

THE NEW RULES OF CAREER SUCCESS

According to researchers at IBM, constant change is the new normal in business, and uncertainty the only uncertain. This radical instability fundamentally undermines the foundation of traditional career advancement models, grounded in stable organizations, working environments, and job hierarchies to ascend. In an age of ongoing disruption, an entirely new set of professional skills is now required to sustain continued career growth and progression. As we discovered through our research, following are eight new rules needed for professional success in increasingly unpredictable career environments - and eight ways you can use them to continually vault yourself ahead of the competition.





Become Essential - You've got to be crucial to your organization - not someone that's easily replaced. For example: You might be the company's go-to IT security expert, a crucial member of its regulatory management team, or a highly sought-after internal thought leader. If others can do what you do, you're already on the road to irrelevance. Instead, be a lynchpin, or crucial piece in any system - one that's fundamentally difficult and expensive to replace.

Rethink Your Value - Never stop learning, improving, and investing in yourself - then consistently apply these talents in ways that go far beyond your job description. For example: If you're a programmer, take design and marketing classes so you can create more user-friendly and engaging products. If you're a marketer, spend more time with your programmers so you can find new ways to leverage your creative ideas through technology. The more versatile you make yourself, the more adaptable, resourceful and uniquely value-adding you can be.

Change and Evolve - Get the capabilities, skills and insights today that will be in-demand tomorrow. Take steps to acquire the talents, contacts and resources you'll need to succeed in the future, so you can be in a more advantageous position to greet it when it arrives. Know where you want to go in your career, have a plan for getting there, and voluntarily push yourself to learn, grow and take on more leadership and responsibility - even if this means taking small steps in different directions until bigger ones become more comfortable.

Create Your Own Opportunities - Go, see, try and do. Put yourself into situations that place you outside your comfort zone, like taking on unfamiliar tasks that require you to do new things with new people. Be open-minded, and soak up as much knowledge and learning as you can - then apply it vigorously. The more you do so, the more you'll consistently put yourself in opportunity's path and the greater your chances of finding it will be.

Never Stop Learning - Constantly look for ways to expand your education and insights - the most resilient leaders are eternal students, and possess talent and training that's applicable to a wide range of professional contexts. Think of it this way: The more resources you've got in your professional toolkit, and ways you can use them, the more future-proof you'll be.

Embrace Difficult Challenges - Seek out hard tasks that others avoid: It means you've got less competition, and the benefits of accomplishing these tasks will be more singular and value. Look to apply a variety of skills and insights while doing so too: The more you exercise different talents while others exercise the same ones over and over, the more versatile you'll be. Applying focused effort towards accomplishing larger goals can help you achieve more. And the more you push your comfort zone, the more you'll increase your courage and capabilities.

Go Above and Beyond - What personal activities are you pursuing that can teach you marketable skills, or push you closer towards achieving your career goals? Going forward, your work, your reputation, and your contributions will be your *résumé* - use off-hours opportunities as a chance to grow and enhance them, and set yourselves apart while others shy away from opportunity.

Take Smart Risks - The more you do the same things over time, the less value they hold in a rapidly-changing world. Faced with change, you've got to take risks that can help propel you further towards achieving your goals. But being risky doesn't necessarily mean being reckless: Rather, smarter about where you place your bets. Pick a portfolio of promising growth activities - start a part-time business, launch a new product, volunteer to lead an innovative new venture, etc. - then pursue them, readjusting your strategies as you go based on the results achieved. Keep taking promising risks that put you in chance's sights, and put you in a position to succeed.

*Award-winning professional speaker Scott Steinberg is a bestselling expert on leadership and innovation, and the author of **Make Change Work for You: 10 Ways to Future-Proof Yourself, Fearlessly Innovate, and Succeed Despite Uncertainty**. Among today's leading providers of keynote speeches, workshops and seminars for Fortune 500 firms, his website is www.AKeynoteSpeaker.com.*

