

Your Career in the USA: Practical Tips & Suggestions to Make Your Career Work for You

David Lum

Director, Asia/Pacific Product & Support Operations

Networks & Enterprise Business

Motorola, Inc

david.lum@motorola.com

Disclaimer

- All of the information presented in this presentation is strictly the opinion of the author.
- This info is being presented to help you manage your career better, and is intended for educational use only.

**What can I do to
develop my career at
work?**

Define "Success"

- How do you define "success"?
 - Define *what* success means to you; this tells you when you've reached there
 - Don't let others define it for you
 - It will change over time, over experience

Do a Gap Analysis

- Understand your strengths, capabilities and weaknesses
 - Continue to use your strengths to contribute to your work
 - Start working on ways to fix your weaknesses
 - Lack of knowledge = academic education
 - Lack of skill = training or practical experience
 - Lack of experience = find opportunity to work
 - Lack of trait = change habit or value system

Get feedback

- Supervisor
 - Most important source!
- Customers (internal and external)
 - 2nd most important source
- Peers (not necessarily in your group)
 - Great source for some honest opinions
- Friends
 - Least reliable, but possible for epiphany
 - Ask for “improvement” feedback

Other Sources of Feedback

- Surveys, assessments, tests
 - Understand the limits of these
 - Great for insights on certain aspects of you
- Groups: seminar, class, event
 - Great for self-confidence
 - Immediate, timely and relevant
- Indirect: What do others say about you?
- Competition
 - Are they jealous? Do they fight back?
- What is not said should also be noted

Understand what is expected of you

- Understand what your job duties and responsibilities are
- Understand the behaviors necessary for success (current and next step)
 - Behaviors are observable, attitudes & values are not
 - Behaviors should be measured in degrees (rare, medium and over-done)
- Understand the deliverables
 - Including the “unstated” deliverables (expectations)

Results, not effort, count

- In the US, it is **RESULTS** that count, not how much work effort you put in
- The **impact** of those results is what truly differentiates you from the next guy, not the result itself
 - Impact of results is best measured by others and your boss, not you
 - The wider the impact, the better for you
 - Impact can be measured in degrees

Network with your associates

- Socialize with your co-workers
 - Have lunch/breaks with them
 - Join company-sponsored functions (hobby clubs, sports, etc)
- Accept the internal “community service” activities
 - Special projects or events
 - Great for visibility and learning
- Develops your social skills

Associate with Successful People

- Hang around “winners”
 - Feel their enthusiasm and zest
 - See what makes them tick
 - Understand how they think & decide
 - Watch their behaviors
 - Sense their attitudes
 - LEARN from them!
- You cannot grow and learn unless you are around people more experienced than you

Knowing how to lead is different than actually leading

- Many Asians are too comfortable with learning academic theory about leadership and management
- Learning from MBA school is no substitute for **experience and practice**
- Get out there and **DO!**
- **Doing** is what will make you a leader!
- Leading requires you to “**take** the lead role”
 - Don't expect to be given the lead role unless you already qualify to be given that role

Be One in a Million, not One of a Million

- Unless you are recognized as THE expert in your field, think of yourself as a “commodity”
 - **We are all replaceable!**
 - If you agree, then what will you do tomorrow that will make you irreplaceable or special? How will you add value to your company? How do you make yourself more unique?
 - Opportunities come to those who are unique or can bring unique solutions to current problems

Find a Mentor, not a Sponsor

- Mentor is someone who will give you information about culture, insights, honest feedback, advice, etc.
 - Pro: Great personal learning
 - Con: Lack of political support
- Sponsor is someone who will provide political support and extra influence
 - It's okay to have a sponsor, but understand and accept the risks if this is what you wish to do

Find a Mentor, not a Sponsor

- Use the company mentorship program
- Find a mentor who “has chemistry” with you
 - Deepens and lengthens the relationship
 - Can be younger than you!
 - Pick one close to your level, not highest
 - Mentor must also have the time available
- Protect this relationship at all costs!
 - Don’t screw your mentor!
 - Your own good reputation and high integrity will protect the relationship
 - The higher up the mentor, the greater the credibility and integrity YOU must have

Find a Mentor, not a Sponsor

- Don't pressure someone to be your mentor
 - Needs to be a natural and desired relationship based on trust and mutual need
 - You don't even need to ask "Can you be my mentor?" if they already behave that way
 - Formality can scare mentor away
- Build your career on your own credible and real achievements, not on someone else's career and reputation
 - Short-term gain for long-term pain, or short-term pain for long-term gain?
 - Trading quick advancement for lack of experience

How are you perceived?

