

Your plan for 2020

Level: Intermediate +

Time: 90 minutes +

Summary: This lesson offers 20 tips that can help everybody further their career. In this lesson, students:

1. discuss recent changes to their job situations;
2. read one part of a text offering tips for advancing your career;
3. take part in an information exchange with students who read the other part of the text;
4. compare which tips they found most useful and are ready to implement.

Materials: One copy of Worksheet 1 per student; one copy of either Worksheet 2A or 2B per student

Group size: Two or more

Note: This lesson plan is for both pre-experience and in-work business students based on an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* issue 1/2020. This lesson plan offers useful career and CV tips that are relevant regardless of the time of year.

Warmer

Hand out Worksheet 1. In pairs, students ask and answer these questions. Ask them to share any interesting information they get in answer to the questions with the whole class.

Key words

Divide the students into two groups: A and B. Give group A Worksheet 2A containing the first half of the article with tips 1 to 10, and give group B Worksheet 2B containing the second half of the article with tips 11 to 20. Each group should read their tips and find their key words in task 2. The definitions are given in the order that the words appear in the tips. Students can listen to how to pronounce the words as well as see them in example sentences by following this weblink: macmillandictionary.com.

Key:

A	B
1. <i>sounding board</i>	1. <i>skill set</i>
2. <i>insights</i>	2. <i>forging</i>
3. <i>internship</i>	3. <i>nurture</i>
4. <i>credibility</i>	4. <i>stable</i>
5. <i>pimp</i>	5. <i>invaluable</i>
6. <i>recruiter</i>	6. <i>snooze</i>
7. <i>submit</i>	7. <i>enclosed</i>
8. <i>coast</i>	8. <i>streamline</i>
9. <i>dreaded</i>	9. <i>cheerleaders</i>
10. <i>impediments</i>	10. <i>chit-chatting</i>
11. <i>performance review</i>	11. <i>moonlighting</i>
12. <i>bottom line</i>	12. <i>assessment</i>

Expressions

Students find and underline the expressions in their half of the text, read them in context, then match them with their meanings according to how they were used in the text.

Key:

A	B
1. <i>d</i>	1. <i>g</i>
2. <i>f</i>	2. <i>e</i>
3. <i>a</i>	3. <i>a</i>
4. <i>g</i>	4. <i>f</i>
5. <i>b</i>	5. <i>b</i>
6. <i>e</i>	6. <i>c</i>
7. <i>c</i>	7. <i>d</i>

Information exchange

a. Go back to Worksheet 1. In this part of the task, an A student sits with another A student, and a B student sits with another B student. Alternatively, especially in groups of fewer than ten students, sit all the As together and all the Bs together. They should talk about the tips they have read (either 1 to 10 or 11 to 20). Students should use this part of the task to ask each other questions about anything they did not understand. This is their opportunity to make sure they understand enough to be able to pass on the information in the tips to students who read the other part of the text.

Allow about ten minutes for this part of the task. After that, answer any remaining questions that students may have before moving onto part b.

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b. Now have the students sit in small A–B groups of two to four, with students from the other group. They should tell each other about the tips they read. Encourage them to use the key words from task 2 as they pass on the information.

This information exchange task makes up the heart of the lesson, so allow enough time – around 15 to 20 minutes – for students to complete it.

Using the expressions

a. Continuing to work in the same A–B groups, students complete the sentences using some of the expressions from task 3, adapting them to fit where necessary by changing the form or personal pronouns.

Key:

1. *brush up*
2. *knows the ropes*
3. *get a/your foot in the door*
4. *step up his game*
5. *catch up*
6. *take advantage of*

b. Then using either these same expressions or others from task 3, students come up with five more sentences.

Discussion

Tell the students to take a few minutes to answer the questions in writing before they share their answers in their pairs or small groups and discuss.

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When did you last ...

- update your CV?
- start a new job?
- take on new tasks at work?
- think about a career change?
- attend a training course?
- ask a more experienced colleague for help?

You will now work in two groups. Follow either Worksheet 2A or Worksheet 2B.

4 Information exchange

- First, talk about the tips you read with someone who read the same text as you. If there is anything you didn't really understand, now is the time to talk about it and get clarification.
- Now sit with students from the other group, and talk about all 20 tips. Try to use the key words from task 2 when you pass on the information.

5 Using the expressions

- Use some of the expressions from task 3 (from both parts A and B) to complete these sentences. Adapt them to fit where necessary.

- Before she goes to Paris next month, Jennifer needs to _____ on her French.
- I'm hoping to find someone who has presented at this conference before and therefore _____.
- My uncle knows the manager really well. I'm sure he could help you _____.
- Jonny's going to have to _____ in order not to lose his job during the merger.
- We really must _____ next time you're over from America.
- I plan to finish early this afternoon so that I can _____ the good weather.

- Use these or some of the other expressions in five more sentences of your own.

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6 Discussion

Answer the questions in writing first. Then discuss your answers in pairs or small groups.

