

Career Rx

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Career Resilience

Career Resilience! What exactly is career resilience? The term resilience is defined as an ability to recover from or adjust easily to change. How does this apply to careers? Today, many of us will have multiple careers during our life. We will need to be in a constant learning mode to keep up with new technologies and demands of both, the local and global marketplaces. As we live in a sensory rich environment – IM, cell phones and the internet at our fingertips, we have grown accustomed to instant gratification. We need to learn how to manage the constant sensory input invading our lives. We also need to manage the expectations of those around us and more importantly, ourselves.

With all of the information available, we can easily experience sensory overload where we remain in a constant reactive state. Being reactive inhibits our ability to plan ahead and impacts our longer term vision. Taking time to integrate new ideas, data and possibilities enables us to reflect, integrate, plan and envision the future. When we do not take this time, we make quick decisions that may not be to our best advantage. These snap decisions can detour us and impact our career, our satisfaction and ultimately, our resilience. At the same time, the marketplace demands are constantly changing based on available resources and global impacts. Today's market asks us to define ourselves with a niche specialty. Think about the practice of medicine – a general practitioner is nearly impossible to find. When one is not feeling well, you are typically sent to a specialist. So who is the "general contractor" of all the specialists when someone gets sick? To survive today, you need to understand your skills and figure out what you need to learn to remain current and build for the future. Reinventing is like evolution – to survive you need to learn how to adapt to the environment.

When we graduated from school, we had a vision of what life would be like. As a Human Resources and Coaching professional, I understand the need to be resilient and manage one's career. While some organizations actively develop their employees, others only focus on the bottom line, leaving you, the employee, to manage your own career development. Regardless of the organization, it is essential to have your own development plan and a vision for your future.

So how does one maintain career resilience?

Envision!

You need to have a vision for yourself. Where do you see yourself now and in the years to come – not in terms of a particular title or position, but rather how do you want to be known? What story do you want told about you when you are not present? And what stories do you want to be retold time and time again? This is your reputation or your legacy, which you leave behind when you leave a company or after you complete a phase of a project.

Ownership of Developing Your Skills

Learning the skills necessary for your next opportunity is another critical factor for career resilience. Within some organizations, development plans are intended to guide your

learning and experiences to enable you to reach your next targeted opportunity. This opportunity may be internal, either a lateral or upward movement or external to the organization. Whether this plan is developed internally for an organization, or is developed on your own for yourself, your roadmap will follow your vision for your future. This plan may include identifying formal and informal training opportunities, and finding projects and developmental assignments that will help to refine and/or develop key skills or competencies. It may include volunteer opportunities that develop, enrich or enhance your skills, your network and helps you to build your reputation.

Relationship Management

Another key component in your career resilience is managing relationships. Learning to build credibility and trust with others is critical for success. And successful relationships are the key to your next opportunity. Most career choices are based on what we choose in life. What motivates you? How do you recover after a setback? And what you can accomplish when you set your mind to it? These are critical for career resilience!

Making Your Development Plan Happen

It takes time and effort to improve and sustain new capabilities. If you have been part of a progressive company you are probably learning new skills and increasing your influence and network on an ongoing basis. You may need some additional support from your career stakeholders such as your manager, co-workers and mentors to engage in selective projects to shape your experiences for your vision and the marketplace's demands. If, on the other hand, you were in a position with a specific product or technology that is losing its relevance in the marketplace, then you will need to retool. It will take more effort to learn new skills and leverage what you know into what is in demand. Some skills may be able to be self-taught, other skills may need hands-on experience, and yet other skills may require formal training. When an employee is performing adequately, many managers with limited budgets in this economy have little incentive to develop their staff. This is when you need to own your own development. You are in charge of your career! At the end of the day, whether you advance or remain stagnant is based on your own initiative. The important thing is to plan time each week to work on sharpening your skills and managing your relationships. If we "pay ourselves first," our investments will benefit both ourselves and the companies we work in.

This column provides thought provoking strategies for getting unstuck along your career journey. A certified Executive and Career Coach can be instrumental in guiding you in your efforts to gain a new perspective. I invite you to contact me @ Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com

Lisa Chenofsky Singer is the Managing Director of Chenofsky Singer and Associates LLC www.ChenofskySinger.com, providing Executive and Career Coaching and Human Resources Consulting.

Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves

in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.