Climbing The Corporate Ladder:
Strategies to Move Ahead During Tough Times

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Today’s Agenda

• Review the market and our employment environment
• Emerging hiring/employment trends
• Ways to move ahead and capture tomorrow’s opportunities
Ongoing Career Mantra 2009

Change is mandatory;

Progress is optional.
Evolution Never Stops

- Manufacturers of products
  - Failures, mergers, globalization, joint ventures, start-ups
- Distribution systems
- New products
  - New issues, societal demands, tort reform
- Technology
How Do Most of Us Advance in Our Careers?

Hit-or-miss!
Insurance industry labor market is expected to grow at 7.4 percent.

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<th>Industry Job Growth: 2006-16</th>
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<td>Total U.S. Employment</td>
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<td>Management/Business/Finance</td>
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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics
• The first boomers turned 60 in 2007.
• The average age of an insurance professional is 54.
• One-third of the nation’s population is included in the baby boomer generation.
• 43 percent of the labor force will be eligible for retirement within the next 10 years.
Changing Workforce

- Traditionalists – 5%
  1900-1945
- Millennials – 10%
  1977-1995
- GenXers – 40%
  1964-1976
- Baby Boomers – 45%
  1946-1964
- Traditionalists – 5%
  1900-1945
When millennials graduate college, millennials and boomers will comprise a majority of the workforce.

“Boomers, know this: You are outnumbered. There are 78.5 million of you, according to Census Bureau figures and 79.8 million members of Gen Y.”

~ Fortune, May 2007
The Situation

Continued industry job growth

+ Mass exodus of baby boomers

+ Less skilled industry workers

Shortage of talent
Most Difficult Disciplines to Recruit

Source: The Jacobson Group, 2008 Industry Hiring Outlook Survey
• Realities brought about by economic downturn and sub-prime meltdown
• Lack of qualified/skilled candidates; high demand for candidates
• Age of qualified talent pool/mass retirement
• Lack of interest in industry
• Competition for candidates = increased salaries
• Decrease in company loyalty
• Onboarding/training

Source: The Jacobson Group, 2008 Industry Hiring Outlook Survey
**What Is Important?**

**Great Company**
- Values and culture
- Well-managed
- Exciting challenges
- Strong performance
- Industry leader
- Talented employees
- Strong development
- Inspiring mission
- Fun
- Job security

**Great Jobs**
- Freedom and autonomy
- Exciting challenges
- Career advancement and growth
- Fit with admirable boss

**Compensation & Lifestyle**
- Differentiated compensation
- High total compensation
- Geographic location
- Respect for lifestyle
- Acceptable pace and stress

*Source: McKinsey Quarterly*
Corporate America’s Challenges

- Company factors (reputation, stability, leadership)
- Location (cost of living, commute)
- Compensation/benefits (flex schedules, telecommuting options, career pathing/advancement)
- Work/life balance
- Generational expectations
Top Recruiting Trends

- Increased compensation and starting bonuses to attract top candidates
- Pursuit of passive job seekers
- Hire for fit, train for skill
- Formal employee retention and engagement strategies
- Reliance on recruiters
- “Recruitment culture”
- Hiring from within
- Strategic succession and leadership development planning
Training Trends

• New learning vehicles
  – Cross-training
  – Planned career rotations
  – Stretched work roles
  – Subject Matter Experts
  – Individual career building: coaching, shadowing and mentoring
  – Personal executive coaches: skills, development, performance
Changing Career Landscape

- Career security vs. job security
- No more job for life
- Strategic contribution vs. tactical production
- Required soft skills vs. hard skills
- Work life vs. personal life
What Are Companies Looking For?
Climbing the Career Ladder

- It is not what it used to be — or is it?
- It can be a struggle; but with preparation and planning, you can beat out the competition.
- Today, the average person makes between five and ten job changes in his/her career.
Where Does This Leave You?

How to move ahead and capture tomorrow’s opportunities:

• Manage what you can manage; learn how to deal with the rest.
• Continually learn.
• Be self-aware.
• Proactively manage yourself and your career.
Manage What You Can Manage:
RAA, RAA!

Join the corporate pep club!

