



110 Where Do You Go From Here? Proactive Career Development for In-house Counsel

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Corporate Counsel University Canada - June, 2006

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June 27, 2006

PRESENTATION POINTS

A. BASIC PRINCIPLES

There are some basic principles that you have to internalize and adopt in order to have any hope of seeing your career move forward in a positive and timely manner. These principles include the following:

1. You must take active on-going ownership of your own career development. It has to be a part of what you do every day if you want to move forward in an organized, predictable and rewarding matter.
2. If you don't know where you want to go with your career and how any by when you're going to get there and you don't keep yourself consistently focused on ensuring that you will get there chances are that you in fact will not realize your full career potential.
3. If you keep putting off dealing with your career your career will get put off.
4. You must involve others in your career development. Supervisors, coaches, mentors, recruiters, networks, etc. . . It is highly unlikely you can get where you want to get by yourself.
5. Finally, remember and practice the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If you help others build their careers chances are that somewhere along the way they will help you at some point in moving your career forward.

B. TAKING OWNERSHIP

1. Career Goals.

In order to take control of your career development or to own your career you need to first define with as much clarity as possible the

stages through which you want your career to progress and over what periods of time.

For example, a student coming out of law school might decide on a set of career goals that would see her first joining a top tier law firm with a view to gaining strong corporate commercial experience over four to seven years, then leveraging that experience to move in-house. Then she would see herself over the next ten or twelve years moving through a series of positions of increasing responsibility, not necessarily all of them in the legal field or with the same organization, with the intention of setting the stage to become part of senior management of an organization, perhaps as General Counsel or as leader of a business division or function. She would then see herself after five to seven years in this role moving to a similar position but with more broader responsibilities, as for example from a country to a North American or global role. This she would plan to leverage to secure a CEO position which she might then intend to leverage to acquire some directorships to keep her challenged as she moves into semi-retirement.

Whatever might be the career stages that you decide upon these should be captured in writing in the form of Career Goals and these should be set out on a potential timeline. Each stage should build on the prior one and have a time target for achieving it.

2. Required Enablers.

Then for each planned stage of your career you need to identify what skills, experiences, behaviors and relationships you believe you will need to have to make yourself eligible for that position. I'll address later in this presentation some methods you might want to follow to identify these attributes.

3. Gap Assessment.

The next step is to do an honest assessment of your existing skills, experiences, behaviors and relationships against the ones you've identified as necessary to progress to the next stage of your career and the one after that one.

One way to do this and to maximize the process is to prepare or update a resume for yourself as though you were about to apply for a job. Then compare your resume against what you have listed as the attributes required to reach the next two career stages you aspire to. The added benefit of this exercise is that you will have a current

resume on hand should a potentially desirable new career opportunity appear.

4. Development Plans.

You then need to develop and systematically pursue plans to address not only the gaps which likely will exist between your current skills, experiences, behaviors and relationships and those required to move forward to your next planned career stages but also to preserve and enhance those of the requisite elements that you already possess.

5. Career Plan.

These development plans, along with the listing of skills, experiences, behaviors and relationships associated with each planned career step and the set of career goals with related timeline should all be incorporated together in writing in one document. Many refer to this type of document as a Career Plan. Essentially it is your long term strategic plan for your career.

6. Progress Checks.

But the plan will be of little assistance in furthering your career unless you take the time to revisit it on a regular basis (at least semi-annually) to assess your progress against your goals and related development plans and to identify, and more importantly, initiate appropriate course corrections.

For example, if you had planned over the past six months to begin learning a new language to support your quest for an international assignment and you did not do so then a reality check is in order. How badly do you really want the assignment and are you going to make the investment to get there?

Again a productive way to revisit your Career Plan is to first update your resume. Then compare it to what you had identified in your Career Plan would be accomplished to date to develop yourself and your career. Again an added plus in following this process is that you will have a current resume at the ready.

