

The 3 E System

Written by: Bill Davis, MA, CM & Dr. Avisha Sadeghinejad | December 7, 2015



How Expectancy, Experience, and Education Can Advance Your Career

Do you remember receiving great career advice? We can, and it was extremely helpful. We've received advice and wisdom from many great leaders and managers we've either worked for in the past or still work for today. They provided consideration and shared their knowledge, insights, and experiences to help us progress further in our careers. Having an informal network of people you trust to help guide you in your career is a huge plus, and having a mentor—or two—to help you develop and grow is extremely important. In all cases, those who shared their advice with us made a positive impact on our success. Their words, stories, and suggestions have helped us make valuable adjustments to further our success and the success of our organizations.

Something Valuable We Learned

The wisdom and guidance provided by mentors and those within our networks helped us learn to align our career goals and purpose to our organization's vision, mission, leadership, strategies, culture, systems, and structure in order to attain career success and contentment. Part of this alignment required us to learn how to be great individual

contributors as well as great team members. We realized early on that teamwork is very important and that leading and collaborating effectively within teams is something that is highly valued. As individuals, we learned it is very important to be open minded, embrace diversity, and be collegial. We also learned to apply our skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience to specific areas of our organization. Embracing our new mindset helped to change our outlook regarding our careers and our organization. We expected to win so we kept a positive attitude and focused on the vision as we moved forward. We strived constantly to innovate and find new ways of doing things better while, as suggested by the late Steve Jobs, trusting “that the dots will somehow connect in [the] future.” We continually progressed, gaining the right experiences and investing in our own professional development and education. Collectively, this helped shape our careers and further our personal and professional growth. Reflectively, we see how expectancy, experience, and education can play an important role in one’s success. We call this simple formula the 3 E System; we believe it provides the much-needed resources and preparation for success.

The 3 E System Prepares You to Be Effective

We all have a stake in controlling our own success, and we manage and control our beliefs, behaviors, and actions accordingly. When we apply the 3 Es--expectancy, experience, and education--and manage them well, we reap many benefits. Successful outcomes emerge and serendipitous moments occur. Sometimes, in our development continuum, we find that by serving others, performing well, and staying aligned with our goals, we end up even better than we were before. The key is to understand how the 3Es impact and advance career success *and* acknowledge that we are all, in fact, on a career continuum: advancing forward by gradually building skills, obtaining knowledge, and increasing our credibility as professionals.

The Situation - Context to Help You See How The 3 E System Applies

Remember that today’s organizations are very dynamic (fluid, not static), and they are constantly shifting into different change modes. Globalization, competition, government, and technology as well as economic, social, and environmental factors are just a few of the change forces prompting organizations to make developmental, transitional, and transformational changes. These forces compel organizations to be more agile and adaptive to change. They are innovating constantly for growth and sustainability, entering new markets, and transforming, designing, and formulating strategies (Weiss, 2012). Today, more than ever, organizations are relying on teams versus bureaucratic structures and past ways of doing things. This provides the members of the organization with an opportunity to gain many new skills. Leadership, communication, planning, project management, collaborative, and innovative skills can be gained when practiced and applied within team environments. So let’s assume you are a mid-level manager interested in career advancement and skills validation. Your goals include gaining confidence and credibility so you can advance within your organization. Let’s take a look at how the 3 E’s—expectancy, experience, and education—can advance your career.

Expectancy

We believe that expectancy is an important component for success. *Do you expect to succeed? Do you believe that you can perform and deliver in your role in a distinguished fashion?* If you do, that relates to expectancy, and expectancy is an important component in Vroom's expectancy theory. Dr. Victor H. Vroom is a professor at the Yale School of Management. Vroom's primary research is on this simple theory: Expectancy + Instrumentality + Valence = Motivation. *If you believe you can succeed, and your performance results in you achieving your desired outcome, then instrumentality is high.* Valence occurs when you value the outcome. "If people expect a positive and desirable outcome, they'll usually work hard to perform at the level expected of them" (Mind Tools, n.d.). Therefore, expect to win, keep a positive attitude, and pursue your career goals. Keep them aligned to your organizational strategies and mission, and always serve to the best of your ability. Visit [Mind Tools](#) to learn more about Vroom's theory.

Experience

Experience does matter, and the more you have, the more resources from which you can source. Gaining experience in a variety of roles is important. For example, managing people at various levels (i.e., front line, middle, and top) provides you with opportunities for learning on the job and expanding your depth of experience. You may also want to volunteer in different fields to widen your breadth of experience. Learning how to manage others is important for career advancement, but accumulating knowledge through hands-on experience is priceless. A few good resources for gaining experience through volunteering are community volunteer centers and volunteer matching organizations that find and match volunteers with opportunities (Hoffman, 2015).

Education

Professional development is another important component to help you achieve your goals and reach your full potential. To create a professional development plan, you need to conduct a self-assessment and examine your purpose, interests, and motivations. You have to decide where you want to go and then develop goals, action plans, and activities to reach your destination. For example, if you want to advance in *professional management*, consider attaining a management certificate or certification from the Institute of Certified Professional Managers (ICPM). Visit www.icpm.biz for additional information. People learn on the job, off the job, and through the job. Pay attention to professional development opportunities available within and outside of your company. Strive to stay active and become a lifelong learner. It will only help you to succeed. References

ICPM (2015). Institute of Certified Professional Managers. Retrieved from <http://www.icpm.biz/> Hoffman, A. (2015). Volunteering Can Buy You IT Experience. Retrieved from <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/Getting-Started/Volunteer-to-Get-IT-Experience/article.aspx> Mind Tools, (n.d.). Expectancy theory. Retrieved from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_73.htm Weiss (2012). Organizational change. San Diego, CA: Bridgepoint Education, Inc.

About the Author



Bill Davis, MA, CM & Dr. Avisha Sadeghinejad

Bill Davis is an Instructor and a Faculty Senator in the Forbes School of Business at Ashford University. Bill holds a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership from St. Ambrose University, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Lewis University, and the Certified Manager certification from The Institute of Certified Professional Managers. He has extensive experience in all aspects of business: consulting, management, leadership, sales, marketing, strategic planning, human resources, and organizational change. --- Dr. Avisha Sadeghinejad is an Assistant Professor in the Forbes School of Business at Ashford University. She holds a Doctoral degree in business administration, with a specialization in marketing, from Golden Gate University. She also earned her MBA, and BS in Mathematics from Sharif University of Technology, and a Certified Social Marketing Associate certification from eMarketing Association. Prior to joining Ashford, Dr. Sadeghinejad worked as the marketing officer at a startup company, where she developed and implemented the strategic marketing plan with an emphasis on email marketing, video-email marketing, and marketing automation.