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## Getting Ahead— Even During Tough Economic Times

### Avoid These Behaviors

- Coming in late/leaving early
  - Gossiping
- Talking on the phone or texting with friends
  - Appearing to be lazy
  - Surfing the web
- Complaining about your supervisor or coworkers

GETTING AHEAD CAN SEEM COMPLICATED, but even more so during difficult economic times. When people you know are being laid off and many companies are downsizing, you might be glad just to have a job. However, this can be a good time to position yourself for a promotion when the economy turns around.

Most of the tried and true advice for getting ahead still applies. For example, many experts who study career advancement offer some helpful tips for women who want to move up the career ladder. One of the most common pieces of advice is to get a mentor.

What is a mentor? A mentor can be someone inside or outside the organization who is usually in a higher-level position. It is someone you feel you can learn things from and who will take an interest in your career development. If you build a good relationship with a mentor, he/she may provide good advice, help you make decisions and advocate for you.

Marketing yourself is good advice, but during this time you may want to emphasize things you do that save the company money, add value or

use resources more efficiently. Make sure you receive credit for the work that you do and let your supervisor and others in management know of your accomplishments and successes. Maintain a positive attitude, get along well with co-workers, treat others politely and respectfully, and demonstrate good problem-solving skills.

This is the time to be one of the positive, helpful people in your organization. Having a great attitude and demonstrating your leadership skills can position you for a promotion once your company starts hiring again. For example, take your good ideas to your supervisor and make him/her look good. You can become a go-to person by demonstrating that you are willing to work hard and you care about the company.

Volunteering and networking are also great advancement tools. If you have opportunities to serve on committees or workgroups, take them! If your supervisor needs help on a special project, offer your assistance. Taking advantage of these types of opportunities helps you meet and work with other people and show what you can do! Meeting other

people and developing good relationships with them is another way to help you get ahead. The more people who know about your good work, the more likely you will hear of opportunities. Attend lunches, parties, and conferences.

Experts also recommend that you work hard and prepare. Make sure you continue to learn in your job and take advantage of as much training and education as you can. Acquiring and utilizing new skills is a good way to get promoted. Make sure your resume includes the new things you learn.

Another way to prepare is to consider making a lateral move to a different job at your current level. These types of moves can be helpful if you are able to increase skills that are valued by the organization.

Finally, it is important to remember that climbing the ladder may not be the only way to define a successful career. Performing excellent work or just making lateral moves (moving to another position with similar pay at the same level in the company) to learn another skill can be fulfilling and keep you prepared for future career changes and challenges. ☞