Evaluation Warning: The document was created with Spire.Doc for .NET.

Title:

Outwitting the Job Market Over the Long Term - Part 1

Word Count:

891

Summary:

You've found a great job, you have every right to celebrate. Go out on the town. Eat a good meal with your friends. Make a toast to your own future. But don't forget that while you've outwitted the job market in the short term, you'll have to keep your eye on the long term too.

Keywords:

job,performance,career,reviews,performance reviews,job performance

Article Body:

You've found a great job, you have every right to celebrate. Go out on the town. Eat a good meal with your friends. Make a toast to your own future. But don't forget that while you've outwitted the job market in the short term, you'll have to keep your eye on the long term too. That's right outwitting the job market is actually a career-long pursuit. As long as you're in the workplace, you'll have to plot and strategize ways of staying ahead. Fortunately, this isn't as hard as it sounds. The tips below are a good starting point for taking advantage of the opportunities your new job will offer-and creating a few opportunities of your own.

UNDERGO REGULAR CAREER SELF-APPRAISALS

You go to the doctor once a year for a complete physical examination; why not undergo an annual career examination too? The self-appraisal is a way to take stock of your continuing career-related achievements and goals. At least once a year, write down a list of the skills and experiences you hope to be gleaning from your job and where you want to be in the coming year. By comparing this list to what is actually happening, you will be able to determine the rate of your professional growth. If your job is helping you to achieve most of your desired career goals, then you know you are making good progress. If, however, there are sizable discrepancies between your "wish list" and your "reality list" over a reasonably long period of time, you may want to consider renewing your job search efforts.

One management consultant says she takes off a personal day every six months specifically for the purpose of self-appraisal. "I usually spend the day outdoors, in a park or hiking. I take my list with me. Away from work and the usual interruptions at home, I'm able to be more objective. I can be honest with myself about where my job is going, where I want to be, and whether those two directions dovetail."

Thinking long-term doesn't hurt, either. Where do you want to be in your career in five years, ten, or twenty? What can you do now to ready yourself for these goals? Considering the distant as well as immediate future can help you to make important decisions regarding your career. Explains a thirty-one-year-old professional who works for a prominent accounting company: "I have a rough idea of where I want to be, using age as a scale. I want to be in a management role by the age of thirty-five, for example. If I'm not there in a few years, I have to assess some things. Why am I not getting promoted? Am I not performing up to the [necessary] level? Or is the company overlooking me because of something beyond my control? [If this is the case,] I'll have to find another company to stay on track." For this employee, as well as for many others, short- and long-term career appraisals are a regular part of work life.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Many employers, especially large corporations, consider job performance reviews a standard part of the cycle. Once every six months, or once a year, your boss and sometimes your peers and subordinates too-will review your on-the-job performance based on competencies such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. You will be graded, in a sense, the same way you were graded in school.

It's natural to balk at the thought of performance reviews. Yet if you choose to ignore them, you will also be ignoring their impact on your career prospects. Indeed, performance reviews are often weighted heavily when promotion time and raise discussions come around. If you're serious about moving ahead in your field, don't be passive about performance reviews. Tackle them head-on. Be gracious when your strengths are pointed out, but pay more attention to the areas that need improvement. If your supervisor says that your presentation skills are lackluster, for example, make an effort to improve them. Take a public speaking seminar; maybe your company will be willing to subsidize it. There are plenty of ways to improve perceived weaknesses in your employment performance: Read books. Take classes. Enroll in online courses. Seek the advice of those who are adept in the areas that you are trying to shape up and sharpen. In the process, be sure that your supervisor is aware of your attempts at self-improvement. Don't assume that she is in the know and will automatically take into consideration your efforts at your next performance review.

And what about those long months between reviews? Don't wait for your employer to initiate discussions about your job performance. Approach your boss and ask, 'Am I working up to your expectations? Do you have any suggestions for how I can become a better employee?" Being proactive about your own improvement is a great way to get noticed for the right reasons.

And speaking of getting noticed-the next time you're praised in an e-mail, letter, or memo, be sure to keep a copy. Keep a folder for the express purpose of collecting items that illustrate your value to the company and your continuing improvement. Keep copies of your performance reviews, too. The next time you begin a job search, this folder will help to convince future employers that you're worth hiring.