7. Flexibility.

Your Career Plan should not however become a static document that more inspires guilt than action. Periodically you should question whether your goals and plans remain valid and achievable given where you then are in life.

For example the arrival of children, sudden unexpected need to help others manage through illness or infirmity or other personal life changing experiences may dictate a new or modified approach to how you might develop your career.

8. Commitment.

However your career goals and plans evolve one thing is certain. To achieve them you have to believe that they are achievable and you have to be determined to see them realized. You alone have the power to own and advance your career.

C. SETTING THE COURSE

There are many ways to figure out how you might want your career to progress, over what period of time and what you might need to do in terms of personal development in order to get there. Consider, for example, the following:

1. If you work in an organization that offers career development support take full advantage of it. Identify appropriate personnel in your organization (i.e. supervisor, human resources, mentor) and relevant processes (i.e. performance reviews, goal planning) to help you identify potential career opportunities and development tools that might be available to enable your career progression within the organization.
2. Read a wide spectrum of job postings and advertisements on a regular basis. This will allow you to see what kinds of jobs are out there and can expand your perspective on what might be possible for you. It will also help you learn what skills, experiences and qualifications may be required for particular positions that interest you.
3. Actually apply for a couple of jobs a year even if you're not sure you want them or that you will be successful. At a minimum you can use the interview process to learn where this type of job might lead in terms of career development and what the employer would see as requisite qualifications and experiences to progress along that career path.

But following this practice can also help you build your interview skills and comfort level. This can give you a competitive edge when the job you really want comes along. It also equips you to be a better interviewer of people when you hire or work with someone.

4. Build ongoing relationships with professional recruiters both in the legal field and the general business field. They can help you understand

how the job market is evolving, what might be possible for your career and what you might need to do to enhance your eligibility. An added benefit is that this can place you on recruiters' radar screens for potential job opportunities.

5. Identify and get to know role models. People who have achieved what you desire from a career perspective or who have qualifications or abilities you would like to emulate as part of grooming your eligibility for career advancement. Find out how they got where they are, what they feel drives their success and how they acquired those qualities and abilities that you admire. An added benefit is that you will have recruited additional champions for your career.

D. INVESTING IN YOURSELF

When trying to figure out how to grow your skills, capabilities, experiences and networks consider the following:

1. First and foremost, keep your professional knowledge at the leading edge. This is the basic block on which your career should be built. Make continuing education and learning a constant in your life.
2. Seek out involvement in projects and assignments that will let you acquire the skills and experiences that you have identified as being necessary to achieve your career goals.

Leverage processes in your organization like annual goal setting and performance reviews to identify opportunities and to co-opt management into ensuring you get involved.

3. Look for opportunities to build your own people development and leadership skills. Even if you have no reports there will be opportunity. Mentor a junior. Help support staff improve themselves, the processes they deal with or to enhance their skills and efficiencies.
4. Get actively involved in groups outside your workplace particularly professional and business associations. Volunteer for committees and projects that feed your development plans, as for example, HR Committee to build your people development and leadership skills or Membership Committee to build your sales and marketing skills.

This can also be an excellent avenue through which to find role models, coaches and mentors and to build networks.

5. Author and deliver presentations several times a year in appropriate forums as for example business groups, charitable organizations and

professional associations. This will expose you to potential employers and career enablers, allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and most importantly will help build your self confidence and presentation skills, all while potentially contributing something of value to others.

6. Keep in regular and frequent contact with the recruiters, role models and mentors you identified when building your Career Plan. See at least one of them in person over lunch or dinner at least once a week. They are a great resource for ideas on how to grow your skills, capabilities and networks. But do please remember that these people are part of your career network. They are valuable and deserve your respect. They are giving you something. Do not wait until you need a job to build this network or walk away from them once you have the job of your dreams.
7. Don't be afraid to step back in salary, grade, position or title in order to gain skills and experiences that will benefit your career over the long term. But know exactly what you expect to derive from the stepback and move on once you have it.

