

Ten Tips on Career Advancement

Many career experts agree that the best time to look for a new job is while you are still comfortably in your old one. If you're starting to feel unchallenged in your present position, you may be ready for a promotion to the next level. If there aren't many career advancement opportunities where you work, the best next job may be waiting for you elsewhere. Nowadays, it's up to you to take control of your professional future and make sure that you are progressing wisely down the right career path. Here are 10 proven strategies to help you get started:

1. **Talk to your boss.** Sit down and have a very direct and pointed conversation with your boss about your future in the company. Stress that you want your job performance to meet the company's goals. Share your own career goals with him or her. Your boss will respect this display of confidence and maturity.
2. **Ask for more.** Volunteering to help out other departments or teams — or simply asking for more responsibilities — increases your value within the organization. Asking for additional work shows an interest and desire to help your department and company to succeed. It also puts a spotlight on your value to the business.
3. **Volunteer for boards.** If you have your career set on something beyond what you are doing in your present position, seek out opportunities to volunteer or serve on advisory boards, where you can build a reputation as someone who is passionate and dedicated to your particular industry.

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4. **Sharpen your people skills.** Strong interpersonal skills play a crucial role in gaining the respect of your boss and coworkers; they will also attract the notice of outside influencers who might open new doors of opportunity for you. Be friendly, outgoing, and personable. Listen carefully to people, and practice being a clear and effective communicator.
5. **Be innovative.** Never be afraid to think outside of the box and put your business acumen to work. Stay on the lookout for creative solutions to problems that will make you — and your boss — look good.
6. **Find a mentor.** Develop mentoring relationships, either inside or outside the company. Recent studies have shown that four out of five promotions are influenced by a mentor higher up in the company. Mentors are also great sources of information and career guidance.

7. **Sell yourself.** Learn the fine art of self-promotion. If you have had major accomplishments or created successful programs, make sure people know about it — especially those in influential positions who could help you advance professionally. Let it be known that you are seeking a promotion or the next step up in your career.
8. **Keep learning.** A proven way to advance in your career is to be continually acquiring new knowledge. Stay on top of trends or developments in your field and make sure that your current résumé reflects those needed skills.
9. **Network.** Strengthen your personal network and join professional organizations, attend industry conferences, or even volunteer. The more people who are aware of your strengths and abilities, the better your chances of hearing about any new opportunities that might arise.
10. **Build your reputation.** In business, your reputation is the most valuable thing you own. Be known for being dependable, professional, and cooperative. Act and look the part by dressing professionally. Make a name for yourself by attending conferences, delivering speeches, or writing articles.