

# from the desk of Tracy Dishman



## New Year's Resolutions for Job Seekers

In addition to losing weight and spending more time with family, many people will promise themselves to improve their professional lives in the coming year. I searched the internet and found that one of the top 10 most popular New Year's resolutions is job-related. But in the busy months that follow, many of these goals are forgotten and never achieved.

Like any resolution, the key is moderation. After you've assessed your career, select one or two goals to achieve. As you check them off, add new ones.

### The following are my "Top Ten New Year's Resolutions for Job Seekers":

#### 1. Explore career options

As the year winds down, reflect on your job by asking yourself these questions: Does my current position take full advantage of my professional abilities and talents? Am I maximizing my earning potential? Am I doing what I'm passionate about? If the answer is an overwhelming "no," assess your work style and personal characteristics and discover a career field that highlights them.

#### 2. Brush up on job skills

On the other hand, if your career suits you, take time to better yourself at what you do. Stand out from other employees by completing the latest training and updating your industry expertise. With an Internet connection, workforce development is at your fingertips. Find options that will increase your skill sets and strengthen your resume.

#### 3. Meet with your boss

Instead of guessing at your strengths and weaknesses, gain the input you need directly from your boss. Schedule a lunch or sit down over coffee to get their opinion on skills that will boost your advancement possibilities. Meeting regularly to review performance will help you re-evaluate goals and set priorities.

#### 4. Set realistic career goals

Identify what you want to accomplish professionally in 2010 and write them down in order of priority. Your goals may include improving current work performance, being promoted to a job that you're qualified for or making a complete career switch. Just make sure each goal is specific and attainable.

#### 5. Establish a plan of action

Think of the required steps you need to take to get your 2010 career goals underway, and put them down on paper. Give yourself deadlines to follow, but keep them realistic. Remember that becoming CEO of a company does not happen overnight.

#### 6. Start preparing now

What are you waiting for? The downtime of the holiday season is a perfect

time for you to get a head start on your career goals. Make a list of career challenges to conquer this week: How's your resume look? Have you talked to the folks on your reference page lately? Still haven't taken the time to learn how to set up formulas in Microsoft Excel? The small steps today will lead to big accomplishments in the New Year.

#### 7. Get organized

Take time in the slow holiday weeks to rearrange your files so they are more organized and efficient. Clean off your desk. Move your files from your hard drive to the network. Put your finished project files in a file cabinet further from your desk. They are resources now for next year and you will have more room in your desk for files that you use daily.

#### 8. Analyze your work day for efficiencies

Practice better time management in the coming year. Are you making your phone calls when people are normally at their desk (8:00 - 9:30), rather than in meetings or at lunch (10:00 - 1:00)? Are you spending too much time on certain activities? I have an "everything to-do" list that I try to keep updated quarterly. Then I have a daily to-do list that I put together first thing every morning...you know, those things that are running through your head on the drive in to work that you know have to get done first? Once those are done, it is easier to focus on the bigger projects.

#### 9. Boost work relationships

Strong relationships with people you work with can develop in small ways. Keep a positive attitude when working with others. Maintaining good relationships with colleagues will not only make the office a place you want to be, but can boost work productivity. You never know who may get promoted and become your next boss.

#### 10. Follow through on actions

Taking control of your career in the New Year will not happen unless you follow through. Visualize your success regularly, don't be afraid to ask for help, and talk about it. I have found over the years that when I set a challenging goal for myself, I tell someone what I'm going to do...in doing so, I've instantly started my support network. Just that small amount of accountability by saying it out loud makes any goal feel real and attainable. Pursue your goals aggressively and resolve not to give up on reaching them.

I've been growing and diversifying my career for more than 20 years and I've noticed that the holiday season is a great time to start thinking about and setting career goals before the rush of the New Year. If you get a head start on your career resolutions now, the New Year will be the year to reach your full potential and take charge of your career.

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