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# primed

PRIME YOUR MIND TO WIN AT WORK



## SOFT SKILLS

Different organizational cultures and job positions may require different soft skills. How can you gain them and practice them?

## ACE YOUR PERFORMANCE

### REVIEW

Learn the step to prepare for a more relaxed and constructive exchange with your supervisor.

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EDITOR & CHIEF BRANDING OFFICER / CHELLIE PHILLIPS

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## editor's note

A communications newsletter article highlighting the benefits of using fear and accentuating the negative in developing campaigns really stopped and made me think. You might think it's a totally backwards way of thinking, but after considering it, I think it has some validity not only in writing, but in living the life we want too.

So many of us fail to take that next step either in our personal life or career because we don't know exactly how something will turn out. We fail to draw on the courage inside us and utilize the confidence we've grown over our years to push ourselves forward once again.

Yes, I know some of us have buried that confidence deep inside. That's ok. Dig around internally and see if you can't find just a small spark. That's all you need to get started.

We're wired to act on feelings. It's not a new concept. Evangelists have played on the idea in numerous sermons. Doctors use it to urge us to eat better and exercise more. Law enforcement highlights it in their distracted driving, drunk driving and buckle up campaigns.

If we turned our fears into a catalyst propelling us forward what would that look or sound like?

How can you take your fear and use it as positive fuel? I'll give you a very personal example. After 21 years with a company I loved, I walked away because I knew there was more. I was tired of feeling misunderstood and unappreciated. I was afraid I'd get used to that feeling and settle. I packed my bags, moved across state lines and took a chance. I woke up one morning and realized I was tired of not being excited about my job.

Was I scared? Yes. Did I ask myself tons of what ifs? Yes. But the fear of complacency, settling for less and never knowing what else was out there was more compelling than the fear of what if it didn't work out. That fear is what compelled me to act. That fear was fuel to grow and become even more. Are you afraid your talents are being wasted? Are you sick showing up day after day and leaving unfulfilled? Use that fear you feel to change your story today.

**Chellie Phillips**  
**EDITOR &**

**CHIEF CAREER BRANDING OFFICER**







### Consider these important soft skills:

1. **Communicate skillfully.** Strong communications can require many different abilities. You might excel at making presentations but need to work on active listening.
2. **Solve problems.** Rising to challenges and addressing business needs is central to any job description. Think about how you react when you encounter a setback.
3. **Express creativity.** A physical therapist can be just as creative as a sculptor. Think about what makes you an artist.
4. **Radiate confidence.** Feeling sure of yourself and your abilities encourages others to see you more favorably. Believing in yourself also makes it easier to be assertive and take risks.
5. **Think positive.** Whatever position you're applying for, your future boss and co-workers will be asking themselves if you're someone they want to work with. An upbeat attitude suggests that you'll be pleasant and helpful.

Few colleges offer majors in time management or resilience. However, you can strengthen any soft skill through practice.

### How To Develop Your Soft Skills

#### Try these effective practice techniques:

1. **Ask for feedback.** Your family, friends, and coworkers are a good place to start. See what they have to say about your strengths and areas where you might want to grow.
2. **Study a role model.** Find someone you admire for their work ethic or strategic thinking. Look for ways to adapt their methods to suit your own personality.
3. **Use your job.** If you're currently employed, seek out opportunities to practice your soft skills. Starting a green office program could showcase your leadership potential.
4. **Take a course.** Adult education programs at your local university and online courses cover any topic you can imagine. Learn more about conflict resolution or basic grammar.
5. **Volunteer your services.** Support a worthy cause while you pick up new skills. Contact a group that interests you and propose a project that suits your mutual goals.



## How to Demonstrate Your Soft Skills

While you may not need to explain how you passed the bar or won a Pulitzer Prize, listing your soft skills usually requires supporting evidence. Try these ideas to help you convince employers that you're a strong candidate.

