of your contributions and performance lines-up with how others perceive you. If it doesn't line-up, it gives you an opportunity to seek clarification on what you could be doing better or different to help track towards your desired career path.

10. Know What You Like (or Love!) To Do

Rate this statement using the 5-point scale defined above:

I have a thorough and firm understanding of the things I really like and love to do in my career and on the job.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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When I work with career coaching clients, I'll ask them what they love to do at work. I often get answers like, "I like working with people," or, "I like doing reports and presentations," or, "I like talking with clients," and so on. While this is a great start, it's important to go deeper to discover what it is that really makes you tick and to get to the root of what makes you happy both in and out of your job.

For example, I may have five people tell me they like doing spreadsheets (yes, for you HR and sales type people, there are people who love doing spreadsheets). Now, if I ask each of those five people why they love doing spreadsheets, I will likely get five different answers. One may say that they like working with numbers and the satisfaction of when everything balances to zero. Another may say that they like creating graphs and charts with the data that make it easy to read and visually appealing. Another may say that they like working alone at a computer and that working with spreadsheets means they don't have to work with people. And so on.

Now we're getting somewhere! Rather than assuming you have to do spreadsheets in order to be happy, you can now work with the broader and deeper reason you like to do spreadsheets. If you're the one who likes charts and graphs and making things visually appealing, we can now look for jobs and

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careers and projects that allow you to do those things (in other words, it doesn't have to be just spreadsheets, but it can be that too).

Start by making a list of the things you like to do at work. Think back to all of the jobs and careers you've had. Even those odd jobs and internships in high school and college count! Then, create a column to the right and right down *why* you like to do those things. Really dig down and give it some consideration. Usually you will find four-to-five themes emerge. Keep this list with you as you consider which projects, career paths, careers, and/or businesses to pursue. If you want help with this project, work with a Career Coach on Career Path Coaching.

It also helps to do this same exercise by examining the things you like to do and the things that give you satisfaction in your off time. The saying goes, "How you do anything is how you do everything," (I heard this from T. Harv Eker) so you can learn about what makes you happy in your career by examining what makes you happy in the rest of your life. It can even be the little things. If, for example, you get a lot of satisfaction from washing the dishes, note that and pause to ask yourself why. Perhaps you're someone who gets a lot of satisfaction from finishing a project or perhaps you get satisfaction from organizing a mess. These are important clues for your career!

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Now that you've considered the top ten areas that affect your career path success, it's time to tally up! Add up the ratings you assigned yourself in each of the ten topics above.

If your score is:

40 – 50: Great job! You're doing a lot of different things to manage and ensure your career path success. Keep up the great work. Focus on 1 – 2 additional goals that may propel you to even more super success. Mentor and inspire others by continuing your efforts in all areas.

25 – 39: You're doing well. You are probably excelling in 3 – 5 of the categories above and it's time to focus on the other 5 – 7 categories to propel you to the next level of career path success. Examine the topics that you rated yourself low on and write 1 – 2 goals for each topic that you can accomplish in the next 2 weeks – 2 months in those areas. Discuss these with your Manager or Career Coach to make sure you're in alignment and on track.

11 – 24: You're doing some things well. Take note of the 2 – 3 areas that you're likely excelling in and keep up the great work in those areas. Now it's time to examine the other areas that also need time, focus, and attention. Write 1 – 2 goals for each topic that you can accomplish in the next 2 weeks – 2 months in those areas. However, don't overwhelm yourself. You should work

with your Manager or Career Coach to prioritize these goals and put a timeline to them so you don't try to do everything at once and give up!

0 – 10: It's time to start focusing on career success. You may be in this category because you 'gave up' or lost focus or you're burned out or you're feeling defeated. The good news is that you took responsibility for managing your career path success by grabbing a copy of this e-book! Pick the top 3 – 5 topics above that you want to focus on first. Then write 1 – 2 goals for each topic that you can accomplish in the next 2 weeks – 2 months in those areas. However, don't overwhelm yourself. You should work with your Manager or Career Coach to prioritize these goals and put a timeline to them so you don't try to do everything at once and give up!

When writing goals or intentions for the career path success categories you want to focus on, make sure they are SMART:

Specific

Measurable

Attainable / Actionable

Realistic

Timely

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Don't waste time! Take the time to do this now. Intention (goals) coupled with action creates results!

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

Goal #3:

Goal #4:

Goal #5:

Congratulations on taking a huge step towards an even more rewarding and successful career. Take advantage of the tools and tips presented to you and you'll see results.

Please contact us at the [Career Max Group](#) if you have any questions or need further support in your career.

About the Author:

Career Coach, Kelly Harrington, brings an inspiring, compassionate, and fun approach to creating true connection in your life! She helps her clients to connect the dots between their values, passions, skills, and talents to create a truly successful, joyful, and abundant career. Her search for her own purpose-driven career has led her into the rewarding field of coaching and training. Her approach to working with individuals and groups is empowering and encouraging. Kelly wants her clients to take what they learn through coaching and classes so that they may apply them easily towards success in their own lives. For information on Kelly and services provided by the Career Max Group go to <http://www.careermaxgroup.com>