



January 2011

New Year Career Resolutions

In This Issue

[Jump Start Your Career](#)

[Finding Your Dream Job](#)

[Growing from Within](#)

[Generational Considerations](#)

HRPA 2011

We will be at the 2011 HRPA Conference at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (Feb 2-4). Drop by booth #529 and say hello!

GAC Promotion

Each GAC member who enlists 5 new members by Jan 31, 2011 will receive a \$50 gift card. Simply email your list of 5 names, including email addresses & generational cohorts, to tyan@ngenperformance.com.

Thank you for your continued survey participation!

Join Our GAC

Click [here](#) to learn about our **Generational Advisory Council**. GAC members are entered into a monthly draw to win a \$50 gift card!

New Year Career Resolutions

Each new year many of us make resolutions to improve our health, to create more balance in our lives, and to have a more fulfilling career. We promise ourselves that we will take action to ensure this year is positive and rewarding. As you begin 2011, consider how you can enhance your career by developing a greater understanding of your ideal job, and of the contribution you would like to make through your work. This month, we explore how to jump start your career, find your dream job, and develop within your organization.

Jump Start Your Career

At some point in our career, most of us experience a stall that we find challenging to push through. Perhaps during the recession, we felt fortunate just to keep our jobs and work for an organization that remained afloat. Other times, our careers may plateau based on personal choices, such as having a family, and thereby focusing on working fewer hours. But many career plateaus are not planned for, or desired. These stalls or plateaus may be demonstrated by being passed over for a promotion, a moderate performance review, or a less-than-desirable pay raise/bonus. These types of events should raise a red flag that perhaps your performance level (or the perception of your skills) is declining. The three most common reasons a career can stall/plateau is:

- **Boredom** - your role has become rote and lacks meaning. This can translate into disengagement, as you are no longer demonstrating the characteristics of an engaged employee.

E-Learning

n-gen's e-learning course, **Four Generations**, is now available for individual purchase.

Click [here](#) to visit the n-gen store.

What are we up to?

Check out n-gen's [online calendar](#) for upcoming speaking engagements, webinars, and other events.

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· **Underperformance** - this can be the result of a changing work environment where new technology or the pace and volume of work increases such that it's difficult to maintain your performance level.

· **Reputation** - sometimes your reputation or perceived contribution level in the organization can hold you back. Senior leaders & managers may typecast you in a role and may not be willing to see beyond that. Your reputation can also be impacted by past errors which decision makers are slow to forget.

So what can you do to jump start your career again?

The first step is to ask yourself some questions to determine if you are in the right type of role. Spend some time contemplating:

- Does your job allow you to work with people who share your world view? Do you need to put on a persona to get through the day?
- Does your job challenge, stretch or change you? Are you enriching your brain power?
- Does your job, because of the organization or level of responsibility, open the door to future jobs?
- Does your job hold meaning for you? Is your work meaningful?

Answering these questions will guide you in determining if you are in the right role, and if you're not, how and where to look for a change.

Finding Your Dream Job

In some cases, you may need to leave your organization and start over to find the right role. Before making a decision to leave, it's important to take responsibility for what has happened to your career, and reflect on how to avoid the same pitfalls in the future. Think about the reasons why you found yourself in a bad fit, in order to develop a better sense of what you want next time.

A 'perfect' job, is perfect because it makes you happy and engages you. It is exciting and provides a sense of meaning. You won't be able to recognize a great job, until you really know what you want. In the exploration, often it's easier to start with what you don't want first, to

help you narrow down your list, but then ultimately you will need to clarify your values. If you value time, your dream job will provide flexibility, and time off to do the things you love. If you value growth and challenges, your dream job will be one where increased responsibility and learning new skills is constantly provided.

Understanding what you value may also lead you to recognize the types of industries and roles that would be ideal. You then need to evaluate whether or not you have the right knowledge and experience to do that work. If you don't, are you willing to invest in gaining the knowledge, skills and experience required? How much will you sacrifice (time, energy, money) to achieve your dream job? Switching careers and embarking on a new path should always be driven by passion and motivation to do meaningful work. Money isn't a good motivator. Simply wanting to have a larger salary won't be enough motivation to sustain you. Recognize where your passions and strengths lie, and then spend time advancing them.

Once you know what you want to do, why you want to pursue this path, and how it aligns with your values, the next 3 steps are easy:

1. **Do your research** - learn about the industry. Identify what knowledge, skills and abilities will set you up for success.
2. **Network** - connect with people in the industry and get a feel for what the work is like first hand.
3. **Create a plan** - map out how you will achieve your dream career. When and how will you gain the right skills? Where will you apply for jobs? How long will your plan take to execute? What tasks will you execute in the short, mid, and long-term?

Growing from Within

If you want to change your career, but stay with your current employer, you can start the wheels of change by communicating your desires to senior leaders, particularly during performance review times. Be certain, however, that you have already done all you can in your current role to demonstrate high levels of performance, through assuming additional responsibility or leading a special project. To grow in your organization, you should be open to relocate in order to work with a new team or division. Enlist your colleagues and team members to help you make a move. Network with internal HR and non-HR

colleagues, seeking their advice on which areas of the business you could add the greatest value. Ideally, you have a formal mentor who can share his/her best practices for success. If you don't have a mentor, invite people (both from within and outside of your organization) whose career paths you would like to emulate out for coffee. Pick their brains as to how you can be successful, and change your current career path.

Generational Considerations

While all four generations - Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen Xers and Gen Ys seek meaningful careers, it's the speed at which younger generations expect their career to be fulfilling that has changed. Today's employees are unwilling to spend years in a job that doesn't align to their passions and goals. In particular, Gen Ys have been coached to find work that has meaning to them. They believe work should be fun and should be based on their values and interests. Sometimes early in our careers, however, we require patience to fully explore a role or organization. While front line jobs can be mundane and lacking in lustre, those roles can often teach us skills that set us up for future success. On the other end of the spectrum, as Traditionalists and Baby Boomers approach retirement, they too may be asking themselves how they want to spend the last few years of employment. Is their work meaningful enough? Have they had an opportunity to build a legacy and add value to the business? Regardless of where you are in your career path, the new year is always a great time to take stock, evaluate how you can grow and evolve this year, and determine what actions you can take to make 2011 a successful one.



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