### Use these strategies to show your expertise in soft skills:


- **Read carefully.** Position descriptions may state the soft skills desired or offer plenty of clues. See if the company focuses on attention to detail or grasping the big picture or both.
- **Provide examples.** When you claim to have a soft skill, back it up with a compelling story. Use examples in your cover letter, resume and interview.
- **Show up on time.** If you want your hard and soft skills to have a chance to be evaluated, you need to be punctual. Arriving a little early to your interview shows that you're responsible and considerate.
- **Follow through.** Delivering on your promises is another sign of a strong work ethic. Be sure to return phone calls and send thank-you letters

Job offers and career success often depend on soft skills even if you have an advanced degree or know how to code in 5 languages. Make yourself a more valuable asset by enhancing your communications and thinking abilities





# **The Complete Guide to Staying Confident in a Competitive Workplace**



BY CHELLIE PHILLIPS

As far as the workplace is concerned, times are certainly changing. You're no longer confined to a dedicated workspace with specific duties. The employees who are treasured are the ones who contribute the most to the organization.

With less jobs available these days, you have to work harder in order to keep yours. And that includes staying on top of your game in a competitive workplace.

But that's sometimes easier said than done. And that's because you may not be as confident in your abilities. It could also be that you're unsure if you deserve consideration over someone else.

Put all of that self-doubt behind you! That way, you won't have to worry about losing out on opportunities.



Try these techniques to stay confident on the job:

### 1. **Keep your skills current.**

Stay current on all certifications and highlight your on-going achievements. When you keep your skills current, they can serve as your face of confidence. It puts you on a level playing field or even above everybody else.

- Now you just need to show why you're a step above the competition!
- In most fields, there are usually mini-courses that can help you earn a more recognized certification.
- Consult your company's newsletter. This helps you see the plans that are underway. With that knowledge, you can start to learn specialized skills that may be needed in the future.

### 2. **Volunteer for the unpopular jobs.**

Everybody is eager to go after the popular jobs that get a lot of attention. Sure, you can join the gang and do the same. But it's also a good idea to go after the unpopular ones.

- You never know who's watching! While everybody's eyes are on the prized jobs, there may be one scout watching over the unpopular jobs. Let that scout see you handling things effectively.
- You may end up gaining additional skill sets just by going after something off the radar.

### 3. **A little gloating doesn't hurt.**

If you've done something worth recognition, it doesn't hurt to point it out. Certainly, you don't want to be tooting your own horn all day, but a little goes a long way.

- In a team effort, certainly everyone's contribution should be highlighted. If you aren't recognized on a project, find a creative way to get the word out about your personal contribution.

### 4. **Put your strengths on display.**

You might be hired as an account executive, but you could have great accounting skills. They won't know until you tell them!

- On occasion, you can send an email to your department head. Advise them of your availability to assist on a project unrelated to your field. That's a subtle way to say, "Hey, I'm good at this, too!"
- Volunteer for projects whenever possible. Be sure that you have the skill sets needed to do an effective job. The company always takes note of skills on display, especially at a crucial time for the business.
- If you know you have an innate skill that sets you apart from everybody else, show it!

### 5. **Give 100% effort.**

- Even when you're not feeling confident, give it everything you have. The effort you put into your job displays commitment and interest in the company.

So as you see, staying confident in a competitive workplace isn't that difficult. Rely on your natural abilities. They can definitely speak for themselves if you give them a voice!

By following these guidelines, you can rest assured that you'll stand out and make a lasting impression at your workplace.





# How to Improve Communication with Your Boss

Good communication allows many life situations to run smoothly. However, there are certain relationships that deserve extra attention such as the relationship you have with your boss. You and your boss have drastically different roles, and when each of you fulfills these roles with a hard working and understanding attitude, you'll both feel fulfilled.

## Get To Know Your Boss

As in all personal and professional relationships, it's important to understand how others communicate. Everyone has their own set of likes and dislikes, and everyone has their own unique personality types and communication styles. Once you understand their preferences, you can adjust your style and methods of communication to best suit their needs.

## Understand Your Relationship

It's important to develop a good business relationship with your boss. Find out what he expects and what his goals for the business are, that way you can both be working toward the same goal.

**The following tips can help you further improve your communication with your boss:**

1. Avoid being too friendly. It's important to be friendly, but only to a certain extent. You're not true friends with your boss. While it may seem like a good idea at first, it can lead to some uncomfortable situations. Your boss might have trouble giving you negative feedback, or your co-workers may develop jealousy.
2. Schedule meetings with your boss. Your boss may or may not be scheduling regular meetings with you. Regardless of this, take the initiative to schedule time with your boss if you feel the need.

