
Angie Morgan & Courtney Lynch, Lead Star's Founders

Best-selling authors Angie Morgan & Courtney Lynch learned these leadership fundamentals during their combined 18 years as Marine Corps Officers. Now they share practical leadership instruction with thousands of professionals in key Fortune 500 companies, law firms, professional service firms, nonprofits, and other leading organizations.



Strategies for Building an Enduring Career

by Carrie Ballone

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The last year has taught us how fragile a job can be. It didn't matter the size of the company, the industry, level of education or years of service, everyone became vulnerable. But in the midst of the uncertainty there is an important distinction to be made – a job is a place you go – where you get your paycheck – it's a day-by-day thing. A career is who you are, a career is connected to your passions, hopes and dreams. A job can disappear with the wave of a pink slip, mass e-mail notification or a bolted door. When cultivated, a career can evolve, grow and mature. You may not have control over the security of your job, but you can strengthen your marketability, despite economic challenges to create an enduring career.

Create Goals & Clarity

- ★ Who are you - what roles are you most fulfilled in? When you scan the job boards or envision your dream job, what does it look like?
- ★ Once you have identified your "sweet spot" ask yourself - how does that career path fit with your lifestyle preferences? There has to be a harmony between lifestyle and career.
- ★ Identify the gap in where you are now and where you want to be. What is missing? Training, education, connections? Clearly identify specific gaps and create a step-by-step action plan.
- ★ Create time-defined milestones based on the plan.

- ★ Find a partner, coach or friend who will hold you accountable and cheer you on as you work towards each goal.
- ★ Celebrate each milestone you reach.

Professional Development

Being knowledgeable is critical to being marketable. Learning is a lifelong process – it shouldn't end when we receive our degree, certification or complete the formal process of education. As professionals it is imperative to cultivate opportunities to grow and learn.

- ★ Degrees & certifications are not magic pills, but they can be door openers or closers. Keep certifications current and pursue or get the degree you need.
- ★ Attend seminars, "boot-camps" and presentations that address specific topics and provide learning opportunities that are current, relevant and interesting.
- ★ Join a professional organization. Professional networks can provide good opportunities to become aware of trends in your industry and meet people in your area of interest.

Are there serious constraints on your resources, time or income?

- ★ Research scholarships, public funds and low-cost alternatives.
- ★ Choose one organization to join and commit to it (they often can be sources of scholarship dollars).

- ★ Join or form a book club focused on reading and discussing books about business topics. If you can't afford to buy books, get them from the library or order used copies from online vendors.
- ★ Inquire if you can exchange volunteering for attending events.

Social Networks

The internet has exponentially increased our web of connectedness. It offers countless opportunities to make new connections, find old ones and share the ones you have.

- ★ **Build** your network. Focus on one or two social networks and build them out. The big plus is that these networks are mobile - they go with you if your employment situation changes.
- ★ **Preserve** your network. Networks are dynamic and should be cultivated. Stay in touch with people; see how they are doing, what is new with them. Be interested in others.
- ★ **Share** your network. Networking is about building relationships not what someone can do for you. Find opportunities to connect resources and build relationships.

Failure & Disappointment

Everyone fails at some point in their career, but you can leverage the failure and turn it into opportunity.

- ★ **Find the lesson.** Take a step back and determine what part did you play in the unfolding of the failure? Find a fearless friend to help you see clearly.
- ★ **Learn the lesson.** Identify your role in the failure and write it down, be specific. What is your weakness; impatience, intolerance, people-pleasing, passive-aggressive...
- ★ **Move on.** Once you have identified the failure, written it down and understood your role – acknowledge it and move on.
- ★ **Be aware of triggers.** In the failure is a weakness, be aware of when you are falling into the pattern again.

Community Service

We can't change everything but we can change something - commit to a cause - a local team, house of worship, community organization - find a way to make a positive contribution.

- ★ **Time** - every volunteer organization needs people - what can you do? If you fear commitment, volunteer at a single event. If you are ready to commit, become a mentor or join a committee.
- ★ **Money** - give a portion of your income to a cause you support. If your resources are limited - give a little - it adds up.

Tools – Keep Them Current

- ★ **Resume** - keep it fresh, keep it current.
- ★ **Markets** - look ahead, read, listen - know the trends and upcoming needs.

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★ **Quarterly checkpoints.** Take the start or end of each season to break away and evaluate your progress - make calibrations in your plan as needed.

Finally... stay positive, proactive and professional. In a climate of uncertainty the tendency is to lower expectations, compromise our goals and close ranks or cling to past success. Although you may have temporary setbacks, by actively implementing these brief strategies you can have a career that is built to last.