

# *Life Skills for Success*

## *Career Management Skills*

### Instructor's Guide

#### **Overview**

The average American changes jobs twelve times over the course of their working life, and among those many changes are bound to be a career makeover or two. But while the job title may change, one goal should remain constant: the desire to succeed. To that end, it is important to cultivate the skills that employees value most—especially the transferable skills that are harder to train but will continue to be useful throughout one's working life.

Ongoing career success requires more than just success on the job, however; it also requires a proactive approach to career management that includes documenting your achievements, networking for new opportunities, and continually improving your skills through education and training.

This video provides an overview of the skills and traits that will help participants advance in their careers as well as key strategies for managing those careers. By the end of the video, viewers should have a better idea of the steps they need to take to get ahead at work and to find new career opportunities.

**Note:** This video is focused on career management for the currently employed. However, much of the material—such as the information on soft skills, networking, and portfolios—will still be useful to individuals currently looking for employment.

#### **Presentation Suggestions**

Since much of career management involves setting goals and taking steps to realize them, begin by asking participants where they see themselves, career-wise, in five years, ten years, twenty. Have them write their answers down, if you like. Then ask them to pick one of those goals and to visualize the steps required to reach it. What will they have to do at their current job in order to get there? Who will they have to impress? Will they need additional education and training? What other obstacles stand in their way?

Alternatively (or additionally), you may ask your students to complete the *Life Skills Inventory* (available from JIST Career Solutions), focusing on the career segment, in conjunction with considering the previous questions.

When you feel participants have a clear career goal in mind, tell them that reaching that goal is their responsibility. Raises and promotions and new opportunities may not simply

be handed to them. They must be proactive in managing their careers.

When you feel participants are ready to think about *how* to do that and reach their goals, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the **video**. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video. If you wish, allow students to do this section-by-section whenever the video suggests a pause.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information in the video. Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group.

Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

## Anticipation Quiz

**Directions:** Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. List three transferable skills that employers desire most in their employees.
2. Give an example of taking initiative at work.
3. What should you do if you disagree with your supervisor?
4. What kinds of documents might go into a career portfolio?
5. What is a mentor?

## Answer Key

1. Answers will vary but might include: dependability, teamwork, problem-solving, communication skills, leadership skills, and taking initiative.
2. Answers may vary but might include: volunteering for projects, making suggestions for improvements, and working extra hours to finish a task.
3. Treat your supervisor with respect. Calmly state your opinion, but be willing to make the changes your supervisor requests.
4. Answers may vary but might include: career goals, resume, transcripts, degrees, licenses, certifications, awards, work samples, reports, customer feedback, recommendations.

5. A mentor is someone, usually in your field or industry, who shares her advanced knowledge and helps you to develop and achieve your career goals.

## Activities

### Activity #1

Title: The Art of Teamwork

Format: Groups of three

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Pen and paper, simple drawings, blindfolds

Procedure:

1. The most recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers ranked teamwork as the skill most valued in new employees. This exercise will test participants' teamwork skills, as well as their communication skills.
2. For this activity you will need a relatively simple drawing (such as jack-o-lantern or a house with doors and windows and a chimney) that you can give to each group. Break into groups of three and assign each member of the group a role: Artist. Describer. Positioner.
3. The Artist puts on the blindfold and is instructed to draw a picture that is then given to the other two without having seen it.
4. The Describer is responsible for telling the Artist what to draw, but they can only describe it in terms of shapes and sizes (i.e., draw a small circle and another small circle next to it," or "draw two squiggly lines"). They are not allowed to describe the image.
5. The Positioner is not allowed to say anything, but after each instruction given by the Describer, they can move the Artist's hand to a new position on the paper.
6. After a certain amount of time (depending on the complexity of the picture), tell the groups to stop. The Artists remove their blindfolds and look at their creations. If you'd like, have an "Art Show" and give an award to the group that got closest to replicating the drawing.
7. Come together as a group and discuss what characteristics make for a good team.