Your boss will know that you're serious about developing your business relationship and that you really care about your job and the company.

3. Problem solving. Find out if you can help your manager with any problems that need attention. While you don't want to step on any toes, your boss will surely appreciate you taking the initiative. Doing so will really give you the chance to stand out.

4. Maintain patience. Perhaps you would've done things differently than your boss or you strongly feel that one of his decisions won't turn out right. Develop the wisdom to know if you should keep your mouth shut and go with the flow, or if you should politely speak up.

5. Shift your perspective. You can improve your communication with your boss and feel less frustrated just by putting yourself in their shoes. Imagine what everything is like for them; they likely have more burdens and pressures on their shoulders than you realized.

## Be Prepared

Even if you're not quite sure what to say all the time, as long as you're prepared and honest in your communication, your boss will surely notice. So if you have to reflect and write down your thoughts ahead of time, so be it. That level of preparation will benefit you in the long run.

With any relationship, good communication skills are a huge benefit. Strive to work on strengthening these skills every day and it will help your career to flourish. In the end, your positive attitude and willingness to understand others will help you forge stronger, more permanent bonds.



# What to Do After You Submit an Online Job Application

Online job applications play a major role in job hunting today. They're convenient, but you may feel like your resume disappears into a black hole after you hit the send button and hear nothing in return.

With so much uncertainty, how can you protect your peace of mind and increase your probability of being invited in for an interview?

While some companies tend to leave job candidates in the dark, there are steps you can take to follow up. Stand out from the pack by using these persistent but polite suggestions for what to do after you've applied for a job opening online.

## Protecting Your Peace of Mind

**1. Think positive.** Maybe you're hesitant to follow up because you're concerned about appearing desperate or annoying. In reality, appropriate communications demonstrate your enthusiasm and conscientiousness.

**2. Keep things in perspective.** It's easy to feel shunned when you see policies about no calls. Avoid taking it personally. After all, any business would be overwhelmed trying to handle personal conversations with 200 or more candidates.

**3. Look ahead.** Once you've put forth your best effort, switch your attention to other opportunities. Having multiple options will help you stay motivated.

**4. Be flexible.** Even if you don't receive a job offer, there may be other benefits. Maybe you'll welcome the hiring manager into your network or ask to be considered for future openings.

## Increasing Your Chances of Being Interviewed

**1. Act promptly.** Note if there's a close date on the job notice. If not, anywhere from 5 to 10 days is usually a reasonable window for confirming your application and trying to continue the discussion.

**2. Choose your methods.** Pick the approach that lets you shine. Write an email or pick up the phone depending on the situation and your strengths.

**3. Be prepared.** Outline your thoughts before making contact. You want to sound as articulate and thorough as possible.



4. **Clarify the process.** Ask pertinent questions if you get the chance. Find out more about the selection timeline and hiring priorities.

5. **Post a letter.** Sending a hard copy of your application by snail mail sometimes gives you a second chance to capture an employer's attention. Think twice if it's an environmental organization that prides itself on being paper free or a technology company that might think that's old fashioned.

6. **Find a contact.** If possible, research the company in advance so you can address your application to a specific individual. Afterwards, continue using your network to identify other company personnel you could consult with.

7. **Watch the news.** You'll make a more favorable impression if you have something substantive to say instead of just asking the hiring manager when they'll make a decision. Try commenting on industry news or one of their Facebook posts. Look for ways to work your relevant accomplishments and qualifications into the discussion.

8. **Juggle multiple offers.** Congratulations if you receive a competing job offer while you're application is pending. You may want to ask the company about their hiring schedule so you can make a decision or withdraw from consideration.

9. **Track communications.** Keep a log of your job applications and related interactions. It will help you to schedule future action, stay in touch with valuable contacts, and evaluate your progress.

Looking for a job can be stressful, but you can take some of the uncertainty out of applying for positions online. Skillful follow-up gives you the confidence of knowing that you've maximized your opportunities, and reassures you of your value while you're making your next career move.





# Why Your LinkedIn Head Shot May Be Holding You Back

Recruiters, colleagues, and potential clients are 14 times more likely to click on your LinkedIn profile if you have a photo. If you're spending hours editing your summary statement, ensure you give equal time to the images.

