

Getting ahead

You probably have many dreams and plans in your career or life, but how do you get there? There are no short cuts to reaching your goal, and it usually involves a lot of hard work and slog. Here are my top 10 tips for getting ahead.

Be realistic—Set achievable targets and don't expect too much too soon. It is much better to achieve lots of smaller goals than constant failure from not achieving much bigger goals.

Be strategic—Write a yearly plan for your longer term career objectives and how and what mechanisms you need to achieve it. For shorter term goals, weekly and monthly plans, or both, can also be beneficial.

Be selective—Play to your strengths while developing weaker aspects.

Broadcast your talents—Don't wait for someone to "discover" you. When you do something well do not assume your line managers will somehow find out about it. Send them a memo or tell them directly about your achievement.

Explore new options—Don't get bogged down with just one narrow interest in your job. For example, if you are interested in research, focus on more than one area.

Create networks—Meet as many others in your field as possible and engage in collaborative projects and networks.

Be opportunistic—Don't miss out on things that come from unexpected directions. Be prepared to experiment and grasp opportunities when they come. Unlike buses, there is not always another one on its way around the corner.

Keep an open mind—Do not try to predict where the next project will come from.

Aim high—Try to achieve something every day (however small). This will reinforce your behaviour and will bring you closer to your ultimate goals.

Persevere—It may be a cliché, but if at first you don't succeed, then try again. Success comes through organisation, planning and resourcefulness rather than luck.