

Date

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To

Partner Marketing
Employees

Dept./Loc.

Subject

Career Development

From

Steve Zecola

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Dept./Loc.

The issue of career development has received more attention in Partner Marketing over the past several months, and I think the progress has been good. MCI, as a company, also has upgraded its career development focus over the past several years with much improved training curriculum for all levels of employees. However, the tenor of the overall policy is that the individual is primarily responsible for his or her own career development at MCI.

Given MCI's policies on career development and my strong personal beliefs on this matter, I'd like to provide you some of my own views. These views do not necessarily reflect MCI's policies. Also, you should not interpret any of following thoughts as requiring action on your part as part of your job requirements at MCI. Rather, this is the sort of memo that you should take home and reflect upon during some quiet personal time. Career development, as you'll see in a second, requires a lot of hard work!

THE INDIVIDUAL

Each person represents a set of interests, skills and experience. Given that the corporate career ladder is pitted with personal challenges, competitive applicants and some "political" obstacles, it's important to carefully plan and line up your skills and experience in an area of personal interest to you to maximize your chances of success. The focus of a career plan should be to position yourself over time as the most competitive applicant for your long-term career objective.

THE CAREER OBJECTIVE

What's a long-term career objective? It's the first step in career development. To me, this requires that you to identify a job or jobs that you would like to have in five years. It's important not to simply point at some job or job title that you are aware of. Rather, you first need to ask yourself what

industry you want to be in. The answer should be influenced by both your personal interests as well as the prospects for growth and advancement in that industry. Second, you need to identify a company in that industry. Third, you need to identify a functional area in that company whether it be sales, marketing, finance, etc.

Don't be a victim of circumstances! Carefully think through where you want to be. Achieving your long-term career objective will take a lot work so it makes sense to be honest with yourself early on in the process.

THE CAREER PLAN

Once you have an objective, you need to develop a long-term career plan to meet your objective -- starting with education. The level and type of education that you get will influence how far and fast you can traverse the ladder. Education often becomes a door opener and also is used to winnow out applicants in many jobs. You should ask yourself and others what kind of education is required to get to the level of your career aspirations.

The second area to focus upon is your strengths and weaknesses. Typically, this involves looking at where you stand on basic skills including analytical, people/management, writing/communicating, etc. This should be an honest appraisal, and one that is independently compared to the evaluation of you by your peers and boss.

The third area of the plan involves training designed to address your weaknesses, which of course we all have but don't like to admit! Also, a rigorous training schedule that also addresses the skill set required for your long-term objective should be part of your career plan.

The fourth part of the plan should be alternative jobs that could take you to your long-term objective. Each person should identify four jobs as the next possible plan step. It's important not to put all your eggs in one basket. Also, job experience is key differentiator in almost all jobs. Often times, passing up a promotion that you are not ready for in order to take a lateral position that will make you more competitive down-the-road is the best approach to reaching your ultimate objective. These four jobs should be specifically identified as to level and job description.

The fifth component of an overall career plan is to identify and cultivate a working relationship with four "mentors". To me, a mentor is a person who is one level above you on the organization chart, and someone who is likely to be promoted based upon performance. In the workplace, it's important to know, get along with, trust and respect the people that you work with. Unfortunately, this is not the case with every situation.

Therefore, you need to go out of your way with business lunches and good communications techniques to develop the trust and respect of four mentors. Why four? Obviously, there is no proven formula here, but given the vagaries of the marketplace, putting all of your eggs in one or two baskets is too risky, and anything more than four is unmanageable.

PUTTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN MOTION

As you can see, career development is hard work! It requires careful thought as to your long-term career objectives based upon your skills, experience and interests, and a detailed plan to achieve those objectives. If you undertake a carefully thought out and planned approach, you will significantly increase your likelihood of advancement in the corporate workplace.

In addition, I believe that focusing on career development will add enjoyment to your job and career at MCI. I'm often told that I must really like my job based upon the amount of time that I put into it. That misses the point. My fundamental belief is that personal satisfaction in all walks of life is derived from setting challenging objectives and achieving those objectives. From my perspective, this is the best part of my job at MCI -- an ability to set aggressive personal challenges and to achieve them.

MCI offers each of us the opportunity for personal growth. However, MCI also leaves it up to each of us as to how far each of us will grow. I agree with that principle wholeheartedly, but I also believe that each of us should put the time and effort in to manage our own personal growth. Try it! I'm confident that you will agree that the best satisfaction in the workplace is derived from achieving your own personal growth objectives!!!

Steve