

Create a Career Plan for 2015

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It's one thing to have career goals, but according to Lisa Quast, a vague notion of where you'd like to go isn't enough. What you need, she says, is a strategic plan, and given that she recently wrote a book called *Secrets of a Hiring Manager Turned Career Coach: A Foolproof Guide to Getting the Job You Want. Every Time*, it's a safe bet she knows what she's talking about. In a wonderful Forbes post titled "How to Turn 2015 Into a Year of Career Success," Quast shares six tips for creating a plan, and they make a lot of sense. Read on to see what she advises.

- 1. Assess Yourself** – While you don't *literally* have to look in the mirror, it helps to take stock of your strengths and weaknesses and figure out what skills you're lacking. Once you've determined your shortcomings, brainstorm ways to overcome them. Perhaps there are seminars or books that can help.
- 2. Determine Your Aspirations** – It's like the old saying says: If you don't know where you're going, any road will lead you there. Figure out your career aspirations by asking yourself, "Where do I want to be in 3/5/10 years?"
- 3. Size Up the Competition** – It's a super competitive world, and regardless of your field, you're not the only one striving to get ahead. Take a gander at the competition and, as with step one, make note of your strengths and weaknesses. If you're lacking in some areas, how will you better yourself and increase your chances of success?
- 4. Create Goals** – According to Quast, goals are essential. They "reflect what you want to accomplish to improve yourself and to continue moving forward in your career." Identify your goals and make a plan for achieving them.
- 5. Jump Right In** – Once you've got your goals outlined, start trying to achieve them. Ditch your fear of the unknown and get moving. To quote another old saying: He who hesitates is lost.
- 6. Encourage Yourself** – At first, you may not receive a lot of encouragement from others, so it might be up to you to keep yourself inspired and motivated. Celebrate your successes with little treats – "new shoes, a movie night, a special dinner," Quast suggests – and above all, keep your chin up.



Career Woman, Inc.