

# Career Resilience – An Overview

## What is Career Resilience?

According to Webster's dictionary, resilience is: *an ability to recover from, or adjust easily to, change*. **Career resilience thus refers to the ability to recover from, or adjust easily to, changes within the sphere of one's career.** Career resilient people take a focused but flexible approach to their careers and assume responsibility for managing their own career development. Career resilient people ensure they:

- Stay abreast of current and developing market needs
- Dedicate themselves to continuous learning so that their skills *stay* aligned to market needs
- Deliver solid performance and ensure that key people are *aware* of their accomplishments
- Remain visible within the market
- Have planned options to fall back on if necessary

## Why Is It Important?

For most of the modern history of work, the employer-employee relationship was based in large part on an unwritten "Psychological Contract". The unwritten rule was that if you worked hard and put in your time, you would be rewarded with continual employment. It was not uncommon for individuals to work with the same company for twenty or thirty years, with many people spending their entire careers with the same organization.

In the most recent decades, corporate downsizing, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, outsourcing, etc. has resulted in a fundamental shift in terms of the employer-employee relationship. Specifically, individuals working today can expect that, at some point, they will be faced with the reality of job change - either inside or outside the company. There is a mountain of evidence to suggest that continual change is, and will continue to be, the hallmark of the business environment; therefore, career resilience is one of the essential skills you will need to develop and nurture throughout your work life.

## How Do I Develop It?

Revisit the bulleted points above describing what career resilient people do. Now think about all that you have learned and practiced within this transition process. We hope that you will see some clear connections between the two! 😊

Over the course of your work with your transition consultant, you have completed several self-assessment and market assessment exercises which have helped you better understand your own strengths and needs as well as those of the market. Among these was the CAR Chart exercise which helped you capture your most significant accomplishments so that you could use them to develop powerful resumes, value propositions, and interview responses. You have honed your networking skills. You have learned how to better leverage LinkedIn. The list could go on ...

All of these skills have become part of your resilience toolkit; you just need to commit to carrying them forward. Develop your career resilience by taking the initiative to design (and follow) your own career development action plan - which should include the following elements:

- Think of yourself and your career as a one-person business; it will become clear that, in order for your business to succeed, you need to: stay abreast of the needs of your customers, develop “your product” to meet these needs, and market and sell your product effectively
- Continually assess your skills; perhaps as frequently as once a month
- Document your accomplishments; they are proof of your skills
- Keep on top of local market trends; know what is happening in your area; consider mobility if necessary
- Continue to learn; view education as a continuing process not a one-time event; do not underestimate the value of on-the-job learning - find a mentor, be a mentor
- Make sure you understand how you add value to your employer and continually find new ways to add even more value; don’t lose sight of the bigger picture
- Ensure you network *internally* as well as externally – promote the value you add and make known your desired next steps
- Continue to meet with others in your industry; networking is not a search activity; networking is a continual career management activity – “dig the well before you get thirsty” and give back as much or more than you receive; listen to recruiters when they call and, if you are not interested, help them find someone else who might be
- Build a transition savings account; put aside 3 to 6-months salary if possible - if you don’t need it, it becomes a great addition to your retirement nest egg
- Seek the services of a career coach, when appropriate, to help you manage your career at significant points of change
- Make a very conscious effort to set yourself up for success in a new role/company; see “***Setting the Stage for Success in the First 90 Days***”