



**PHASE FIVE:
PROPEL YOUR CAREER FORWARD**

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OVERVIEW

Energetically implement your plan, step by step. Fully engage in courses, trainings, and discussions around competency gaps. Assertively develop relationships with champions who can help you accomplish your goals. And strategically build internal as well as external support for your initiatives. Walk briskly down your path. Reassess regularly, and recalibrate whenever appropriate.

Step One: Work Your Action Plan to Overcome Deficiencies

Now that you are clear on your goals and have developed a plan of action - work it, and stay true to your vision.

Step Two: Broaden Your Network of Support

Consider engaging your manager in supporting you toward your next step. His or her buy-in can be powerfully helpful in giving you time, support, direction, contacts and entrees, if appropriate. Indeed, your manager's responsibility is, in part, to assist you in growing your career. Although he/she may at first be threatened by the thought of losing you or even competing with you, you can alleviate concerns by promising to reflect well on your relationship, his/her mentoring, support, etc. Try to establish an ongoing discussion with your manager regarding your goal(s), meeting at preset times to update and amend together. Ask for his/her participation in turning your next step into a reality, making sure to share credit as appropriate. But even if this backing is not available in your situation, do engage your supporters and your larger network in helping you to make this transition work. While you do need to be aware of internal politics, your network, appropriately accessed, is your very best resource. You may set a goal of contacting a certain number of people per week, letting them know of your aspirations and asking for their counsel, their support, and even their advocacy. Always ask your contacts who you should talk to next. Always leave a conversation with another name...always.

Step Three: Manage Your Professional Reputation

Managing your professional reputation, while always important, is particularly critical as you position yourself for advancing within the organization. You will need support at many levels, especially the highest ones. Promote yourself thoughtfully wherever possible so that key people know who you are and are aware of your accomplishments. More than ever, consider putting yourself out there by writing for an internal (or external) publication, speaking to a special interest group, volunteering with a non-profit whose board members interface with top management at your company or attending meetings where you know your ideas will be welcome. Initiate conversations with colleagues about shared interests regarding your company. Stay positive - focused on contributing to your own as well as your company's mutual success. Take advantage of all opportunities to inform others about your interests and your contributions. It sounds like work and it is, but it can also be lots of fun.

Step Four: Develop Strong Supporting Documents

As you position yourself for your next step, you may need to refer to documents that support your story. Make certain that you have on hand 1) an Action Plan that reflects your goal(s) and your progress toward it, 2) a strong Positioning Script, 3) a current accomplishment-based resume, 4) a list of references - people who would, if asked, recommend you for this next step and 5) a portfolio of support materials if appropriate to your field, (even perhaps a web page.)

Step Five: Walk Briskly Toward Your Goal

Action is required. Careful assessment and thoughtful collaboration with your manager and supporters has brought you this far. Now working your plan in a disciplined way will get you where you want to go. There is no substitute for the rigor of taking action every day toward your goal, checking off your Action Plan items, reassessing and creating new action steps within the timeframe you have specified. Making yourself accountable for accomplishing your action steps gives you a level of accountability that leads inevitably toward faster success. When a good idea begins to gather steam, the universe cooperates.

Step Six: Evaluate, Reassess and Adjust Goal(s)

Although you have set out on a course of action with careful planning and good intentions, you are not required to continue on that trajectory if it proves dissatisfying or otherwise unproductive...the company changes course. Your personal life gets more complicated. The joy you thought you would experience just is not there. Things happen. Smart people change courses when evidence weighs in favor of doing so, always tacking toward engaging their strengths to benefit their environment. Resilience requires regrouping as things change inside your world or outside in the business environment. Re-visit your plan regularly, figuring in new information. Revise your plan accordingly. This process will serve you again and again.