Top Success Strategies: People don't plan to fail; They simply fail to plan

By Robert Hosking, vice-president of Robert Half Legal

Just as an entrepreneur needs a business plan to turn dreams into reality, legal professionals should create a career plan to turn their hard work into professional success. A career plan is a document, or blueprint, designed to determine where you are professionally, where you want to be in the future and how you intend to get there.

A career plan can be a valuable tool, whether you're an experienced professional or in the early years of your career. It clarifies your goals, provides you with a clearly defined path on how to achieve them and helps you stay focused.

Indeed, creating a sound career plan takes time, but it can be less intimidating when you follow a few simple steps:

- **Establish your goals.** Goals give your career a destination with tangible rewards for your hard work. They can also keep you motivated. Goals can be anything you want them to be, such as attaining a job at a top law firm or joining the law department of a *Fortune* 1000 company where your legal knowledge will be highly valued.
- **Create time horizons for each of your goals.** Establish short-term goals, such as monthly and yearly, as well as long-term objectives – those with three-, five- and 10-year time frames. Periodically, evaluate your progress in working towards them to help ensure you stay on track.
- **Make an honest appraisal of your skills and strengths.** Everyone has job skills that set him or her apart from others. Identify those that distinguish you among your peers. Do you feel you're more adept than others at using technology? How are your communication skills? Can you produce succinct, well-organized reports for senior management? You might consider seeking input from your colleagues to answer these and other questions.
- **Conduct an honest assessment of your weaknesses.** By doing this immediately after you list your skills and strengths, you'll feel much more empowered in knowing which areas to develop. Make a checklist of those areas you would most like to address, and identify concrete solutions. Explore specific ways to improve upon your weaknesses. Again, ask trusted friends and

colleagues for their opinions. If appropriate, speak with your manager, as well. Don't feel awkward about seeking their advice: All successful professionals, from chief executive officers on down, take this step at some point in order to attain higher levels in their careers.

- **Assess your personality.** Evaluate what you like and dislike most about your role. Do you enjoy managing and mentoring? Do you prefer independent work or working with others? This step is critical because it will help you avoid making decisions solely for other reasons, such as money or status. You may even discover characteristics about yourself that you didn't even know existed.
- **Make a list of your network contacts or "external assets."** These refer to contacts described earlier, who can help you during a job search or when you will need to update your skills. They can include lawyers, other legal professionals, organizations and associations, friends and acquaintances. Even after you feel secure with the progress of your career plan, keep adding names to your list of external assets. In the highly competitive legal profession, you can never have too many valued contacts.
- **Keep your pulse on the market.** Today, legal professionals with certain types of skills may be in demand, but over time new trends will emerge which will result in new requirements. Five to 10 years ago, not many people were aware of the Internet and its global implications. Those who were aware, discovered opportunities long before others even knew they existed, as any Internet-savvy legal professional could tell you. To keep your pulse on the market and to become more in tune with prospective opportunities in the profession, read legal trade publications regularly, visit the library periodically and utilize legal resources on the Web.
- **Tailor a plan of action to help you work towards your goals.** Make a list of smaller goals that will help you move in the direction of your larger ones. Don't hesitate to ask others for their help. You will be surprised about how many people are willing to serve as an advisor, mentor or coach if you'd only ask. Again, if appropriate, share your action plan with supervisors and ask them for their advice on how you can achieve your goals.
- **Don't neglect your "work-life" balance.** Working hard is imperative to achieving long-term success, but it can lead to career burnout if you have no other interests. Schedule "down time" with friends and family members regularly. Take up hobbies and get involved in physical

Top Success Strategies
Rob Hosking, vice-president
Robert Half Legal

activities. Learn to recognize when you need to put work aside and go home – without neglecting the responsibilities of your job.

