

Azzarello Group Article

Your Career: Why your hard work doesn't stand on its own

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As a business leader, I learned the hard way that building your career requires you to do lots of things outside your job description -- things no one ever really tells you directly. Sadly, most corporate environments don't really show people how to get ahead.

Many think that if you are doing a great job delivering results, you will get recognized and get all the good things you have earned: raises, bonuses, promotions. Unfortunately, it doesn't usually work that way. So you're left to watch and wonder why less capable people are getting all those things.

I have mentored people for many years and I use a simple formula. I ask:

- ✦ How are you doing managing your business?
- ✦ How are you doing managing your people and relationships?
- ✦ How are you doing managing your publicity? (a blank stare is typical here), and how is your life going?

People tend to have a lot to say about how their business is going. When forced to focus on how intentional they are being about their communications and behaviors, the dialog typically falters a bit. When questioned about managing their publicity, it stops entirely.

When asked "how's life?", reactions range from "why do you ask? -- I'm talking about my job", to people tearing up as they remember that they are supposed to have one.

Here are a few lessons I have learned along the way...

If you are consistently working hard and delivering great results and consume all of yourself doing it, remember:

NO ONE OTHER THAN YOU has any motivation to get you out of this situation!

And in this state you don't have a chance to do the necessary things it takes to get a promotion or a new opportunity, which always takes effort above and beyond your job description. You have to find a way to contain your job and make room for more.

Only you can do this.

Your boss, your company, your peers, your team, only benefit from your thankless dedication to results. Why would they spend any of their time to help you stop giving them the benefit of your hard work?

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The decision makers in your company don't know you

People fail to get recognized by the decision makers in their own company. When they are ready for a promotion, they often feel like the need to go to a new company to get it.

There's a simple reason. At the new company you are given an opportunity to sell yourself to the decision makers. You need to know how to create that opportunity in your current environment.

There is always "A List"

The skills you need to "Get the job" are different than the skills you need to do to "Do the Job". And if you are targeting an executive spot there is only one way to get it -- You need to be on the list of people that the decision makers are looking at.

There is always a list. If you're not on it, no amount of hard work and results are going to get you that job.

Manage politics without being political

Don't get labeled as one of those people that is only managing their career! The first rule: Do your current job well no matter what!

First be known for results, then make room to do the things you need to do to get ahead, in a way that does not label you as being "political" (or annoying!). We've all seen those people that put more energy into managing their career, than doing their job.

That's NOT the formula for success! There is a constructive way to get recognized.

Clarify your desired outcome

I believe that it is critical to be very clear about your desired outcome. Some people are afraid to admit that they want to make a lot of money, and some people are afraid to admit that they don't want to make a lot of money.

All people have ambitions, and responsibilities, talents, families, and dreams. Getting clear on your desired outcome is the path to success. When you are in a difficult role, or have a terrible boss, or you're in a failing business you can ask, "is this helping me to achieve my desired outcome or not?"

I had an absolutely terrible, draining assignment once, with a boss that just wasn't helping. But I knew that the experience of being successful in that environment would set me up for my next couple of jobs so I stuck it out. Being clear on my desired outcome is what allowed me to survive it.

Get Help

Many people are afraid to ask for help. Asking for help is rarely seen as incompetence, if you do it in a productive way. The last thing a manager wants is to have you suffer and struggle and not get the job done.

I have seen people whose egos prevent them from getting coaching, just slide into oblivion. If you are advancing your career, you will be in over your head from time to

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time. My strategy was to get as many mentors as possible. It made an enormous difference to my success.

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Manage what you are known for

I work with people to assess their core strengths and values and to develop their personal brand. This is so important. It helps clarify your desired outcome, it helps get the right stuff on your resume and in your interview banter.

But it also guides your leadership behaviors and communications and how you choose to act every single day and in every single meeting. Know what do to and do it on purpose!

Enjoy your life along the way.

I have found it vitally important to have a sense of humor and generosity. Effective leaders are not the people who are entirely used up by their jobs. It's not always easy, but you need to make time for yourself and your family.

It doesn't just make your life better. It forces you to make room in your job which makes you more a more capable business leader anyway.

Patty was the youngest person to become a general manager at Hewlett Packard at the age of 33. She ran a \$1B global software business at the age of 35, and she became a CEO for the first time at the age of 38. A few of her roles were the VP and General Manager of HP OpenView, CEO of Euclid Software, and Chief Marketing Officer for Siebel Systems.

Patty is the CEO of Azzarello Group, www.AzzarelloGroup.com a unique leadership development organization focused on helping business leaders actually get done what they want to do, and get a bigger payoff from their hard work. Azzarello Group delivers practical, experience-based tools to business leaders, through products and services including articles, e-books, mentoring programs, executive coaching, public speaking, small business retreats, and business execution workshops.

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