Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

# How do I get there from here? Setting and attaining career goals

You've got your foot in the door—you may have even been with the same employer for years, and now you have your eye on a bigger prize—what do you do?



**Map it out**

Have you ever tried to find your way around a new city without a map? Reaching your destination is always faster when you know where you're going and how you're getting there. Creating a career map is a great way to help you visualize a bright career future and get there faster. Here's how to start:

**Mark out a finish line.** What is your final destination or goal? Be specific about the position you'd like to be in.

- **Plot needed skills.** Brainstorm and plot out the skills you'll need to get on the path to your final destination—and don't be afraid to ask for directions along the way. Contact people in the position you aspire to and ask them how they got there—their stories may surprise you.
- **Mark your route.** As with any long-term travelling, there are always stops along the way. Mark down the roles you see as possible steps on the path to your desired position and the skills and training you'll need to get there.
- **Use the map.** Don't forget to reference your map when making career decisions. Your career map may be personal to you, but know it well so you can share your career development goals with your manager.
- **Adapt the map.** With life challenges, opportunities and career moves ahead, the only certain thing is that plans will change. Review and update your map from time to time. Keep yourself on course to your final destination, even if that finish line is different then originally planned.

**Stand out**

Now that you have your career plans on paper, it's time to put those plans into action!

To excel in the workplace, be sure to:

- **Ask questions.** Ask good and timely questions; it shows you're interested and eager to learn.
- **Show initiative.** Don't always wait until someone asks you to do something. Look for opportunities to help, and offer your services.
- **Be a team player.** Be positive, encouraging and give credit where it's due—your co-workers will appreciate your work and you will earn their respect.
- **Do great work.** Don't just get the job done. Give one-hundred per cent with everything you do, even the tiniest of tasks, and you will be trusted with more over time.
- **Learn and learn some more.** Volunteer, get a mentor, go to seminars, take a course—but never stop learning! View every opportunity for growth as a new tool in your belt for the road ahead.

**Mix and mingle**

Networking can provide you with important connections that can help you grow both professionally and personally. It's often who you know that gets you to the next stop on your career map, so be sure to maintain and expand your connections.

To build and maintain a great network:

- **Keep your old friends.** When starting a new career, especially if you move locations, don't leave your friendships behind. It's easy to stay connected wherever you go, so don’t let go of the lines of communication.

- **Make a daily effort.** Whether by e-mail, phone or in-person, stay "plugged in" to different networks. Most people have about 250 people in their network of friends. Get to know your friends' friends and take opportunities to mix in different circles.

- **Do unto others.** If you know about a job opening, send the posting to a connection that may be looking. Found an intriguing article? E-mail it to a contact you think might also find it interesting. Look for opportunities to help others and good things will come back to you.

- **Get involved.** You'll be amazed by the types of networking opportunities available by staying active at work and in the community. Whether it's heading up your organization's slow-pitch league, pitching in for a fundraiser or joining a professional organization, stay active and involved.

The career track can be intimidating at first, but with a goal in mind and a strategy in place you can keep yourself on target. In our fast-paced, instant gratification world, it's easy to get caught up in looking forward without enjoying and appreciating the place you’re in today. Your experiences now will help you down the road, so be sure to enjoy every bit of the journey towards your desired career goals.

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