- **Put your plan into action.** After devoting the time and energy to create a sound career plan, you'll gain a great deal of satisfaction implementing it. To help ensure you stay on track in fulfilling your career plan, always have it accessible. Keep it in a book on your desk or on your computer, and refer to it regularly. You might consider expanding your skills further through consulting assignments that can broaden your exposure and enhance your strengths. Specialized staffing and consulting firms can play a significant role in helping you market yourself.

A Final Word

- **Don't think twice about creating a career plan.** Many professionals fail to create a career plan because they are afraid it will take too much time. But that's a misconception. You can create a sound career plan in a couple of hours once you have the framework and have done an adequate amount of brainstorming.
- **Avoid striving to create a "perfect" plan.** Some professionals will take an inordinate amount of time to form a career strategy because they want to make sure it's "perfect." But perfection is an unlikely goal. A career plan is a fluid document, not a one-time event. You'll likely make modifications to it as time goes on. In fact, count on it. You may find that certain goals are unrealistic within your predetermined time horizons, or that you possess certain skills and strengths that you didn't even know you had.
- **Get started as soon as possible.** Delaying the start of your career plan is similar to filing an important motion long after it was due. The sooner you launch your career plan, the sooner you will be on your way to working towards your true career goals.

Rob Hosking is a vice-president with Robert Half Legal, a leading staffing service specializing in the placement of lawyers, law clerks, paralegals and other legal professionals with law firms and corporate legal departments.

GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENURED LAWYERS CALL FOR INCREASED RETENTION EFFORTS

Robert Half Legal Press Release: Distribution May 11, 2006

As the economy gains momentum and the hiring climate improves, job opportunities for experienced legal professionals are increasing, notes Charles Volkert, executive director of Robert Half Legal, a leading staffing firm specializing in the placement of lawyers, paralegals, law clerks and other highly skilled legal professionals. As a result, managing partners and general counsel must make a concerted effort not only to address growth, but also to make retaining their best and most experienced lawyers a front-burner issue.

According to Volkert, current business expansion is giving tenured lawyers with expertise in high-demand practice areas such as intellectual property, real estate and litigation more career choices. He offered retention advice to those managing law firms and corporate legal departments.

“Compensation is an important element in any retention strategy, but it’s just one of several variables that must be considered,” said Volkert. “Law firms and legal departments also must bolster their investment in staff through avenues such as professional development, training and mentoring while working to foster a balanced work environment.”

“If efforts are not made to prevent staff migration, an organization may find itself in a difficult position as experienced lawyers look elsewhere to find a workplace that better meets their goals and needs,” added Volkert.

Volkert offers the following retention tips:

- **Keep compensation competitive.** A firm’s pay and benefits package should at least match prevailing rates. Ideally, salary levels and bonuses should exceed industry standards.
- **Facilitate employee development.** By emphasizing career growth and training, law offices can demonstrate that they support employee growth and success while investing in the organization’s future.

- **Create a worker-friendly environment.** Establishing a workplace that promotes a healthy work/life balance can be instrumental in keeping your best talent. In order to give employees more flexibility, consider adopting practices such as telecommuting, compressed or flexible workweeks, and job-sharing.
- **Celebrate a job well done.** Praise and recognition demonstrates to employees that their contributions are valued. People who have positive attitudes about their jobs tend to do them well, are more invested in the organization and are likely to see themselves as part of the team, rather than soloists who are detached from co-workers and management.

About Robert Half Legal

Robert Half Legal is the legal staffing division of Robert Half International Inc. The company provides law firms and corporate legal departments with highly skilled professionals, including lawyers, paralegals, law clerks and legal support personnel, on a project and full-time basis. Robert Half Legal offers online job search services at www.roberthalflegal.com.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: Survey Finds Lawyers Bring Projects Home an Average of Nine Days Per Month

Robert Half Legal Press Release: Distribution May 10, 2005

Despite long hours at the office, many lawyers continue to burn the midnight oil once they leave, according to a new survey. Lawyers polled said they give themselves homework assignments an average of nine days per month, or more than twice a week.

