

The Secret to Career Success

It has been one of those days.

You know, the ones where everything keeps pointing to the same thing, as if life were running along according to a script with an overtly obvious theme.

Well, maybe not. - But today was “one of those days”. I tripped on three separate powerful pieces of information. Together, they **pointed to the same general conclusion:**

We all need a career plan.

Hardly a news flash on this blog, but there was **that message** once again – and I couldn’t ignore it.

The first message has been sitting in my office for years amid the cluttering of my children’s art work. Along with these priceless pieces of art, I like to collect great quotes. My absolute favourite (and one that clients always seem to comment on) is from Patrick Lencioni, a respected author on leadership. His message:

“The biggest mistake you can make is to believe that you work for someone else”.

Now some people may be thinking that the statement is flawed – most of us are not self-employed and, therefore, **do** work for someone else. However, what he is really saying (and what we always advocate), is that you are a service provider and your employer is your customer. By thinking this way, you are less likely to fall into the trap that someone else is responsible for your career success.

Right below that quote was a copy of a newspaper article that, at the time, seemed unrelated. But, there was the message again, albeit in a different context. This article was discussing how people who advance in their careers are usually the ones addressing their employer’s (customer’s) explicit needs. Most of us will recognize these needs as being 1. **generating revenue** 2. **decreasing costs** and 3. **making your customer’s (employer’s) life easier**.

The third thing? I read a recent report that states that in light of the employment upheaval, many people are chasing jobs that pay more than the role they are currently in. There is no question that compensation is important, but it isn’t the only thing.

Our advice for managing your career well...

1. Don’t fool yourself into thinking you are an employee. Take responsibility for “You the Product” by acting like the CEO of your own business
2. Any good business owner will have a business plan – develop your own.
3. In writing your plan, focus on how you contribute to organizations’ profits, mainly by increasing revenue or decreasing costs.

4. Take stock of how you have met these needs previously and integrate this information into stories to share with others
5. Determine how you contribute to your organization's sustainable competitive advantage because that is likely your own (= job security)
6. Learn the art and science of self-promotion because no one else is going to do for you

I can't wait to see what tomorrow brings!