

How to Make Things Happen in Career

To build the kind of career that will label you as talent, never stop thinking about how to make things happen, and never let your superiors forget how much you are contributing to their success. You must turn yourself into a certain kind of person. Every day you must ask yourself:

- What am I doing that my boss or his peers or my boss's boss is going to notice?
- What am I doing today that's going to make a difference the next time I'm talking to a hiring manager?

If you can't seem to make anything happen, it might be the company you're working for. But if colleagues at your level are succeeding and you're not, then you are the problem. Do not, however, beat yourself up over this. Be delighted that you've recognized that you've got a problem and that because you're young, you have time to fix it. You are probably making one of these common mistakes:

- Doing or saying the wrong things. For example: if you're in sales, your technique may be incorrect or off. It will help if you become a

better salesperson. This can be learned.

- Interacting with the wrong people. It is difficult to achieve the right goals with the wrong people. Often young managers get stymied because they do not have the right people around them. Sales or marketing people are out there in the field, killing themselves, but nothing is happening because they are talking to the wrong people.



If you think you are working flat out but are still running in place, here are some suggestions for getting things moving:

- **Be Bold.** Ask for things. Ask to talk to people. “I’d like to explain why I should be your next VP of marketing.” Always take the initiative. Do not be afraid to shock people. It’s one way to be recognized, and you will not get your superiors’ attention without trying to do some things differently. A CEO I spoke with from a Fortune 500 company had this to say to me. “Years ago, I was interviewing someone for a job. I had no intention of hiring him; he did not have the kind of background that we were looking for at this stage in the company’s growth; he was also physically unkempt. Frankly, I felt sorry for the guy, and perhaps to assuage my guilt at the end of the interview, I said, “Let me show you around the office.” “That’d be great,” he replied. “I’d like to see where I’m going to sit.” I hired him, and he turned out to be one of the brightest people we ever hired, our first researcher, and a huge asset to the company. He surprised me. It works.
- **Be innovative.** Sponsor things that are new and different in your company. Initiate conferences and meetings
- **Research your organization’s problems.** And then start figuring out how to solve them. One of the primary marks of talent is being a

problem solver. Find out what other successful companies are doing and figuring out how to adapt those ideas to your situation. Companies around the world have benefited from Wal-Mart’s inventory innovations and Motorola’s experiments in quality control. You don’t have to invent the wheel to get credit for getting things rolling in your organization. Import new ideas and information from other companies.

- **Volunteer for tough new projects.** To stand out, you have to be on hand for the significant successes in your organization. To get a reputation as a problem solver, you have to go where the problems are.

The next article will be written on the secrets of a successful career. I’ll give you a hint, we all have them in one form or another, but it’s the way we use them when building a career is the key. Stay tuned for next month's article.

“Fitting in is a short-term strategy, standing out pays off in the long-run.” ~ Seth Godin