1. When you read the ten tips in your half of the article, which of them immediately appealed to you and would you like to do?

Numbers: _____

2. Which three tips from the 20 will you definitely do or implement within the next two weeks?

Numbers: _____

3. Which three tips from the 20 would you like to do or implement within the next two months?

Numbers: _____

4. List the tips you find interesting but you either do not know how to do or will just can't do in your current situation.

Numbers: _____

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2 Key words

Write the key words next to the definitions. Then find them in the text to read them in context.

bottom line coast credibility dreaded impediments insights
internship performance review pimp recruiter sounding board submit

1. someone who listens to your ideas and opinions and tells you whether they think they are good or not

2. chances to understand something or learn more about it _____
3. a temporary job that a student or recent graduate takes in order to get experience in the area they want to work in _____
4. qualities that someone has that make people believe or trust them _____
5. make something better than it was before _____
6. people whose job is to get someone to work in a company or join an organization

7. formally give something to someone so that they can make a decision about it

8. carry on at the same level without making a significant effort to improve

9. frightening or worrying _____
10. things that make it more difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen

11. a meeting between a worker and their manager to discuss how well they are doing in their work

12. the amount of money that a business makes _____

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Text A

Had enough of your job? Ready for a career change? Or do you simply want to stand out in the workplace and finally get that promotion? LOIS HOYAL gives you 20 tips that will help you make successful career changes.

1 Find a mentor

We can all benefit from the wisdom of other people's experience, which is why a mentor at work is such a good idea. A mentor can be a sounding board for your ideas and provide you with clear advice and honest insights. Ideally, the mentor should be someone who is years ahead of you on the learning curve and represents who you want to become in the future. Equally, it could be several people, who can provide different insights.

Mentors can also ease the transition to any new, unfamiliar workplace, as Flavia Collins discovered while acting as a mentor in marketing subscriptions at Reed Business Information. "I think it was quite useful for new starters to have someone who knew the ropes who they could ask questions of," she explains.

2 Give it a try

Completing a short internship is an easy way to prove you're suitable for a job. What's more, an internship helps you better understand a potential employer and the world of work. Look online to find the right internship.

3 Join the club

You can't go wrong with membership of a professional association. Membership can provide you with free or discounted courses and conferences and, more importantly, networking opportunities.

Howard Elliot-Jones is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) in the UK. "If nothing else, it provides a degree of credibility when negotiating," he says. "It also often opens up new opportunities, particularly as some companies only recruit qualified surveyors." Look out for a similar association for your profession.

Pimp your CV

Why should you write your curriculum vitae (CV) yourself, when a professional can help you by doing it better? "One of the key benefits of hiring a CV writer is the external perspective they bring," says Neville Rose, director of CV Writers, one of the UK's leading CV-writing services.

"It's important to approach writing a CV from the point of view of the recruiter," he says. "The more you can focus your CV on the specifics an employer is looking for, the better your CV will perform. This can be difficult to do yourself. Being immersed in your job can make it difficult to approach it from any other way than writing from your own perspective. A CV writer can overcome this and get you thinking more deeply about your achievements and how to quantify these." Rose recommends starting with a detailed consultation so that the CV writer can understand you better and identify your key strengths.

Put it on camera

How else can you make your CV stand out? Well, why not submit it in video format? Video CVs are increasing in popularity, particularly for creative and customer-facing roles, as businesses look for new ways to attract a more diverse range of candidates, explains Sarah Brookes, marketing director at Prospects, careers experts for graduates.

And the increasing popularity of video CVs is justified, says Brookes. "Competition for jobs is high, and a video CV can offer an effective way to impress recruiters, helping you to stand out as someone prepared to go the extra mile. They can also help you to get across your personality and demonstrate particular skills, such as creativity, communication and digital skills."

A word of caution, though: some recruiters might prefer to scan quickly through a traditional written document and may therefore resent the time needed to watch a video CV. And if you're shy in front of a camera, then video CVs are probably not the right solution for you. Otherwise, you'll stand out for the wrong reasons.

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Text A

6 Get out of your comfort zone

If you've been in your job for a while, you can probably do it in your sleep by now. That's good, right? Wrong. It's when we start to coast that the problems start. In time, comfort will turn to boredom.

Career-change coach Avery Roth advises applying for a new job even if you're not looking for a change. "Executives often find themselves in roles that are comfortable but are not fulfilling them as deeply as they'd like. Applying for a job in the realm of 'the ideal role' can shift one's mindset to the possibility of that dream becoming reality."

7 Picture this

Visualize a bright future so that you can turn it into reality. Visualization helps bridge the gap between where you are in your career and where you want to be, says US executive leadership coach Cynthia Corsetti. "The fact is that 90 per cent of the impact and influence that is necessary to progress comes from intangible things like thoughts, moods and emotions."