Speaking of images, researchers also say that most viewers take only about one-tenth of a second to form judgements about how trustworthy and competent you are. Learn how to make your LinkedIn photo say what you want it to say and deliver the message quickly.

## Tried and True Tips for Your LinkedIn Photo

Numerous studies show some techniques are effective for any line of work or any stage in your career. When you're trying to convey your professionalism, it's usually okay to look a little conventional.

1. **Smile and squinch.** A smile makes you look friendly and approachable, and even increases your happiness. Squinching refers to the lines that appear when you narrow your eyes, a sign that your grin is genuine.
2. **Stay updated.** You may lose some credibility if your photo doesn't look like you when you show up in person. Take a new shot every couple of years.
3. **Focus on your face.** Making your face about 60% of the image is a good rule of thumb. Crop it from the shoulders up.

4. **Make eye contact.** Holding eye contact encourages positive feelings. Take off your sunglasses and watch out for glare so the viewer will be able to connect with you.

5. **Dress for work.** Put on clothes that you would wear to an interview for your dream job. For most professionals, that means business or business casual looks. Solid colors tend to be more flattering than busy patterns.

6. **Hire a professional.** Investing in a visit to a professional photography studio could pay off. Ask around for referrals and check out work samples. If you're on a tight budget, ask a friend or family member who's handy with a camera.

7. **Skip recycling.** Suppose you have a shot you love from your last vacation or your cousin's wedding? Unfortunately, you'll probably lose points if you have to crop out the background or your girlfriend's knees.

8. **Be consistent.** Become more recognizable. Use the same image on other social media platforms and websites.

9. **Seek feedback.** Check out photofeeler, a free online service that gives you unbiased opinions from strangers. It even breaks down the ratings for qualities like confidence, trustworthiness, and influence.

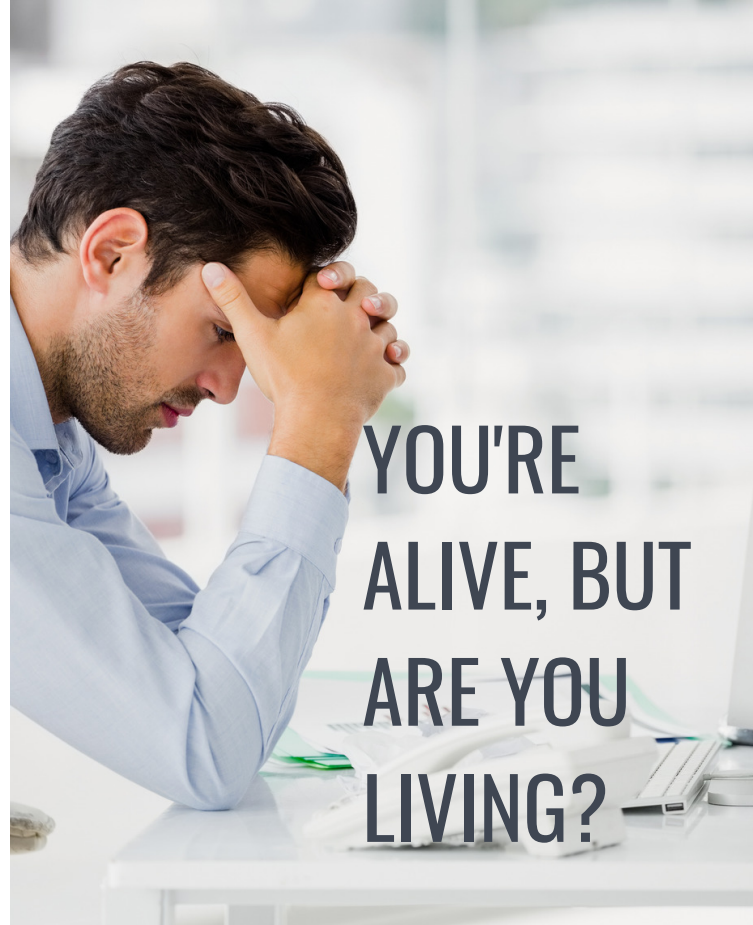
## Innovative Tips for Your LinkedIn Photo

On the other hand, maybe you need to stand out or communicate your unique personal brand. Experiment with these more creative ideas.

