The Geospatial Career Toolbox

9 actionable tips that you can apply to your geospatial career TODAY and start seeing results.

Below is a preview of what's in the course, along with actionable advice you can start applying TODAY.

Get to the root of any project & deliver exactly what your boss needs
Hint: It's not always what they ask for, and it's not always a map

Have you ever received an overly broad or vague request for a map? A lot of managers think you're the magic map maker and that any data can be mapped and fit on a letter sized sheet of paper.

That's ok, **it's not their fault**. They're busy doing the business of business: budgeting and hiring and setting policies. The things they do are probably just as foreign to you as your work is to them.

Your job is to educate and enlighten.

But how? You can't just tell them how wrong they are, or say "No, that's stupid," when they ask for something stupid. You have to be tactful, and you have to be persuasive.

This won't happen overnight, but if you keep the following ideas in mind you'll get there soon:
1. Have a preset checklist of questions you ask for each map request
2. Be inquisitive – not judgemental. Ask – don't tell. "Does it have to be a map?" versus "I can't map that because _____"
3. Deliver solutions, not excuses. "It sounds like you really just need a bar chart," instead of "That's not how maps work"

How to avoid getting bogged down and constantly deliver value

As you start applying the lessons from the course, you're going to start getting noticed. You'll become known as the person who can get things done.

However, *sometimes* this can work against you. There are people in every organization who like to deliberate, think, plan, and meet *ad infinitum*. They are the people who feel like *meeting* is the same as *doing.*

This is where things may get tricky for you. One of those people may be in charge of a committee who is running a large project for the company. They may see your success and want to include you in their meetings because you have become known as the person who gets results.

You may or may not have a choice in joining their group.

You won't be able to take over a project that's already underway, but you can position yourself to be the diver of future projects.

The trick is to be in the driver's seat, not riding shotgun.

How? By consistently demonstrating your value to the company, especially those in the "C-suite." Take every opportunity talking with an executive to gather information about what they're struggling with and what they need. Position yourself as a problem solver, not just a map maker.

You will learn the method to get out of the "advisor" role and into the "decider" seat.
1. You'll learn the language to use when you're asked to join a "sinking ship" project
2. You will learn when to help, when to take charge, and when to bail
3. You'll learn to articulate clearly the need to be involved at an earlier stage
4. Better yet, you'll learn how your executives think so that you become the chairperson, not just the technical advisor

How to create a system for discovering what your company needs

I'm not just talking about which software platform to use.

If you're tuned in to the daily hustle and bustle, you'll be able to easily identify growth levers or "quick wins" that will make you a hero.

Everyone in the company has their responsibilities. Through getting to know your colleagues, you will begin to see opportunities throughout the company. How do you get others on board with your ideas? **By making it theirs.**

Ask a bunch of innocuous, open ended questions about their work.

- "Why do you do that this way?"
- "Have you ever considered _____?"
- "What would you need to try that out?"

By paying attention to key factors, you'll be able to figure out:
1. Which group has the easiest low hanging fruit that will deliver 80% of the value with 20% of the effort.
2. What pre-existing tools are available which could be implemented intelligently without incurring additional costs.
3. How to leverage your relationships to increase output by collaboration
4. Get to know your support staff so that when you want to try something, you won't have to jump through bureaucratic hoops.

A roadmap to taking your big idea from a sketch to the board room

You're a smart person. That's why they hired you. (*And why you studied geography in college*). You've learned what your company needs, but how do you deliver it?

The people at the very top of your organization spend all their time worrying about politics and the market.

Their direct reports spend lots of time thinking about productivity and budgets.

Your boss has to meet his performance goals or he won't get his bonus.

How can you use all of these factors to introduce a new, interesting, fun, and innovative solution for your company?

Learn the language your boss speaks. Don't try to impress them with technical jargon, convince them by spelling out **how your project will help** them surpass their goals.

Also:
1. Don't give them a chance to say no – clearly illustrate the reason why your idea is valuable.
2. Tell, don't ask. If you say "Can I...?" or "I want to ____, is that ok?" they'll likely say "No" by default.
3. Before pitching your idea, gather all the resources you'll need. If you pitch your idea by saying, "I can do this if I get ____ on board and figure out ____ software," then your boss will likely say, "Figure out those things and let me know."
4. **If you're 100% ready for launch then they have to decide on the spot.**

How to guarantee the best outcome from your big pitch meeting

If you get the chance to pitch your idea in front of a high-level group, you'll need to make sure that everything goes your way. How? By pre-wiring the meeting.