- Resiliency
- Agility
- Attitude
Manage What You Can Manage:
Need For Personal Resilience

re·sil·i·ence  
Pronunciation: ri-'zil-y&n(t)s  
Function: noun  
1: the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress  
2: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change
Manage What You Can Manage

• Resilience is critical.
• You must possess it to survive in a leadership role.
• It is becoming more important than technical knowledge in this ever-changing industry.
Manage What You Can Manage: Develop Personal Resilience

- Learn from those who are naturally resilient.
- Learn from your own experience.
- Understand yourself.
- Know the territory.
- Connect to those who can help.
- Take care of yourself.
Manage What You Can Manage:
Demonstrate Agility

• Be focused.
  – Proactively seek information.
  – Understand what you can control and impact.
  – Seek out those who can help.
  – Plan tasks and projects in detail to implement change.
  – Ask questions to clarify priorities, objectives and timelines.
- Be flexible.
  - Adapt to fit changing business demands.
  - Take appropriate risks and accomplish tasks.
  - Continually update skills.
  - Operate in an environment where structure is not always present.
  - Propose innovative solutions.
Manage What You Can Manage: Demonstrate Agility

- Be facilitative.
  - Assist those who are struggling with change.
  - Help others maintain a positive attitude.
  - Collaborate to accomplish goals.
  - Focus on benefits of change — for self and organization.
  - Make suggestions to improve outdated processes and systems.
Manage What You Can Manage: Demonstrate Agility

- Be fast.
  - Strive to maintain momentum and move forward.
  - Gather information efficiently to make timely decisions.
  - Promptly inform those impacted by the change.
  - Generate ideas to remove obstacles.
  - Proactively seek needed tools and resources.
Manage What You Can Manage: 
Attitude Determines Altitude

• Live in the now.
• Don’t be weighed down by past failures or successes.
• Embrace the day.
• Give thanks.
• Utilize your talents.
• Be your own destiny.
Manage What You Can Manage: Make it Stick!

- Encourage yourself.
  - Avoid “I’ll try” or “I hope to.”
  - Use “I will.”

- Engage in optimistic behaviors.
  - Each day identify three achievements, personal or business-related.
  - Determine why it was an achievement and how you can make further progress.
Manage What You Can Manage: Overcome Obstacles

- Stop blaming.
  - Blaming costs organizations millions in productivity, customer service and job satisfaction each year.
  - Blaming suffocates creativity and teamwork.
  - Blaming keeps employees from taking risks.
Manage What You Can Manage:

Overcome Obstacles

• Stop asking the wrong questions.
  – Why do we have to make changes?
  – When will someone train me?
  – Why is so-and-so making so many mistakes?

• Begin asking better questions.
  – What is the problem?
  – How can we fix the problem and avoid it in the future?
Manage What You Can Manage: Overcome Obstacles

- Create, instead of complain.
  - Utilize your sense of vision to create goals.
  - Identify obstacles between you and the achievement of your goals.
  - Transform obstacles into solutions.
Activity

Understanding/Managing Change
The past is history; your future is still to be written!
Manage What You Can Manage:
Manage Your Brand

Your brand should:

– Distinguish you from others.

– Make others aware of your character, strengths and personality.

– Become the message that is conjured up when someone thinks of you.

– Influence the decisions, attitudes and actions of others.

– Increase confidence, presence and visibility.
Manage What You Can Manage:
Personal Brand

- Know yourself.
- Express yourself.
- Know your competition.
- Know your target.
- Give your brand context.
- Evaluate and evolve.
- Recruit a band of “brand cheerleaders.”
Manage What You Can Manage:
Personal Integrity

- Deemed one of the most important traits in today’s business world
- May be impossible to recover if you step over the line
- Value of a “personal integrity statement”
Activity

Personal Integrity Statement
Continual Learning

- Breadth versus depth
- Mixture of staff and line
- Ability to transition into new roles
- Challenging assignments outside of “comfort zone”
- Failures and successes
- Gaining new skills — not overusing old ones
- Ongoing education
- Know the business
Continual Learning: The Course To Success

Job 1
Job 2
Job 3
Job 4
Job 5
Job 6
Job 7
Job 8

Job 1a → Job 1b → Job 1c → Job 1d

JACOBSON
Continual Learning:
Key Core Competencies

• Leadership
• Analytical Ability
• Technical Ability
• Communication
• Business Knowledge
• Strategic Thinking
Continual Learning: Consider Mentoring Relationships