The survey was developed by Robert Half Legal, a leading staffing service specializing in lawyers, paralegals and other highly skilled legal professionals. It was conducted by an independent research firm and includes responses from 200 lawyers from law firms and corporations in the United States and Canada.

Lawyers were asked, “On average, how many days per month do you bring work home with you?” The mean response was nine days.

“Lawyers may prefer to stay late at the office rather than bring work home with them because of the importance of face-time in the legal environment,” said Charles Volkert, executive director of Robert Half Legal. “Law firm cultures are driven by billable hours and corporate departments expect easy accessibility to their lawyers, which can encourage lawyers to remain on-site. However, working at home may also be required to keep up with caseload demands.”

“Lawyer work hours are changing, though,” added Volkert. “Organizations striving to retain top talent are implementing practices that help lawyers find greater work/life balance.” In another survey by Robert Half Legal, 36 per cent of lawyers described their law firm’s culture as “family-friendly.” Volkert noted, “Flexible or compressed schedules, part-time employment and telecommuting are just a few options being introduced by law firms and legal departments.”

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SURVEY INDICATES MOST LAWYERS WOULD NOT START THEIR OWN LAW FIRM

Robert Half Legal Press Release: Distribution July 5, 2005

An overwhelming majority of lawyers have no ambition of starting their own practice, a new survey shows. Ninety-three per cent of lawyers polled said they would not establish a law firm even if they had the necessary capital. This is a steady increase from similar surveys conducted in 2002 and 1997, when 84 per cent and 78 per cent of lawyers, respectively, reported no interest in flying solo.

The survey was developed by Robert Half Legal, a leading staffing service specializing in lawyers, paralegals and other highly skilled legal professionals. It was conducted by an independent research firm and includes responses from 200 lawyers among the 1,000 largest law firms and corporations in the United States and Canada. All respondents have at least three years of experience in the legal field.

Lawyers were asked, "If you had the necessary capital, would you start your own law firm?"

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>1997</u>
No.....	93%	84%	78%
Yes.....	5%	16%	20%
Don't know...	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%

"While it may be exciting, for many lawyers, the allure of starting their own law firm is overshadowed by the many administrative aspects entailed, such as finding and outfitting office space, investing in computer systems, acquiring clients, and hiring and retaining staff," said Charles Volkert, executive director of Robert Half Legal. "These responsibilities demand time and energy that lawyers may prefer devoting to the actual practice of law."

Volkert pointed out that there are numerous alternatives for lawyers with an entrepreneurial spirit: “Careers in private industry, public interest, mediation, research and teaching are all attractive choices for individuals seeking change from the structure of law firms and corporate environments. Lawyers in these settings frequently assume prominent roles as key decision makers while benefiting from more flexible work arrangements.”

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How to Delegate Successfully

By Robert Hosking, vice-president of Robert Half Legal

Would you like to decrease your workload, increase your efficiency and motivate your employees -- simultaneously? By delegating various responsibilities, as well as appropriate levels of authority, you can accomplish all those goals and more.

Delegation is essential for a strong, productive organization, but many leaders are reluctant to hand off anything but the most routine duties – perhaps because of ingrained habits, a false sense of expediency or uncertainty about what kinds of tasks can be delegated.

Don't allow these – or any other reasons – to prevent you from delegating. You owe it to yourself and your organization to develop this skill. This article will explain why delegating is important and help you decide which functions to delegate, when and how to do it and how to perform the necessary follow-up.

The Case for Delegating

The most compelling argument in favour of delegating is that it helps you, your department and, ultimately, your company. By strategically clearing your own schedule of certain tasks, you'll have more time and energy to devote to urgent, mission-critical issues that require your attention and expertise. You'll suffer fewer distractions and alleviate the stress that comes from an unmanageable workload. You'll also be able to pursue opportunities and initiatives that you've been putting off due to time constraints.

When you delegate to your staff, you're demonstrating trust, building confidence and fostering competence. Your employees will expand their skills and knowledge, which in turn will allow you to delegate more tasks. They'll be able to grow professionally within your organization, rather than looking elsewhere for career development opportunities.

