

5 IT Career Mishaps

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Just because you've landed that dream job or received that promotion doesn't mean you can rest on your hands. It's just as important to keep working on the skills, values and goals that helped land you that job in the first place, even after you've been hired. Here are five top tips for avoiding career mishaps.

1. Don't Stop Networking

Networking can be a crucial part of any job search, but don't quit once you're hired. Continuing to build strong business connections, and taking care of the relationships you already have, is critical for future success. And avoid neglecting networking and relationship-building within your own organization.

Most people think of networking as something you do to build connections outside their workplace. But networking within your own company with other departments, other business units, and the like is just as important. Networking within your organization can help you gain visibility and contribute to your reputation as a team player who wants to make an impact across the whole business, not just in their position.

2. Drive Your Own Destiny

Focus on the importance of taking control of your own career path and avoid getting complacent. Too many people depend on their manager or boss to set the tone and the direction for their career path. Be proactive when asking for assignments and responsibilities, and make sure you and your manager are on the same page as far as your career goals and direction.

3. Create a Five-Year Plan

To that end, create and maintain a five-year plan. When you started out in your career, it's likely you had a five-year plan. You should make sure to keep that plan fresh; constantly updating and refreshing that plan and reviewing goals and achievements can help make sure you're on track. It's much easier to make career decisions, when you have a solid plan laid out.

For myself, personally, I'm focused on new business development, but that hasn't always been the case. At a previous position, I had been in a position with responsibility for existing client service delivery, but made sure to explicitly ask for responsibility for new business development roles.

I told my managers I wanted to drive and generate new business relationships, even though I was focused on existing service delivery. So I found every opportunity to talk to managers, executives, thus, making new inroads with the business relationships formulated on trust.

4. Keep Social Media Profiles Professional

Remember, People do extensive research on these sites before they hire you, Because of the technology, the personal and professional spheres are more integrated than ever, and it's safest to assume that your social media persona is not separate from your professional persona.

To avoid potentially career-ending mistakes, you should know what your organization's social media policies are and follow those to the letter. In addition, you can take cues from senior leadership as far as what's appropriate to post and to which platforms.

5. Keep Your IT Skills Sharp

Finally, no matter what industry you work in, it's important to keep building on and adding to your skill sets. It's not enough to graduate from college and call it a day. Education is an ongoing process and it's important to stay sharp and keep up with the latest industry trends if you want to be a key player at your company.