



Climbing the Corporate Ladder

These days, it's even more imperative than ever to know what you're doing when you want to climb the corporate ladder. We all have heard that term, but what does it really mean - especially in today's economy, when jobs are even harder to come by and therefore the atmosphere more cutthroat than ever? Here are some tips that can help you advance your career, ethically and responsibly.

Make sure people notice your work

Now, that doesn't mean you should brag about yourself, but do be willing to showcase your work and take credit where credit is due. In this case, "modesty" is not a virtue. It's only going to hold you back, because people need to see what you're doing in order to know what you can do -- and therefore, possibly give you that promotion, puts you in charge of the project, and so on.

Do the job and do it well, all the time

Don't be a brownnoser, but do take absolute responsibility for projects or tasks you are given, and do them well -- all the time. Be consistent, in other words. It's one thing to be the mercurial new kid on the block who "can" turn in a brilliant performance (but may not), and entirely another to simply be the person who always does what he or she says is going to happen.

(.... But don't be a pushover)

There's a fine line here between being the "go to" lackey, where projects get dumped on you that no one else will do so that your life is one of drudgery; you don't want that to happen, of course, because what you want to do is to advance your career, not stay stuck where you are because you are "indispensable." So don't be a pushover and just take the garbage no one else will touch, but do be a willing, responsible, and key player whenever someone needs to get the job done right, and you have the skills to do it.

Schmooze

In business, it really is who you know. So get to know the people in your business, especially those who can further your career, and make sure they know who you are, too. This is not the time to be absolutely deferential to superiors. Be respectful, absolutely, but don't be intimidated and do get to know these people one-on-one. The more these people see you as a peer and not a subordinate,



the more likely they are to think you've got the chops to get important projects done. (And of course, be sure you really can do the job and keep those skills up, too; don't just rely on schmoozing, in other words, without making sure you've actually got the **job skills** to back up your great interpersonal skills, too.)

Plan for success

Plan your goals as though you could get that promotion any day -- and then act like it. Plan your rise to the top as though it's going to be a certainty, and then put your own actions into play by learning what you need to learn and knowing what you need to know, so that you can actually fill that role when the time comes. Set goals (make them attainable), reach them, and then set new goals. Strive to push the envelope within reason and stay competitive, because if you don't, someone else is going to get the promotion that should've been yours.

Watch for opportunities, and grab them

You're not simply going to get advancement because you "should." Instead, you're going to have to watch for **opportunities** and then grab them. Work hard, persevere, and keep going.

Nix the self-pity

Guess what? You are going to be disappointed sometimes, and there will probably be times when things are not going to be "fair." Someone else will get a project that you "should" have gotten, or someone else will nab that promotion that you've been waiting for. Happens to everyone. Really. The difference between the people who make it and those who don't is that those who don't wallow in self-pity, plot revenge (even if they never actually take action), feel sorry for themselves, and basically stay stuck in disappointment. Those who make it realize that disappointments are inevitable, that these things will happen sometimes, and will move onto the next thing. Decide which approach you are going to take -- but I can guarantee you that whining that this or that wasn't fair isn't going to gain you any sympathy, and it's not going to get you anywhere, either.