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Media Release

10 Tips For Managing Your Executive HR Career

Are you frustrated with the progress of your Executive HR career? We spoke to executive search expert Stephen Lennard, Joint Managing Director of Crown & Marks Executive Search who gave us these tips on shifting your career to a higher gear:

10. Seek personal satisfaction - If you're not satisfied, you're not going to work as hard, and your career is likely to stall out. Lennard points out that happiness isn't the same thing as personal satisfaction. "It's unrealistic to think that you're supposed to be happy at work all the time. That's simply unrealistic."

9. Master your job and do excellent work - It sounds simple enough, but negativity and boredom often lead to a downturn in quality, says Lennard, at the senior HR level, there's no room for inefficiency.

8. Set goals - Have an idea where you want to go with your career. Once you do that, you'll focus on finding ways to achieve your goal. If one opportunity doesn't work out, another will.

7. Learn and grow - The ideal HR executive or manager of today is a senior generalist who understands both a wide range of HR functions and the business. "If you can't become a strategic partner and sit at the table, you've missed the train."

6. Be flexible - The workplace is changing rapidly, and the human side of the equation is gaining more attention than ever. Flexibility is sometimes more important than actual knowledge. Organisations need individuals who can adapt and get up to speed quickly.

5. Develop a network - Yes, top HR professionals are sought out aggressively through the executive search process. But many of the best jobs come from a network of colleagues-those who know about great positions when they become available. Professional contacts can prove invaluable and help everyone realise gains.

4. Don't just look vertically, look horizontally - "At times the best moves are lateral," says Lennard. "There isn't any change in pay, there's no new title or fancier office. Such a move can allow personal and professional growth. What initially seems like a lateral move may eventually turn out to be the basis for a big vertical move."

3. Understand your company's goals - The better you know your company, the more likely you are to succeed.

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2. Evaluate your career regularly - It's not a good idea to change companies every eight months. But it might not be a good idea to slip into a pair of golden handcuffs either. Experts say it's now acceptable to change firms once every three to five years. The most important thing, says Lennard, is to make sure you get the experience and exposure you need to succeed.

1. Look before you leap - If you decide to make a move, learn everything possible about that company. Ask important questions during interviews, talk to colleagues who currently work at the company or deal with it, and ask yourself how your values and attitudes would fit in. "It sounds like common sense, but its amazing how often people make mistakes," says Lennard.

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