



The secret to career advancement

So, you're keen to advance your career. Perhaps you have been overlooked for promotion or been an unsuccessful candidate for a more senior role at another organization?

It's a frustrating predicament to feel you're ambitious, capable, and ready to take a step up the career ladder only to miss out on the opportunity.

If advancement is what you want, the PIE principle is what you need to drive your process. PIE stands for:

1. Performance

If you're going to be a serious candidate for a more senior role, you need to show you are capable and competent. You need to demonstrate the aptitude and the attitude expected of someone ready for a greater challenge and greater responsibilities. What are the skills and capabilities that you need to have proven? Leadership capability? Analytical thinking? A proven record of delivering results?

Sometimes people miss out on a promotional opportunity complain that they were "the best performer" and feel unfairly treated. That's because, while performance is a prerequisite for advancement, it only represents about 10% of why people are selected for advancement. You've got to have it, but performance alone rarely lands someone the next role.

2. Image

Image contributes about 30% to a person's successful career advancement.

Sometimes described as “personal brand”, a person's image is the perception that others have of them. It is more subjective than performance. It includes:

- ☐ Evaluations of your strengths and weaknesses
- ☐ Perceptions of your values
- ☐ Evaluations of your style and potential fit in a more senior role
- ☐ Your likeability
- ☐ Degree of trust or confidence others have in you

Image is a subjective assessment but something we can influence. Sure, some people spend too much energy managing their image at work. We've all met people who are vacuously obsessed with creating an image for themselves. Often though, the image they ultimately create is just that – shallow or vain aspirants. But most people who desire career advancement don't spend enough time really thinking about the esteem key decisions makers hold them in. They don't evaluate their image and set to ensure they create one that is suitable for the roles they aspire to.

- ☐ Considered too young – demonstrate your maturity. Prove that you can mix, lead, and collaborate with more mature colleagues. Project responsibility.
- ☐ Considered too old – demonstrate vitality. Show the capacity to be flexible. Flex your experience and the wisdom brought through life experience but counter the stereotypes of being inflexible or unable to change that often (unfairly) are attributed to older people.
- ☐ Consider whether your style fits the requirements of more senior roles including your communication style, your social style, that you show the appropriate mix of thought and action.
- ☐ Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses. Look for opportunities to show your strengths and show that you are addressing any areas of weakness you may have.
- ☐ Don't simply ask for development opportunities. Seek them out and show your appetite for growth. These activities may be as simple as setting yourself a reading program to broaden your general business knowledge or actively seeking projects that will broaden your experience.

Some aspects of image are hard to influence. Most of us will recognize that highly attractive people seem to have an unfair advantage in climbing career ladders. But most people fail to take adequate responsibility for the areas of their image that they can control. So, take a good evaluation of yourself, and get to work!

3. Exposure

As important as image is, what really matters is WHO holds that perception of you. It is for this reason, that exposure contributes 60% to your chances of successfully advancing your career. If you are relatively unknown, or known to only a few key decision makers, your opportunities are going to be significantly limited.

Gaining exposure isn't necessarily difficult but requires a quite strategic approach.

- ☐ Getting involved in projects that are visible to influential people.
- ☐ Giving presentations. Some people love presenting and many people hate it. But it is a skill worth investing in. We often attribute people with strong presentation skills with other skills. Presentations are also provide unique opportunities to be noticed by influential people.
- ☐ Networking is a skill that is critical for advancing your career. Proactively getting to know, and becoming known by influential others can open both immediate and future opportunities. People who network well don't operate in a transactional way (ie. meeting with people solely for the purposes of asking to be considered for higher duties) but create sincere encounters where ideas and information are exchanged and trust and relationships are formed.

In applying the PIE principle, never underestimate the role good preparation plays. Fulfilling your ambition requires a plan and an investment of time and energy.

The power of a plan

Remarkably, few people have defined a career plan or aspiration. Equally, remarkably, few people can articulate WHY they want to take steps on the path of career advancement. A smart interviewer will quickly uncover a person's motivation for promotion.

Because of that, it is critical that you can show your self-awareness, and articulate why you want to succeed in a new role. The CLP Survey is a valuable tool in this way, providing insight, feedback, and coaching advice that can help set you apart as a quality candidate.

Additionally, it is critical that you have thought through the implications of stepping up in your career. You need to ensure that you are making a good decision for yourself. And you need to show that you understand and have considered the implications to anyone who may consider hiring you.

Understand the realities of a more senior role.

Most people naively see the external rewards that come with an advancement in their career. A bigger pay check, greater influence, access to more senior people, or a new title.

But equally, it's important to consider the:

- ☐ Greater demands on time and higher scrutiny a new role will bring.
- ☐ Potential loss of tasks and duties that were very fulfilling in previous role.
- ☐ Insecurity and challenge that accompanies the learning process of stepping into a new role.
- ☐ Changes to your social relationships at work as you are required to exercise different responsibilities.

These considerations are important whether you are trying to advance to become a first time supervisor or become a company CEO or president. Many people fail to transition to a new level of responsibility because they struggle to let go of the things that made them successful in previous roles. So being clear that you really want to make the change is vital to long-term success and satisfaction.

Note: The motivation toward career advancement is one of twelve elements we measure in the CLP Survey. Few people have a profile dominated by only one element. It is helpful to understand how other motivations may affect your sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. To learn more, take the survey at: www.CLPSurvey.com