- 1st impressions DO count
- Your own self-perception counts very little
- How are you perceived by others?
 - Physical: Appearance, eye contact, confidence
 - Character: Integrity, role-model, persona
 - Professionalism: On-the-job, charisma, under pressure, choice of words, attitude
 - Organization: Time, tasks, workspace, mental
 - Interaction: Ability to handle people, verbal and written communications skill, network
 - Business: Motivation, leadership, decision-making, objectivity, results!

Once a month...

- Once per month, write down all of your accomplishments that contributed to the business: What did you do that the company see as value-add?
- 1-2 hours per month devote to career management or skill development
 - Update resume, send out resume
 - Thinking about yourself, self-assessments
 - Think about long-term career plans/goals
 - Take a class that helps you or your career

Key Message for Work

- Always **focus on doing your best at your current job**
 - Be the smartest; be the best learner
 - Be the most productive, highest quality deliverer
 - *Target to be your boss's right-hand/2nd in command*
 - *Be the "role model"; be the person that everyone else wants to be like, or that mgmt wants the rest of the team members to be like*
 - *Be a team player; focus on the team's performance, harmony and delivery, even if you disagree*
 - *Do more than expected – show you have behaviors & attitudes of the next level*
- Management does observe for the best performers in the group & will promote

**What can I do to
develop myself outside
of work?**

***Get out of your comfort zone!
Enhance your value system!***

Quick Tips & Lessons Learned

- **Volunteer** your time in Community activities; take a leadership role
 - Besides making you feel good, it looks good on your résumé; good visibility
 - Develops social & leadership skills
 - Focuses on developing your influence skills
 - Develops your people & networking skills
 - Promotes sense of civic duty
 - Helps to shape your value system, giving you new attitudes and behaviors

Quick Tips & Lessons Learned

- Leadership role in a volunteer organization
 - Start small, no need to take the top jobs
 - Learn the small jobs first – there are plenty of learning opportunities at this level to learn & exercise your people skills
 - Tackle higher positions once you feel confident and competent
- Always try to give more than you receive
 - More will come back to you that cannot be measured monetarily

Networking & Leadership Opportunities

- Asian Associations/Organizations
 - National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)
 - Professional development, leadership development
 - Organization of Chinese-Americans (OCA)
 - Civil rights advocacy, political
- Religious Institutions/Organizations
- Community-based Organizations
- Sports Organizations
- Humanitarian Organizations
- Company Affinity Group
- Educational Institutions

Quick Tips & Lessons Learned

- Join Toastmasters to develop communication & leadership skills
 - **HIGHLY recommended for all Asians** to overcome fear of speaking publicly
 - Gives you greater self-confidence and self-esteem, a key need for many Asians
 - Will enhance your value system
 - <http://www.toastmasters.org/>
 - Important to shop for the right club

Resetting Your Expectations

- **Don't expect immediate results!**
 - You are catching up by adding new experiences to your value system
 - You are trying to do now in a few years what your kids in the US have been doing since grade school
 - It will take time to learn

My Personal Challenge to You

- My tips & suggestions are easy to share and talk about, but **VERY DIFFICULT** to start and complete
 - They go against the Asian value system
 - Sadly, most of you will quit, some won't start
 - I'll be happy if anyone completes 1-2 items
- Learning these new behaviors and skills will help your career (and your personal life)!
 - It doesn't mean that you give up being Asian, but it can make you a better person!

For Your Info...

- This presentation is a very small part of an 8 hr seminar
- 2007 plans in the works for delivering entire 8 hr presentation to all Asians in Chicagoland via NAAAP
- Watch out for this on NAAAP website (<http://www.naaapchicago.org/>) or through your friends

Additional Resources

- **Keys to Success: 17 Principles to Personal Achievement** by Napoleon Hill
- **Leadership Passages: The Personal and Professional Transitions That Make or Break a Leader** by David Dotlich, James Noel, and Norman Walker
- **The 5 Patterns of Extraordinary Careers** by James Citrin and Richard Smith
- **7 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey
- **First Things First** by Stephen Covey
- **Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling** by Jane Hyun
- **Developing the Leader Within You** by John C. Maxwell
- **Your Road to Success** by John C. Maxwell

*Thank you for
your time and attention!*

Best wishes on your career!