- Connect with leaders who are not your managers.
- Gain further insight on what it takes to be a leader, thrive in the position/industry.
- Gain additional company perspectives.
- Obtain guidance and suggestions.
- Reverse the roles and learn something new.
- Build relationships and networks.
Continual Learning:  
Mentoring Considerations

- What is your goal in a mentorship?
- Is there a formal program or do you need to create your own?
- Who do you know and respect that can provide you with critical information and honest feedback?
- How will you structure the relationship?
- What structure will you put in place to make it happen?
- How do you know when there is no longer value in the activity?
Continual Learning:
What Mentoring is *Not*

- Formalized coaching
- A remedial program
- A way to manage performance
- A way for mentees to get promoted
Continual Learning: 
What Makes a Good Mentor?

- Professional standing and experience
- Professional competence and skills
- Commitment to mentoring
- Use of active listening, reflecting and summarizing
- Respecting mentee’s right to decide actions
- Sharing personal insights and experiences
- Providing feedback
- Use of business anecdotes to illustrate concepts
Continual Learning: What Makes a Good Mentee?

- Seeks information; asks questions
- Is open to being mentored
- Strives to deliver his or her best at all times
- Accepts critiques graciously
- Learns from mistakes
- Accepts responsibilities
- Possesses the courage to try new things
- Is open and honest
- Is respectful and gracious
- Listens, watches, learns, grows
Continual Learning: Roles/Responsibilities of a Mentor

• Be committed.
• Advise and instruct without interfering.
• Offer different and impartial perspectives.
• Remain non-judgmental.
• Share own experiences.
• Act as a sounding board.
• Provide advice, but do not tell a mentee what to do.
• Act as a friend or colleague when mentee has a need.
Continual Learning:
Roles/Responsibilities of a Mentee

- Commit to the process.
- Drive the relationship.
- Manage the process to ensure own needs are met.
- Request and arrange meetings with mentor.
- Be open to receiving feedback and advice.
- Do not expect mentor to solve problems for you.
Continual Learning: Choosing Your Mentor

- Do you respect this individual and is he/she someone that you believe can help you?
- Will he or she commit the time to meet with you and open doors for you?
- Does the individual have an “approachable” personality and demeanor?
- Is there chemistry?
- Do you both have the same expectations?
Continual Learning: Scheduling Your Sessions

- Meetings should be planned in advance, with specific times and agendas.
- Choose a place where you will be comfortable and not interrupted.
- Before you leave the current meeting, schedule your next.
- More informal meetings should occur when the mentee has issues/concerns about specific plans or on day-to-day practices.
Continual Learning:  
Ground Rules and First Meeting

- Establish rapport.
- Discuss specific mentee and mentor goals.
- Set expectations.
- Determine how to handle contact between meetings.
- Obtain agreement around confidentiality.
- Determine possible dates/places for future meetings.
“Invisibility is Worse than Failure.”

- Keith Ferrazzi, author, Never Eat Alone
Continual Learning: Why Network?

- Stay current on what is happening in the business world.
- Learn the organization’s needs.
- Determine if your transferable skills are a fit for other positions.
- Create your own new position.
- Be seen as a mover and a shaker.
- Set yourself apart.
Continual Learning: Network

**Passive Networking:** what you are already doing each and every day at meetings, in the lunchroom, in the hallway

**VS.**

**Active Networking:** when you go out of your way to set up meetings to meet with leaders to learn more about your organization - proves you are interested and motivated
Networking is not complicated...

– Observe.
– Ask questions.
– Listen well.
– Accurately articulate who you are.

…it just takes focus and action!
Continual Learning: Who Do You Network With?

- People you know inside of your organization — your boss, co-workers and clients
- People you know inside other organizations that you admire
- Individuals that are members of target professional organizations
- Anyone else that can provide you with fresh points of view and ideas
Continual Learning: How Do You Meet Them?

- **Personal Introductions**
  - In person
  - On voicemail
  - On the phone

- **Pre-Letters**
  - People you know
  - People you’ve been introduced to
  - People you don’t know

- **Direct Phone Conversations**
Continual Learning: Be Prepared For Active Networking

- Develop questions and scripts.
- Know what to ask.
- Ask questions that will provide answers that lead you closer to your goals.
Continual Learning: Networking Meetings With Impact

- Face-to-face meetings are better than on the phone.
- Treat them like a business meeting — begin and end on time.
- Give your meetings purpose and structure.
  - Build rapport.
  - State your purpose.
  - Present the situation.
  - Ask questions.
Continual Learning: Successfully Conduct Your Meeting

- Ask for referrals/introductions.
- Write thank-you notes.
- Update your records.
Continual Learning: Get Started Now!

