

## Setting career development goals and meeting them

Tired of doing the same job day in and day out? Try these tips for developing career goals and meeting them.

According to recent research, the average South African will change careers at least five times. Blue collar or white collar worker, there are many things you can do to get a better job or earn more money. Rather than move from one dead-end job to another, here are some ideas for making preparations to advance your career to a professional level.

1. Take vocational classes, earn a professional certificate, or consider going to college for a two-year or four-year degree. Sometimes taking just one class, like math's or accounting, can be enough to move you from the factory floor to the office area, especially if you have been with the company for a while and understand its workings. On the other hand, a manual laborer may decide to study for an electrician's license, while a union-registered pipe fitter might enroll in computer classes. Wherever you're at in a job, you can always move up.
2. Strengthen communication skills. The ability for written or oral expression is one of the top three skills sought by many employers, with the other two being job skills and a team attitude. The simple act of reading more books will automatically enhance the way a person talks and writes.
3. Study the job that you want. Talk, dress, and act like the person whose job you would like to have. While you don't want to make your goal obvious, subtly assuming the characteristics of the next level of job performance will unconsciously encourage others to look at you in that light and treat you accordingly. More importantly, the management team may absorb a professional image that will come to mind when they are looking for the next promotion candidate.
4. Keep good records of exceptional job performance. Chart your overtime hours, extra projects, volunteer service, and community support. Not only will you get more noticed as the person who knows a lot about the company and cares enough to get involved, you will have written accounts to share at your next opportunity for advancement when you can cite missing just one day or mention working 187 hours of overtime that should impress your interviewer. Numbers can be convincing over general phrases like "I worked a lot of overtime" or "I hardly missed a day."
5. Seek out mentors or guides you can offer advice or insight. They may be part of the team who will suggest certain names for advancement within the company, or among those you will ask for a reference in applying for a job elsewhere. Do the same within the community by volunteering for projects that will get your name and skills noticed by others, and perhaps impress someone enough to write a job reference.



Don't sit around waiting for Lady Luck to show up and change your life in the job market. Take control of your future by taking initiative actions like these. Then you'll have just yourself to congratulate when your career advances to the next level.