1. Play with color. Vivid background colors grab attention. See how you look in a field of orange or purple.
2. Highlight your passions. While it's usually a good idea to leave pets and children out of LinkedIn photos, you may be the exception if you're a veterinarian or a nanny. Similarly, a musician playing or a chef cooking may be more persuasive than the usual head and shoulders shot.
3. Create balance. If your photo is a little daring, let the rest of your profile show your serious side. Write a compelling headline. Gather impressive recommendations and endorsements. Change your custom LinkedIn URL to your full name.
4. Supplement it. Add additional media to your profile. SlideShare presentations, YouTube videos, and Instagram posts help to make you more interesting and engaging.

Your LinkedIn photo is an important ingredient in your professional brand. When you're picking images that will advance your career, appearing approachable and competent is more important than looking like a movie star. If you're serious about finding a career you love, check out [www.chelliephillips.com/primed](http://www.chelliephillips.com/primed).

If you can't get noticed, you won't get hired.



**YOU'RE  
ALIVE, BUT  
ARE YOU  
LIVING?**

**DO YOU FEEL  
TRAPPED? KNOW  
YOUR JOB ISN'T  
RIGHT FOR YOU  
ANYMORE?**

**LAUNCHING A NEW  
CAREER IS DOABLE  
WITH THE RIGHT  
APPROACH.**

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# AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations have helped thousands of people make significant changes in their lives. An affirmation can work because it has the ability to program your mind into believing the stated concept. Each quarter, you'll find an affirmation designed to help you on your career journey. You'll even find questions for deeper thought.



# **I envision myself in a higher position.**

I envision myself in a higher position.

I am an excellent employee. I am faithful to my work, arriving early every day and leaving only after my work is complete. Every task I perform is done with passion, because I take pride in my work.

I am passionate about what I do and the company for which I work. Although I know that my career is far from over, I am happy to be living out my Creator's best for my life at this time.

I am blessed to have employment during these difficult times in my country's economy. While others struggle with work, I am blessed with a job that puts food on the table and allows me to exercise my talent.

While I am grateful for what I have, I am filled with ambition. I envision myself in a higher position than the one I hold today. My dreams are big and more alive than ever.

I deserve a promotion because I have acquired the skills necessary to perform my job well. My performance at this level is faithful and exemplary, and now it is time to serve in a role with more responsibility.

Experience makes me a qualified candidate for a promotion. Even when there are no open positions available, I know that things are working in my favor to reward my faithfulness.

Today, I choose to inquire about open positions or upcoming promotions as a first step in preparing myself for what is to come.

## **Self-Reflection Questions:**

- 1. Where do I see myself five years from now?**
- 2. What position would I like to be promoted into?**
- 3. Am I willing to put in the effort and pay the price for my promotion?**





# Pathway to Promotion

*Inside each issue, you'll find an exercise designed to put you on the path to promotion.*

## View From the Mountaintop

This exercise is designed to help you gain a clear vision of what you enjoy. Most people feel fulfilled or enjoy their work when it has meaning or value. Once you gain clarity, you can develop a career path that includes more of the activities you enjoy doing.

Use your resume to remind you of the different periods in your career. Or if you're just starting out, include volunteer activities and school projects to pull from.

Make a list of at least 12 of the best or most enjoyable experiences and activities. Now narrow that list by half and mark the 6 top. Keep narrowing it down until you get to your top 3.

Do they show a pattern? Maybe you're doing a specific type of activity. Maybe you're working solo in all of your favorite activities, or you're focusing on a complex project for a long period of time. Looking back down from the top of the mountain helps you discern patterns in work and projects you enjoy. You can then look for similar activities and environments in your next career move.

If you're not sure what to put on your list, start by keeping a list of the things people come to you wanting or compliment you for or ask for your help with. You'll soon see a pattern evolve that should help point you in the direction to a career you'll enjoy and thrive in.

Growing up, we're all taught that we have to work hard to be successful, so we assume the work has to feel hard. I'm here to tell you it doesn't have to be that way. When you identify the activities you enjoy and are good at, you can build a meaningful career around those.



**Chellie Phillips**  
**CAREER BRANDING OFFICER**

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is captured mid-jump against a solid light blue background. She is wearing a black blazer over a white top and a grey skirt, with red shoes. Her arms are outstretched, and her mouth is open in a joyful expression. A shadow of her jump is cast on the blue background to her left.

