

Management Career Advancement : What You Need

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The straightforward career path of previous generations, which promised a steady increase in salary, position, and responsibilities over time essentially doesn't exist anymore. Most corporations expect people to take responsibility for their career advancement these days, and there's no "standard" career ladder in most industries. *It's up to you to design and implement your own career development plan.* If you have a career in management, you may not be sure how to craft a career development plan that will take you to where you want your career to go. Be assured that you are not alone. Having a successful career in management today requires an active approach that covers several bases. Here are some considerations for you as you develop or evaluate your career development plan.

Continuing Education Isn't Just Advisable, It's Essential

Businesses change, the marketplace changes and customers change. Resting on your degree simply isn't enough to advance a career in management these days. [Continuing education is necessary](#) for developing new skills, sharpening existing skills, and understanding the direction of the business world. Continuing education isn't just about CEUs or pursuing an advanced degree, but shows that you take your responsibilities seriously and are committed to learning throughout the course of your career. And some "continuing education" takes place on the job. Many managers choose, for example, to make a strategic lateral career move on occasion to broaden skills and increase chances for

advancement.

Stay Involved in Industry Organizations

Becoming and remaining involved in industry organizations enhances business skills, allows you to connect with peers, and provides many opportunities for exchanging ideas and resources. Industry-associated activities can not only help you build a strong professional network, they can help you raise your profile and offer opportunities to demonstrate hard work and leadership. Speaking at industry association events can be tremendously empowering, and larger industry associations typically have many opportunities to do this throughout the year at specialty or general industry conferences.

Networks Must Be Tended Regularly

Successful networking should be a key part of your career development plan. You need to build many, diverse relationships, and learn to tap into network contacts for advice, feedback, and insight. As "[CEO of your career](#)," you need a network both inside and outside your company, up and down the chain of command. *Effective networking requires sustained effort*. But names and contact information in a spreadsheet aren't enough. Networks, like gardens, must be tended regularly to bear fruit. That means staying in touch with others regularly and discovering new contacts along the way. Help others in your network as much as they help you. Don't just ask for advice. Be valuable, volunteer, and show up. It can mean a better, more dynamic career in management.

Certifications and Your Career Development Plan

There's no substitute for the right certifications if you want to accelerate your career in management. But certifications are not all equally valuable, so it's important to invest in certification programs with a proven track record, which are esteemed by business leaders and show that you have serious management and leadership potential. The [Certified Manager](#) certification by the Institute of Certified Professional Managers (ICPM), for example, cannot be earned by just anyone. To earn the Certified Manager credential, those interested must complete an application and meet education and experience requirements before being admitted. Though no certification can guarantee a promotion or success, the Certified Manager certification is widely recognized throughout the world for demonstrating that the holder is serious about fulfilling his or her management and leadership potential.

Taking Steps to Improve Career Prospects

Your career development plan is uniquely tailored to you, and it's up to you to create it, evaluate it, and revise it as necessary. Continuing your education, joining and participating in industry associations, building a strong professional network, and pursuing certifications that matter are all important components of a career development plan and are worthy of your time and effort.

About the Author



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Emily Benusa is the Marketing Coordinator for Cardinal Bank in McLean, VA. She has worked in the banking, medical, food, insurance, travel, child care, wedding, and education industries, gaining exposure to a wide range of tasks that include customer relations, finance, administration, communications, advertising, marketing, event management, and public relations. Currently, she specializes in graphic design, brand management, inbound marketing, and print and digital advertising. Emily holds a B.F.A in Graphic Design from James Madison University and a certification in Inbound Marketing.

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