The ripple-effect benefits to your company are obvious. A team of motivated, contented legal employees will interact more effectively with other departments, executive staff and outside counsel. Your department will operate more efficiently, saving the company money.

Recognizing the value and importance of delegation is step one. The next step is to identify which functions can be delegated and create a systematic plan.

What to Delegate

Start by listing all tasks and responsibilities then analyze each according to the following criteria:

- Is this a task that only you can or should handle (e.g., emergencies, strategically sensitive matters)?
- Does one of your employees have skills or knowledge well suited to the task? (e.g., familiarity with corporate governance legislation)
- Would a particular employee benefit from the additional responsibility (e.g., a junior lawyer with leadership potential)?
- Is this a task that anyone on staff could perform (e.g., Internet research)?

This exercise should make clear those duties that can be delegated. You might find it easier to begin with tasks that meet the last criterion until you feel comfortable with the delegation process.

Once you've decided what to delegate, precisely define each job and your expectations. Write down exactly what needs to be done, the resources required and the corresponding deadlines. Make sure you can envision the desired outcome so that you can clearly communicate it to others.

Delegating How-to's

The process will flow more smoothly if you know your employees' strengths and abilities. Assign tasks according to which people are most capable of delivering results that will satisfy your expectations. Don't assign a highly technical project to someone whose competencies lie elsewhere, for example.

Describe the broader context of the task (i.e., why it's important), mention possible complications and describe how you'll evaluate performance. Make sure you and the employee agree on specific deadlines, and make any necessary arrangements to provide the resources or

training required to complete the assignment. Keep in mind that you need to delegate authority as well as duties. Encourage your staff to make independent informed decisions and take the initiative.

A word of caution: Avoid the trap of telling your staff *how* to perform a given task. Each person has his or her own individual style – effective delegation does not require that you impose your own approach. Judge results, not methods.

Finally, let go. Once you've delegated, resist the desire to constantly peer over your employees' shoulders. By stepping back, you'll demonstrate your trust and confidence in their work. If you don't feel confident in a person's abilities, you may want to re-evaluate the choices you made in the delegation process.

Close the Loop with Follow-up

Of course, once you've delegated a project, you still have a role to play. Request regular progress reports so that you can handle any difficulties that may arise. Don't hover, but let employees know that you're available to provide guidance if necessary. When the job is complete, thank staff for their efforts and publicly recognize their accomplishments. Ask employees for feedback so that you can correct flaws in the delegation process. Rather than criticize employees, ask them how you could better communicate objectives, deadlines and expectations.

Ultimately, you'll know delegation is working when you're no longer struggling to gain control of an unmanageable workload, but instead are strategically planning assignments and directing a highly productive, motivated staff. At that point, you may still be working hard, but you'll likely enjoy it a great deal more.

Rob Hosking is a vice-president with Robert Half Legal, a leading staffing service specializing in the placement of lawyers, law clerks, paralegals and other legal professionals with law firms and corporate legal departments.

Taking Control of Your Career

By Robert Hosking, vice-president Robert Half Legal

In today's rapidly changing workplace, only one person is qualified to make important career decisions: you. It is up to you -- not your boss, co-workers or senior management -- to formulate objectives, develop a plan, and follow through with the necessary steps to realize your professional goals.

Think of it this way: You are the CEO of your legal career. Like any CEO, of course, you need to solicit advice from others and, in many instances, rely on the expertise of people who have additional knowledge and experience. Ultimately, though, you have to make the big decisions. Here are some guidelines to consider.

