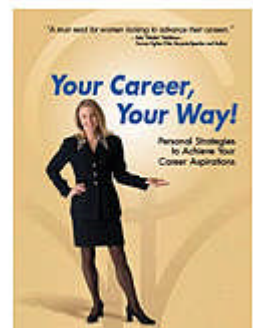


## Five Tips for Achieving Your Career, Your Way!

by Lisa Quast

A wise person once said, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." Achieving success requires more than luck, more than hard work - it requires a plan. The fastest way to take immediate control of your career and steer yourself to destinations of your choice is to treat your career as a business and treat yourself as a competitive product, using the same strategic planning steps that businesses use to position themselves competitively.

1. **Review your assets and liabilities, determine your differentiators, and obtain customer feedback.** Define yourself as a competitive product, challenge yourself by facing any weaknesses, and commit yourself to systematic improvement and upgrades. Identify those things that you do better than other people. Seek to understand the perception others have of you so you can be confident in the assessment of your assets, liabilities, and differentiators.
2. **Identify and evaluate your competitors.** Competition is a fact of life. Simply doing your job and hoping for the best is not enough. You need to compete for what you want. Competition and what you can learn from it should be viewed positively and embraced. Strive to be your best by understanding yourself and your competitors.
3. **Determine your goals and create your strategic plan.** Goals reflect what you want to accomplish to improve yourself. They will lead you to a greater sense of commitment and motivation as you pursue your aspirations. Like using a roadmap to arrive at a destination, having a clear strategic plan in place helps ensure you achieve your aspirations efficiently and quickly. Clarify your aspirations by building a personal strategic plan that will help lead you to success in your career.
4. **Implement your strategic plan and check your progress.** Strategic plans, like ideas, are effective only if you implement them. You alone are accountable for your success or failure - you are your own CEO. You must be willing to commit yourself to a plan of action in order to open the doors of opportunity. Having and implementing a personal strategic plan requires that you review and demonstrate progress. Make immediate corrections to unproductive or unsuccessful plans as soon as they become apparent. Do not procrastinate!
5. **Stay focused and be sure to celebrate and reward achievements.** Tenacity, courage and commitment are essential to achieving your career aspirations. Only you can achieve your dreams. Focus on the positive, but be prepared to overcome obstacles. Most important, give yourself encouragement and rewards that will help provide motivation and pleasure as you continue achieving your goals.



You truly can manage your career, *your* way and meet professional goals. You can put yourself in the driver's seat, steering yourself toward destinations of *your* choice. Make the commitment to treat yourself like a product, to continually upgrade your skills, and to differentiate yourself from others. Take control and be proactive. Never doubt that your dreams are worthy of your best efforts. It is hard work and you're worth the investment!

Lisa Quast is the President and Founder of Career Woman, Inc., a Seattle-based international career development consulting company ([www.careerwomaninc.com](http://www.careerwomaninc.com)). These tips come from her new book, *Your Career, Your Way! Personal Strategies to Achieve Your Career Aspirations*, published in January 2007. The book offers a simple, step-by-step plan for increasing professional growth and maximizing job potential.