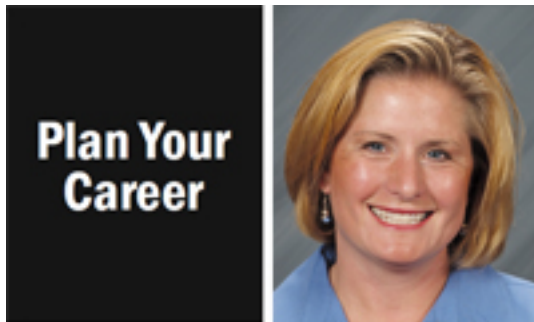


Making a career comeback

Written by Julie Desmond

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By Julie Desmond
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Every survey, article and prediction published lately says 2011 will be better than 2010 for business. This good news means people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits and patience for TV reruns will be returning to work. If you are among them, plan your career comeback to make it a long-term triumph.

First, choose work you know how to do. If you are unemployed, your best chances of getting hired and succeeding on the job will be in work you are familiar with – and good at. It's like riding a bike... there are some things you never forget how to do. Whether your strength is sales, administration, vending machine maintenance or something else, your past success will make you confident and effective from day one.

Figure it out. Even in a familiar position, there will be much to learn. Smart people capitalize on the information available from Google, the company intranet... and the local know-it-all. Smart people also ask questions. Raise your hand and get some answers if you're lost, uncertain or curious. Work is usually a team sport; if you wait until your exit interview to tell someone you need help, you're not going to get any.

Yes, work is a team sport. Support the people around you. You already know you're supposed to say please and thank you. Try smiling, too. Always. Amazing how likeable you become when people think you like them. Along those lines, it helps to fit in when possible. If everyone wears a blue shirt every day, you're going to have to find yourself a few blue shirts.

People rarely lose a job over a mistake, botched project or lost sale. It's the simple things that matter when you are being paid to perform a task. The simplest: show up: On time. Every day.

Sober, sunny and ready to work. Being tardy leads to being unemployed. And your hangover gives other people migraines; spare us the details.

When things go well, with a few months of excellent work behind you, it's tempting to ask for a raise. Resist. Instead, ask for more responsibility. When you reach for a challenge, the rewards will surely follow. Just keep showing up, smiling, and doing your job. This year, you might find that working is a pretty good way to spend your time.

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Send your career planning questions to julie@insightnews.com.