- **Know where you're going.** Successful CEOs invariably have a clear vision or direction for their companies. As the CEO of your career, you also need a vision -- an overall goal of what you want to achieve in the legal field. It isn't necessary to cross every "t" and dot every "i" in the plan you formulate, especially early on in your career, when you may be exploring various options. But you need a general sense of what's important to you. That is, how successful you want to be, and what form that success should take. How you measure your success -- by financial gain, rank, peer recognition, or personal satisfaction -- is up to you. What's important is that you have a target that is more than a dream.
- **Develop a plan.** A common pitfall in career management is becoming so bogged down with day-to-day priorities and pressures that you lose sight of the big picture and where you eventually want to go in your career. One way to guard against this pitfall is to create a strategic career plan, which is a broad outline of the steps you need to take to achieve your goals. Every few months, set aside some time (two or three days at least) to reflect on where you've been, what you've been doing, and where you're headed. Make sure you're still on target with respect to long-term career goals. If not, you need to make the appropriate adjustments.
- **Make every job count.** Every job you take as you progress in your career should be logically keyed to the goals you've established. When you uncover new employment opportunities, capitalize on them and run a success-driven job hunt strategy. And as an employee, you need to

work effectively within your company's culture and deal wisely with the political dynamics.

- **Keep your life well balanced.** It's much easier today than it used to be to stay committed to a career and still have time and energy to devote to your family, your leisure pursuits, or your personal interests. Investigate opportunities for alternate work arrangements, such as flex-time, part-time employment, job sharing and telecommuting. When they're compatible with your job duties, these arrangements give you more control of your time and help to ease the pressures that arise when the responsibilities of your career and your personal life coincide.
- **Learn how to manage yourself.** The typical CEO almost always operates in overload mode. Only those who have discovered how to set priorities and manage their time effectively are able to meet their responsibilities. Managing a career lends itself to many of the principles that apply to time management. You set goals. You re-evaluate priorities on an ongoing basis. You recognize when you're taking on more tasks and responsibilities than you can possibly manage. Tools such as project-management software or day-planning notebooks can help. More importantly, you need a commitment to organization and a sense of discipline.
- **Become a better communicator.** Effective communication has always been a critical business skill. The most important aspect of communication is the ability to *listen* -- not only to hear the words that people are saying but also to understand the concerns and motivations that lie beneath the words. And it's especially important, in this era of e-mail, to communicate as clearly, concisely, and persuasively on paper (or on-screen) as you do in person or over the telephone.
- **Expand your network.** For most high-level executives, networking has played an important part in their career advancement. True, staying in touch with people takes time and effort -- two precious commodities in today's workplace. But by creating an organized schedule, you can usually fit in one or two days per month to mingle with colleagues at an association meeting, a trade show, or similar venue. Think of it as an investment. A network of colleagues and associates is not only a resource for advice and help, but also enriches your life on a personal level. Keep in mind that networking isn't something you do only when you're looking for a job; it should be an ongoing element of career development.
- **Stay on the cutting edge.** No CEO can possibly know everything there is to know about every aspect of his or her company. Similarly, it's unrealistic to think that you can keep your finger on the pulse of everything going on that might relate to your career. Even so, take reasonable steps

to stay abreast of new developments in the legal field. The Internet is a powerful tool to help you access important information and find out more about recent events. Most legal associations, organizations and publications have their own websites, making it easier and more convenient than ever to educate yourself.

- **Conduct yourself with absolute integrity.** We are called upon every day of our lives to make ethical decisions. Obviously, each person operates from his or her own set of ethical standards. What represents integrity to one person may mean something entirely different to another. Today's professional ethical dilemmas are often compounded by intense competition and an increasing focus on quick results. In these surroundings, it is important to remember that there is no such thing as situational ethics. You are either ethical all of the time or not at all. Integrity isn't something practiced now and then, when it is convenient. It is a core value that governs everything you do and say. If you have to ask yourself whether something you're about to do is ethical, chances are it is not.
- **Be visible.** Contribute ideas during meetings and do your best to offer suggestions for improving company practices. Arrive early to the office. And, most important, don't hesitate to stretch your abilities. You shouldn't take on what you can't do, but you should be open to opportunities that may fall outside of your job description -- it could serve as a springboard to career advancement.

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