### Activity #2

Title: Promoting Yourself

Format: Individual/Pairs

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Paper and pen

Procedure:

1. Many jobs come with performance reviews, and those reviews often, but not always, come with raises and the possibility of promotion. Managing your career is your responsibility, however, and there may come a time when you have to approach your supervisor directly about the possibility of a raise and/or promotion. Tell students that they have a meeting coming up with the supervisor and that this is their chance to ask for a raise (they should imagine themselves at their current or most recent job). Before this “meeting,” instruct participants to write down the reasons they feel they deserve the bump in pay, following the guidelines set out in the video. In other words, they need to gather evidence of their accomplishments and contributions to the company.
2. Now in pairs, role-play this meeting, having participants take turns being the employee and supervisor and allowing the employee to make his case. This gives participants practice in verbalizing their skills and achievements—a useful skill for career management. When everyone has had a turn, come back together as a whole group and discuss what seemed to work and what didn’t. If you’d like you can finish by playing the role of employee yourself.

## Discussion Questions

1. Imagine you are the boss of a small company: What skills would you value most when hiring a new employee? Why? Alternatively, what kinds of behaviors and actions would you look for when deciding whom to promote? Explain your answer.
2. Assuming you had to go home and put together a career portfolio today, what would you put in it? What kinds of evidence can you gather that showcases your success on the job?

## Quick Quiz

**Note:** You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, write or project responses for the group to see.

1. The skills most valued by employers tend to be \_\_\_\_\_ skills.
  - A) job-specific
  - B) technical
  - C) transferable
  - D) computer
  
2. Which of these is *not* an example of being dependable at work?
  - A) following directions
  - B) handling personal business at work
  - C) arriving on time
  - D) owning up to your mistakes
  
3. Good teams tend to
  - A) set clear goals and expectations.
  - B) keep criticism constructive.
  - C) encourage creativity and diversity.
  - D) all of these.
  
4. The process of continually upgrading your knowledge and skills through educational opportunities is known as
  - A) lifelong learning.
  - B) mentoring.
  - C) taking initiative.

- D) career management.
5. The best way to find new career opportunities is through
- A) searching for openings on the internet.
  - B) networking.
  - C) visiting your local employment office.
  - D) none of these.
6. Often the first step in successful career management is
- A) putting together a portfolio.
  - B) finding a mentor.
  - C) setting goals.
  - D) asking for a raise.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ is an employment-oriented social networking site geared towards sharing information between professionals and businesses.
- A) Pinterest
  - B) Facebook
  - C) Twitter
  - D) LinkedIn
8. True or False: It is important to get involved in office politics and gossip so that you always know where you stand.
- A) True
  - B) False

## Answer Key

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|------|------|
| 1. C | 5. B |
| 2. B | 6. C |
| 3. D | 7. D |
| 4. A | 8. B |

## Homework Option

The video stresses the need for continuing education, both as a lifelong goal and as a means toward advancing in your career. Continuing education can take many forms: college classes (in person or online), seminars, conferences, and workshops. Assign each participant the task of researching one potential postsecondary educational opportunity they would be interested in and gathering information on it that they could present to the group. This information should include not only a description of the course or event, but also the costs (in time and money) and the perceived benefit to the participants. In other words, how do they think this will help them advance in their career.

In most cases these should be educational opportunities focused on enhancing participants' skills in their current field. However, those interested in a possible career change should explore options in other fields as well.

## References

The following sources have been referenced in creating the *Life Skills: Career Management Skills* video. Instructors may choose to use this resource for research purposes or extend it to students for additional and/or advanced reading.

“45 Pieces of Career Advice That Will Get You to the Top,” *The Muse*; article accessed December 2017: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/45-pieces-of-career-advice-that-will-get-you-to-the-top>.

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“How Can a Mentor Help Your Career?” Dawn McKay; *The Balance*, 2018, accessed February 2018: <https://www.thebalance.com/how-can-a-mentor-benefit-your-career-526243>.

“How Often Do People Change Jobs?” Alison Doyle, *The Balance*, 2018, accessed January 2018: <https://www.thebalance.com/how-often-do-people-change-jobs-2060467>.

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