

## YOUR CAREER IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION

Historically, businesses were much more hierarchical than they are today. One reason given for this hierarchy was its usefulness for conveying information from the top of the business down to employees. With the advent of the Internet, information (and misinformation) became more readily available than ever before. Employees do not want to hear filtered information nor do they want their contributions filtered up to the top of the business. Also, time is of the essence; information needs to be conveyed more quickly than ever before. Thus, organizations are much less hierarchical than they have been. How can you, a job applicant or an employee thrive in the age of information?

As an applicant, learn all that you can about your potential employer and the industry you wish to work in. Prepare documentation in the form of blogs, websites, and a Results Oriented And Relevant (ROARing) résumé showing potential employers that you are skilled at interpreting and presenting information in a way that is easy to use. If you are an engineer, writer, or scientist, demonstrate that you understand business as well as

your discipline. Attend conferences, conventions, trade shows and other networking events where potential employers are likely to be. Present your work and emphasize how it would be beneficial to potential employers.

As a junior employee, be prepared to explain your projects and how they contribute to your company's strategy, products, processes, and bottom line. Be prepared to do this for your colleagues as well. Determine the best ways to share this information within your business and do so. Develop a plan to keep yourself current with technologies, processes, and methods. Learn all that you can about the business financials — how to make decisions that will make money and minimize losses. Be sure to keep current. Be a great listener who colleagues and management want to share information with.

As a team lead or manager, if you set developing your people as one of your primary goals, your employees

should be among the most state-of-the-art, productive, and motivated in your industry. Be sure your employees understand how their contributions are critical for your clients, business, and product lines. Make it easy for your employees to have direct communication with your customers. Synthesize the work done by your employees, corporate strategy, and customer requirements into a graphic with textual explanation that can be presented with ease. If your manager does not have this type of presentation for the entire mission, offer to develop it. Demonstrate that you understand profit and loss. Obtain buy in from colleagues along the way so they are favorably presented. Remember, your job as a manager is to help your employees achieve their goals. Avoid the tendency to be the single subject-matter expert with numerous assistants doing assigned tasks for you.

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