

## Keys to effective career management in the new work contract:

- **Continuous learning is critical.** The love of lifelong learning is more critical now than ever. Learning in the new workplace is increasingly the key to career viability, for the shifts in the structure and shape of jobs will require you to cultivate new skills throughout your career. The pace with which change occurs will demand that you approach your career as a series of progressive learning experiences, mastering new technologies and advancements in your field.
- **Employability**, defined as "taking responsibility for the shape and motion of your own career," is the new mandate in career development. More than ever, you will need to take responsibility for choreographing your own career, including long-term career training and re-training. Manage your career as if you were self-employed.

While employers no longer promise job security, they do provide opportunities and resources for you to develop new skills in order to keep yourself employable – (i.e. professional associations, conferences, training in technology, etc.). Take advantage of these resources to actively manage your career. Your best job security is your ability to be employable in your chosen field, by continually updating your skills and staying abreast of new opportunities.

- **Excel in your present job.** Be proactive! Ask for feedback about your current skills and how they fit with the future direction of the organization. Engage your supervisor in discussions about what "next steps" might be good for you. It is now more imperative than ever *not* to wait for your manager to offer to alter your job description, suggest that you upgrade particular skills, or assign you to a new project. It is now *your* job to identify the tasks and the projects and to take initiative in managing your career.

Within your organization, seek projects at the core of the institution. Look for areas of your own career interest that are aligned with the institution's priorities and emerging areas of growth. Notice what is valued by your organization and look for where it intersects with your own interests.

- **Develop effective working relationships.** Work will increasingly be done in teams. If you are in middle management, prepare for more collaborating with direct reports as equals in teams. Your ideas will increasingly be judged for their merit, rather than in status and deference to your position.
- **Network with other people** whose work is related to yours—attend events, professional association meetings, conferences, and training both to learn and to meet people. Conduct information interviews with people in other units, organizations, or fields to find out what they do.

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- **Develop expertise in your field.** Define your career in terms of your chosen field, not only in terms of your specific employer. Read about your area of expertise, talk to others in your field—*stretch yourself* to anticipate the future and place yourself in it. When possible, write and speak about your work and publish in appropriate trade and professional journals. Look for opportunities to be a spokesperson for your employer, in your professional associations, and in your community work.
- **Find mentors.** Relatively new in leadership positions in the workplace, many women do not realize the value of mentoring. While ability and credentials will always serve you well, do not underestimate the power of having the support of a senior person who knows you well. This person may or may not currently work in your organization, but frequently it is someone with whom you have worked before. People who have been mentored often secure more key assignments, promotions, and better salaries during the course of their career. As they acquire experience, they also tend to become mentors themselves.
- **Maintain a "What's next?" perspective.** Individuals who do their best in their current jobs are those who think ahead about how things will be changing. Keep your resume up-to-date and ready to go. Collect materials about yourself—commendations, examples of your work, ideas for projects, and keep them organized so that you are ready to let others know of your qualifications and accomplishments should an opportunity arise.
- **Re-examine your goals.** Regularly re-examine and revisit your life's work and direction. A solid sense of self is more critical than ever in order to take responsibility for managing your own career. It is in doing work that you love, and which offers challenge and meaning that you will be motivated to excel. Regularly check in with a trusted friend or colleague.
- Staying in touch with who you are and what matters most to you is critical to your professional success and fulfillment. With each transition, the self-assessment phase begins anew as you develop new goals, plan for career advancement, or new career directions.