# **How to Ace Your Employee Performance Review**



Do you often feel nervous about your annual employee performance review? Even the thought of it can make your heart beat faster as uneasy feelings well up inside you!

The good news is there are steps you can take to prepare for a more relaxed and constructive exchange with your supervisor during your performance review.

**Try these techniques year-round to ensure you ace your yearly review:**

- **Understand how your job fits into the big picture.** Show your supervisor that you understand the goals of the company and how your job promotes those goals. Make yourself a valuable asset by working cohesively with your colleagues to increase productivity and profits.
- **Seek regular feedback.** Avoid letting feedback get saved up for once a year. If your supervisor doesn't share his views very often, ask if he is satisfied with the way you're doing key tasks. Implement any suggestions that you receive to show that you're eager to improve.
- **Encourage two-way conversation.** Listen actively to what your supervisor says. Ask for clarification if you have any questions. Accept constructive criticism gracefully.
- **Take initiative.** Identify needs and approach your supervisor with alternative solutions to choose from. Impress your supervisor with your willingness to go the extra mile. Look for opportunities to get additional training and broaden your skills.
- **Be friendly and supportive.** You may not choose to socialize with your supervisor outside of work, but it's important to maintain a friendly and supportive atmosphere on the job. Having a cordial relationship will help make your performance review and all your communications run more smoothly.
- **Take care of yourself physically.** Ensure you get a good night's sleep the night before and eat a nutritious breakfast. You'll be less sensitive to stress if you're rested and well fed.
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** Use the relaxation methods that work for you the day before your review and the day of the review itself. You could do some breathing meditation or listen to soothing music. Even taking a walk around the block can help.
- **Bring written notes and documentation with you.** Having written materials will help you look and feel more organized. You'll also be less likely to forget any important topics you want to bring up. Outline your accomplishments from the past year. Prepare responses for any criticism that you can anticipate and share discussion points for outlining your future goals.

- **Stay calm.** Even if the review turns negative, try to keep your composure. If you feel overwhelmed, let your supervisor know that you'll reflect on the information you've been given instead of making any hasty remarks that you might regret.
- **Evaluate the criticism you receive.** Welcome constructive criticism that can help further your career and make you a better employee. If you receive negative comments that you don't believe are justified, talk them over with a trusted friend or family member. They may help you to be more open-minded.

*Remember that supervisors are human so they sometimes mix their personal preferences in with more valid observations.*

- **Focus on the future.** Annual performance appraisals review the past year, but you also need to consider the coming years. Ensure you come out of your session with measurable and specific goals that you can focus on for improvement. Develop a timeline that will enable you to monitor your progress.

*You'll achieve more and be all set to ace your next performance appraisal too.*

Performance reviews are often tense, and the current economic downturn increases the pressure on many companies. With the right preparation, you can improve the process for yourself and the people you work with to help build morale and productivity.

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# Are you ready for 2021?



January is one of the best months for job searching because employers are typically hiring to fill many open positions. The average will change jobs 10-15 times in their career, so there is no reason to stay in a position that is not a good fit. However, before you make that move, you should take the time to evaluate your career goals and determine the right career path for you.

Evaluating your career goals is an active process that takes some time. Our FREE Career Planner is designed to help you evaluate your career goals and make a plan to achieve them.

Inside, you'll be guided through several steps including:

**Review your experience and skills:** Make note of all past job or volunteer activities you enjoyed or found rewarding. Make a list of the skills you would like to use in a new position.

**Reach out to your network:** Use your network of co-workers, friends and family and ask for advice or tips related to your goals. Networking can positively impact your career path.

**Consider additional education or training:** If you find that your career goals require more education or training, take that next step to find out more. There are so many free online classes that are a great option to help you gain knowledge. Volunteering can also help build your skills.

Using the Career Planner is also a great way to prepare for your annual review as well. You'll be prepared with a list of accomplishments and goals as well as have uncovered any roadblocks before you arrive at the meeting with your supervisor.

Evaluating your career goals is vital part in career success. Having a clear picture of where you are going and what you need to achieve it, will put you on the path to promotion.

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**“Find out what you  
like doing best, and  
get someone to pay  
you for it.”**

**— Katharine Whitehorn**



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