- Overcome your networking phobias.
- Make it a part of your routine.
- Be organized.
- Make commitments in advance to attend events or functions.
- Stop procrastinating!
Continual Learning: Create a 30-Second Introduction

- Script your 30-Second Introduction.
- Tailor it for every audience you may encounter.
- Have you prepared an introduction for yourself that leaves your contact with the right message?
Activity

Create Your 30-Second Commercial
Be Self Aware:
Know Yourself

- What are you good at?
- What are your passions?
- What do you hate?
- What have you actually accomplished?
- What are your personal considerations at this time?
Be Self Aware:  
Is Your Job in Danger?

- Are you losing credibility?
- Are you no longer in the loop?
- Is your every move being scrutinized?
- Are you and your boss not seeing eye-to-eye?
- Does praise turn into criticism?
- Are responsibilities being taken away?
Be Self Aware: Align Yourself with a Position/Company that Matches Your Goals

- Is your current role/company a good fit?
- Is it time to move on?
- Are you “done with it?”
- Are there other roles inside the company that are more appropriate for you?
- Are you in sync with the company philosophy and approach?
- Do you utilize your strengths and passions?
- Is your position/company toxic?
Actively Manage Your Career
Be Self Aware: Know Yourself

- What are you good at?
- What are your passions?
- What do you hate?
- What have you actually accomplished?
- What are your personal considerations at this point in time?
Actively Manage Your Career: Personal Inventory

- Activities/skills you like/dislike
- Personal priorities
- Dreams
- Ideal work environments
- Ideal geographic locations
Activity

Skill Review
Actively Manage Your Career: Establishing Direction

- Use the knowledge gained in your personal inventory to find the match.
- Research your options and establish your path.
- Continually update your direction.
Actively Manage Your Career: Active Search

- Always have a resume ready.
- Be prepared to “interview” on the spot.
- Conduct informal job searches.
- Schedule regular check-ups.
  - Monthly
  - Annually
Actively Manage Your Career:
Establish Personal Career Goals

• Make them SMART.
  – **S**pecific
  – **M**easurable goals
  – **A**chievable
  – **R**ealistic
  – **T**imely

• Support with well thought-out action plans.
Activity

Creating Written Goals and Action Plans
Actively Manage Your Career: Monthly Checklist

- Re-evaluate your goals.
  - Have you accomplished any goals since last month? If so, check them off your list and add a new goal in its place.
  - Have any of your goals changed due to new requirements or developments in your field?
  - Has anything happened at work or in your personal life that may cause you to rethink your career direction?
Actively Manage Your Career: Monthly Checklist

• Add new accomplishments to your success stories journal.
  – Writing down your achievements will allow you to describe them in more detail.
  – This record will jog your memory before an interview, allowing you to more clearly demonstrate how you can add value.
Actively Manage Your Career: Monthly Checklist

• Review your networking list.
  – Have you made new contacts since last month?
  – Did a contact share some interesting news with you?
  – Is there anyone on your networking list that you haven’t had contact with in the past 90 days?
  – Be cautious when networking with clients and peers. Establish yourself as a talented individual, not a job-seeker.
Actively Manage Your Career: Monthly Checklist

• Update your resume.
  – Have your current job responsibilities broadened?
  – Have you attended a new class or seminar?
  – Have you received an honor or award?
  – Have you joined a new association or group?
Actively Manage Your Career: Monthly Checklist

• Conduct a quick job search.
  – Scan the help-wanted ads to get a complete picture of the marketplace and the current salary for your role.
  – Visit your ideal organization’s website and review their job ads.
  – Is there a new reason to set up some networking meetings?
Actively Manage Your Career: Annual Checklist

- Do a full-fledged personal assessment.
- Realign personal goals as appropriate.
So, How do You Climb the Corporate Ladder?

✓ Identify, accept and embrace the changes that are occurring around you.

✓ Learn new skills and approaches.

✓ Understand who you really are and recognize what you bring to the table.

✓ Proactively manage your career and your life to create your story — not someone else’s!