

# CONVERSATIONS

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## Your career is not your bosses top priority; Now what?



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**Synopsis:** *It is more a wish than reality that our boss always has our career success in mind. Bosses have multiple priorities and most times our career needs just don't rise to the top. So, short of finding another boss what can you do to make sure your career plan gets attention? This article discusses some simple yet effective strategies for taking more personal ownership of your career success.*

Believing that your boss is responsible for your career success is a good wish but not a very practical reality. Whether we like to admit it or not, organizations and bosses

have one thing in mind first, the success of the organization. Sure, today's leaders understand the importance of providing job growth for employees. However, that doesn't take the ownership for career planning out of your hands.

Now, I'm not suggesting that your boss can't be of great support for helping you to have an engaging and successful experience at work. What I am offering however is that in today's workplace each of us holds immense power and opportunity for creating the workplace and career that we aspire to. Essential to making that happen is accepting

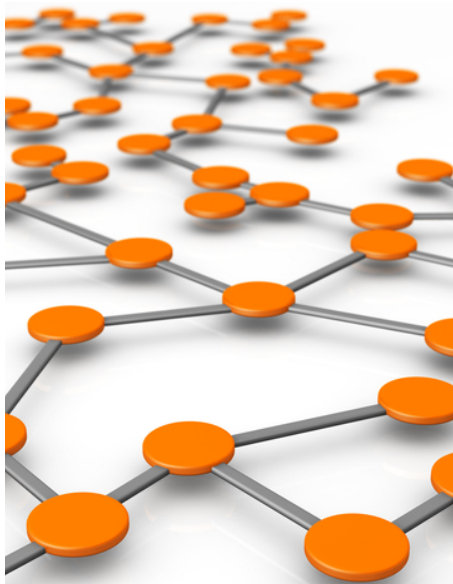
the idea that there is no one more responsible for our own career success than us.

One thing I know from working with thousands of people on career development is that those who are prepared are more likely to have a better career experience. People who own their own careers do a few things more often and better than those who don't. Those few things include keeping networks active, staying current, maximizing opportunities for different experiences and lastly managing the perceptions others have of you.

It can be hard to accept but important to know that “whom you know” is as least as important as “what you know”. Beyond some point in our careers what we know about doing our work is taken for granted. What then becomes most important is the trust others have in us. Trust comes from others knowledge of us and knowledge of us comes from familiarity. Networking in all of its forms is a critical part of how successful people build careers.

‘What we know’ does play an important role in building successful careers. Not only are people changing careers more often but the knowledge needed to stay current with the new careers fields continues to grow and at an accelerating pace. The emergence of on-line and other ‘distance learning’ universities are the result of increasingly more people returning to school at mid and late career to gain additional education.

‘Showing up’ in life provides experiences for learning about success. Our jobs can only offer a certain amount of opportunity for growth. Taking advantage



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of other experiences like volunteering, community activism or traveling bring perspective and the chance to learn new skills in low risk settings.

As the corporate trainers at Second City Theater in Chicago put it “you are always on stage at work”. All that you do, and do not do is building a personal brand that can either help or hinder your career success. Get regular feedback from a formal 360 assessment or from a trusted mentor. Keeping a level of awareness of how others see us gives us the chance to emphasize our strengths and work on our development areas.

Few of us can predict where our career will eventually lead or what kind of success we can expect. Successful careers are built one day, one month and one year at time. Accelerating your career readiness, you make yourself prepared to take advantage of the opportunities when and where they may happen.

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