

Nine Ways to Ensure Your Upward Career Mobility

The economy may be down, but that doesn't mean your career needs to sink with it. Keep moving up that corporate ladder with these tips from career experts.

By Karen Yi



Ah, the gloried path towards professional ascension. A little slip of smooth-talk, some networking skills, a consistent job performance—give it some time and the cycle of upward career mobility is bound to take you next. At least that's how it was then. Now with corporate America on the edge of uncertainty, the climb to the top is more grueling than ever.

"In a stable economy, it is possible to 'coast' and get by on mediocre performance. In a rough economy, professionals will be evaluated much more critically," says Marshall Goldsmith, executive educator, coach and *New York Times* best selling author of [What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful](#). He adds, "It will become necessary to go beyond

just doing your job."

With everyone's neck on the line, how can aspiring sales professional clear out their cubicles to move *up* rather than *out* of the office?

1. Adapt to change.

The first step is awareness. It's time to "recognize that the world is changing and that what you did before may not work now," says Robert Gunther, co-author of [Your Job Survival Guide: A Manual for Thriving in Change](#). Get ahead of the ball game and be proactive: don't remain passive. "Hard times are hard times," says Goldstein. "There is no point in sugar-coating reality. We may well be headed for the most difficult economic conditions in decades."

2. Keep your balance.

Have a plan that details the three critical elements of your life, says business and success coach John McKee. The most satisfied professionals balance their career, their personal lives and their financial side. It's important to understand the purpose behind what you are doing and clearly define where you want to go. Once you establish your "personal action plan," you can gain the confidence to move on up.

3. Get visible.

"Build personal networks and allow people to see you at work and see who you are," says Gregory Shea co-author of *Your Job Survival Guide* (FT Press). Put yourself out there and be clear about your qualifications. "Gain visibility within the eyes of the decision makers and deliver results," says McKee. Communicate your successes and make sure "people who are in a position to influence your promotional path know that you are delivering those results," he says.

4. Show don't tell.

"The ability to communicate in a very direct way is vital," says Gunther. In the middle of this economic pandemonium, words can often get thrown in with all the other chaotic noise. Now is the time to show, not tell! "Actions and symbols

are important," says Gunther, because in a turbulent environment, "words get shredded." There's no better time than now to apply the actions speak louder than words maxim.

5. Don't be one-dimensional.

Always continue expanding your knowledge base and deepening your portfolio. Take networking to a new level. "Learn more about the organization" by understanding "the needs of the other 'arms' of the company," says McKee. This will help you "see the world as [others] see it," so when it comes down to staff reductions you won't be the one to go.

6. Be willing to make mistakes.

Learn from both your successes and your failures. "Don't try to prevent making mistakes; instead, change your mindset," says Gunther. Have the mentality to recover from mistakes, and don't hesitate to "experiment with new things and test your skills," he says. Don't be afraid to take risks.

7. Think like an entrepreneur.

"Make a concentrated effort to come up with creative ways that go above and beyond the call of duty," says Goldstein. Brand building is crucial even for those that work in larger corporations. It's an opportunity to "add unique value to the organization," he says

8. Pace yourself.

Things may feel chaotic with everything coming at you all at once. But Gunther reminds us that the faster you go, the more exhausted you will be. "It may be counterintuitive," he says, "but you have to pace yourself." Otherwise, "you're not able to think clearly and respond to the environment," Gunther says.

9. Show optimism.

Times are tough, but have the ability to show optimism and resilience. "The more anxious you are the less intelligent you're going to be, including the less reflecting," says Shea. Waiting out the economic storm and wallowing in self-pity will only be your boost out the door. "Like it or not, you are going to have to sell the value of what you are doing in a very tough market," says Goldsmith. Think like a Broadway star, he says, "every performance is 'show time!'"