

Two Steps You Must Take To Ensure This Year Is A Success

As you begin this year with a fresh page to create the life that you want, there are ways you can ensure that it is a success. Take time to get the most out of your career and life, starting today. First, reflect on the past year, and write down some of your biggest achievements from the last 12 months, as well as the things that you are most proud of and the activities that gave you energy.

Next, there are two steps that you can take to ensure that the next year and beyond are leading you towards success.

The first step is to think of where you want to reach, what are some things you will do, where you will devote your energy, what you will focus on. The below questions will help you get started:

- What are top three things that you will accomplish this year?
- How will you continue to do things and get involved in activities that give you energy?
- Which relationships will you work on developing?
- How will you implement the lessons learned from last year?
- Write down three ways you will implement healthy habits into your lifestyle.
- Write down three things you will work on regarding both your personal and professional development.

Now that you have an idea of what you want to accomplish in the next year, the second step is to identify people who can help you reach your goals. It all starts with you and your own determination and hard work; however, it is also essential to surround yourself with the right network in your personal and professional circles.

Everyone you meet has something of value to offer you, whether it is information, knowledge, advice, introductions or opportunities; it is up to you to ask the right questions and have the right conversations. Understanding what you want out of your career and life will help you pinpoint those opportunities.

Outside of your personal circle of friends and family, and your professional circle of colleagues and coaches, you must also ensure you surround yourself with a great mentor (or two). A mentor can play three roles, depending on the relationship and the situation:

- Coach—a mentor can help a protégé develop the skills they need to achieve their goals.
- Counselor—a mentor can share their knowledge and experience to help their protégés to strengthen their self-confidence.
- Sponsor—a mentor can lobby for the protégé to get a salary increase or promotion, or expand their network and opportunities.

How do you find a mentor?

- Start with your alumni networks. Most universities have an alumni network or mentoring program available for their students and alumni.
- Look at professional bodies where you are a member. If you belong to specific interest or professional groups, it is likely that they have networking sessions or opportunities to meet others as well as connect you with other members on individual basis who could be open to mentorship.
- Be pro-active. Attend conferences that are of interest to you. This will give you a great opportunity to meet people and establish connections that could turn into a mentorship prospect.
- Go social. In the age of social media and global connectivity, you can now have a long distance mentor. Establishing a connection with someone via LinkedIn and other social media channels does not need to be formal or very ceremonial. It should be natural and approachable. If you have someone you look up to and they are in your online network, reach out to them, comment on their posts or publications, send a message and establish a connection.
- Finally, keep in mind mentorship can be and should be a two-way road. Think of ways you can add value to your advisor—you never know what skills you may have that might be of benefit to them.

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