You have a plan you've been dreaming up for a while. You talk about it in the lunchroom, at the watercooler, and to anyone who will listen. Now, you finally reached the critical mass where the executives want to hear more.

They ask you to come give your pitch at the next staff meeting.

Now's your chance! but how do you avoid blowing your opportunity?

Meet with each attendee in advance to give them your pitch. Answer every question before you even get in the room.

You'll learn how to:
1. Learn about their objections ahead of time, so you can address them before the meeting.
2. Meet with the leaders in hierarchical order. As you work your way down the organizational chart, you can tell each manager that their boss has already signed off.
3. Run a successful meeting as if the votes haven't already been cast. Then once your presentation is done there will be a unanimous "YES!"

How to hire a brilliant employee without breaking the bank

In tough economic times, those that control the purse strings often won't let you hire someone just because you say it'll be good for the company. You have to demonstrate in advance that your team will be even more extra awesome with the help of additional resources.

Remember, your boss has a budget to maintain. Sure, they love what you're bringing to the company, but bringing in extra people is a big risk for them.

It's not only a financial risk, but a political one. Your boss has power over you, but they must report to people, too. They have to convince HR or Finance to go along with your plan. **That will cost them political capital**. That's a steep obstacle to overcome— based solely on your assertion that hiring someone will be good for the company.

But if you make the proposal that you **hire an intern**, then the obstacle is much easier to overcome.

But how do you get something valuable from someone you're not paying? How do you separate the wheat from the chaff when you have a huge stack of resumés?

1. Learn the interview questions that weed out the future high performers from the college slackers.
2. Learn the most successful attributes to look for in candidates.
3. Learn how to inspire your intern to do amazing work and deliver tons of value.
4. THEN learn how to convert the intern into an employee.

A 'secret' weapon to maximize employee happiness & productivity

There's an old joke in management circles that goes something like this:

A hiring manager, talking to an applicant, says "I see you list 'people person' under Skills. That's good, because all the jobs here working with dogs and trees are taken."

Managing people is hard. If the company has entrusted you with direct reports, then you have a responsibility to use them to **achieve the company's goals.**

But people aren't machines, they need to feel personal growth and fulfilment in their work. How do you strike that balance?

Learn the "management trifecta" that will strengthen your relationship with your directs.

1. Hold weekly one-on-one meetings with everyone that reports to you.
2. Give frequent feedback (BOTH positive and negative).
3. Delegate some of your core responsibilities.
4. Coach and mentor your employees to grow.

Why you should deliver a single solution for all of your projects

When you're faced with a major task, you may be tempted to deliver a variety of solutions. This is natural. It takes the burden of making decisions off of your shoulders and places them on your boss.

You wouldn't want to make a decision they don't agree with, right?

Wrong. You're a professional. **Professionals deliver SOLUTIONS, not OPTIONS.**

You may have a boss who likes to look over your shoulder while you work, or have you bring multiple drafts for him or her to review. To combat this, you must define clear boundaries for the project.

Your boss is responsible for delivering the goals of the project: data, medium, style, audience, and deadline.

Everything else is up to you. This ties back into digging deep into every request and having a set questionnaire so that you can figure out exactly what they need from you.

1. When given a problem to solve, ask for all the information necessary.
2. Then deliver only the BEST solution.
3. If you don't know the BEST solution, then you don't have enough INFO.
4. Ask more and more questions until you can deliver just ONE solution.

Your internal network - why you should build it before you need it

At some point in your career, there will be an opportunity. Maybe a senior executive is retiring, giving everyone a chance to move up the ladder. Maybe a company reorganization opens up positions in another division. When that time comes, you don't want your resumé to be the way you're introduced to someone in charge.

This can be difficult for many reasons. Maybe you're not an extrovert, maybe you're so busy that you never get a chance to break out, maybe your boss prevents you from collaborating with other units.

There isn't a universal solution to those obstacles, but it's vitally important that you figure out how to overcome them so you can **network internally.**

You'll learn:
1. How to identify the people in your company who are the movers and shakers.
2. Learn the surest way to build a strong network: always deliver value.
3. The weekly habits of the most successful people – Hint: it's on their calendars.