

Five Career Killers to Avoid

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Everybody knows that showing up on time, being a team player and working hard are keys to advancing a career to become an invaluable employee, but there are some not-so-obvious career killers that can work against you.

In today's feeble labor market, employees should steer clear of these five action that could detour your career track.

Complacency

A surefire way to ensure you never move up the corporate ladder is to become complacent in your job. Even if you are good at what you do, if you rarely go above and beyond what's required, you're likely to get passed over when it comes promotion time. According to career experts, the nine-to-five employees that only focus on their specific job title are less likely to succeed in their career.

"[You better] try to set yourself apart from your co-workers or ensure your accomplishments are noted," says Joel Garfinkle, author of *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*. "When it comes time for promotion, your go-getting peers will be first in line for that next coveted opportunity."

Pulling a 180

Change can be good, but shifting gears to do something completely different than your expertise can sabotage your career, warns Mark Jaffe, president of executive search firm Wyatt & Jaffe.

Let's say you're an established investment banker at a firm and you suddenly decide to take a sabbatical to build houses for poor people in an undeveloped country. While it's honorable, it could signal to the higher ups you can't handle the job, says Jaffe. "You shouldn't take an extended period of time away from work doing something completely not career related," says Jaffe. "It sends the message that something came unraveled."

Not Delegating

Holding onto all the responsibilities and failing to delegate work or work with a team because you think you can do the best job can back fire.

"It becomes impossible to promote you because you've become so necessary in that role no one else can step up," says Chuck Fried, president and chief executive of technology staffing company TxMQ.

He suggests managers surround themselves with smarter people to build a team of over achievers that can easily transition into the role.

Letting the Spark Fade

Chances are when you were hired you were full of energy and excitement and eager to take on any task. You were out to change and better the company, but the newness is bound to wear off and too often apathy sets in.

Apathetic workers typically care less about the company's well-being and are more apt to focus just on having a job and a paycheck instead of a career, says Garfinkle. "Once you've lost your passion, this apathy for the company's future is bound to lead to lackluster performance that may not just put your career on hold, but put it into a complete tailspin."

Switching Jobs too often

It's acceptable to switch jobs for higher positions, but too many lateral moves can damage your career over the long run.

"Making too many moves is a career killer," says Jaffe. "If you change jobs every two years, or every three or four years in some professions, you will look like a high-plain drifter without a home."

Jaffe says when his firm is searching for an attorney for a client he won't consider any candidates that haven't stayed at the firm for at least four years and prefers those with six or more years with a company.

"It says you are not willing or able to pay your dues in one place," says Jaffe. "You don't stay long enough to prove your value or lack thereof."