

HACE's Career Insights for Latino Professionals



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There are many avenues for career enhancement available to Latino professionals and we are proud of our collaboration with the Latin Business Club and the opportunity to share insights with you in the coming months. With this in mind, our first series will look at the Top 25 Lessons of Success provided by established Latino executives, providing important tips, advice and short-cuts on your path to success. We'll start with our first lesson and then cover other lessons in coming months.

Lesson One: Only You are Responsible for Your Career Development and Plan

Our first lesson is about ownership. That's right! Ownership of your career plan begins at home with you! At the end of the day, there will be nobody else that benefits more directly from your career success than you, so it's really about honing up to this responsibility as well as recognizing that you're the one with the greatest vested interest in your career growth. Others might want to help, but ultimately just might not have the time or ability to make it happen.

Interestingly, many Latinos, especially those employed by large companies or institutions, believe that their employers have processes in place for succession planning and that careers are mapped out for each and everyone all along the way. There is a belief that the large companies know what they are doing and so it's only logical that they will also work with you on your career planning, development and progression. Isn't this what HR is for? Don't they have a Succession Planning Department? Isn't that why we do performance reviews on an annual basis?

In the real world, however, rarely do companies have solid methodologies and true processes in place to determine the right career path for each and every employee. At best, some have a formal succession planning process, however, this involves typically only the top 250 or 500 professionals in the organization. This means that if you are not near the Vice President level and above, chances are you are not in the discussion nor top of mind when it comes to a company managing your career.

Furthermore, in the frenetic non-stop pace of life and business anymore, rarely do managers stop and truly think about what you might need to get ahead and how they can provide you with just the right experiences to get you promoted. While this is technically part of every manager's responsibility, we all know that in the real world, the day-to-day demands of business can derail even the best managers' intentions of taking care of his or her people.

That means that you must be responsible for the ownership of your career. By this, it is up to you to establish your own Succession Planning Committee, made up of friends and others that have your best interests in mind. People that really know you and want to see you realize your true potential would be the right ones to reach out to. Get together with them

about twice a year and establish a long-term relationship that will serve you well as you consider each and every internal move and possible switch to a new employer.

Your advisors can also serve as a sounding board if you are thinking of pursuing an MBA or any further education. Similarly, they should be honest and direct with you about their perceptions so that if you need to fill some important developmental gaps, you address them.

While your boss is presently the gatekeeper to your next move, in reality, you are the person with the power to really impress people around you and in other departments so that you get noticed and eventually everyone wants to pull you into their group. Career success comes primarily through hard work, dedication and above all else, through great execution and performance.

Well, we're getting ahead of ourselves for now, and will talk about all of the other magic that is necessary for you to be wildly successful and achieve your greatest career dreams in our upcoming columns.

No matter what level you are as a Latino professional, take ownership for your career and form your Succession Planning Committee today. This is an important first step in making it happen for you! As a Latino professional, you've already managed to achieve a great deal of success. Stay tuned on how to now take it to the next level!

¡Suerte!

Abe Tomás Hughes has over 20 years of successful corporate, entrepreneurial and civic success and leadership. He has his MBA from Harvard and is a graduate of Cornell University. To learn further about Latino careers go to www.hace-usa.org