So, how does visualization work? Corsetti suggests painting a clear picture in your mind of the "highest version" of yourself. "Think about your career right now and imagine that it's in a box," she says. "But say you want to go further. This is where you create a vision of another box. If it has you in a higher position, what has to be different about you to get there? You obviously have to step up your game. Once you get a clear visualization of that second box, you can begin to operate as if you're already that leader."

Corsetti also has advice on how you should respond to situations at work. "When a situation comes up at work, don't simply react. Ask yourself: how would that future version of me respond? How would that higher version of myself handle this? And then do that."

8 Turn weak to strong

It's that dreaded interview question: what are your weaknesses? So how about doing away with that professional weakness? Make a list of your weaknesses and then set goals on how to improve them. When

that interview comes around, you can talk about how you've turned a past weakness into a strength.

9 Work less, do more

It sounds like a paradox, but working shorter hours may help us achieve more.

Andrew Barnes, founder of the estate-planning company Perpetual Guardian, has introduced a four-day week at his New Zealand company. The idea is to let employees better manage their work-life balance so they can focus on work during company time. "In an always-connected world, one of the greatest impediments to creative thinking and leadership is the lack of downtime and the space to relax, recharge and re-evaluate ideas, concepts and opportunities," says Barnes. "It's my belief that if you truly want to stand out from the crowd, creativity is essential. And this isn't possible if you don't allow yourself the space to dream. The four-day week gives us that space." Barnes says that other benefits include lowering our carbon footprint and improved mental health.

10 Sell your value

Seeking a job promotion? Your performance review might well be the best way to win it. Build up a solid case to prove your worth, remind your boss of any recent accomplishments and show how you contribute to the company's bottom line.

And start early. Roberta Matuson, president of Matuson Consulting and author of the forthcoming book, *Evergreen Talent*, advises her clients to provide their boss with a self-evaluation several weeks before their review date. "When doing so, be sure to include all of your accomplishments, and monetize wherever possible. Also, include one or two areas where you believe you have opportunities for growth," she told *Business Spotlight*.

LOIS HOYAL is a former correspondent for Bloomberg News and has written for many magazines and newspapers, including the *Guardian* and *The Times*. She has also published two books. Contact: loishoyal@gmail.com



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3 Expressions

Find and underline these expressions in the article. Then match them with their meanings.

1. know the ropes
 2. immersed in something
 3. go the extra mile
 4. bridge the gap
 5. step up your game
 6. do away with (something)
 7. stand out from the crowd
-
- a. make a special extra effort in order to achieve something
 - b. improve your skills and talents
 - c. be better than others in your position and be easy to notice
 - d. know how to do something, especially a job
 - e. get rid of something
 - f. spend most of your time doing one particular thing or thinking about it
 - g. reduce the differences that separate two things

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2 Key words

Write the key words next to the definitions. Then find them in the text to read them in context.

assessment cheerleaders chit-chatting enclosed forging invaluable
moonlighting nurture skill set snooze stable streamline

1. the combination of different skills that someone has and can use in a particular job

2. developing a successful relationship, especially in business, with another person

3. look after something; help something to develop _____
4. a healthy mental and emotional state _____
5. extremely useful _____
6. a short sleep _____
7. surrounded by something _____
8. improve something by making it more modern, efficient or simple _____
9. a group of people, usually young women, who shout and dance to encourage and motivate people, especially at a sports event _____
10. making friendly conversation about things that are not very important

11. the activity of working at a second job in the evenings or at weekends

12. a piece of work or test done by a student so that a teacher can judge their level of progress

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Text B

Had enough of your job? Ready for a career change? Or do you simply want to stand out in the workplace and finally get that promotion? LOIS HOYAL gives you 20 tips that will help you make successful career changes.

11 Get the app

Nowadays, there's an app for everything. Try Todoist for to-do lists and task management, Asana for project management, allowing teams to track work and project results, and Calendar for choosing and booking meeting times directly linked to your calendar.

12 Educate yourself

Take advantage of free online learning courses, such as those provided by Khan Academy, to extend your existing skill set. Many well-known universities also offer free or cheap online courses. For example, it won't hurt your CV if you can say you have done a course at Harvard or Cambridge.

13 Date a stranger

A lunch date is a great way to catch up with established colleagues. But how about having lunch with a colleague you don't know well? Hardware developer Jesenka Veledar Krüger in Munich returned home from holiday to find she had a new boss, whom she'd never met before. A lunch date helped break the ice. "As a joke, I asked her if I should bring a red carnation, but we managed to find each other in the canteen," she jokes. "Having lunch together helped me get to know her and realize she was someone I could trust."

14 Keep in touch

While forging new contacts, also nurture your existing relationships. Send out Christmas cards, invite a contact you haven't seen for a while for a coffee or send an email to keep in touch.

15 Ride your way to success

Sport can help your mind to be in a healthier place for making decisions at work. Horse riding, for example, promotes both physical and psychological strength, says

Susanne Fuss, riding teacher at Reiterhof Aschbach. "Riding is more than just a physical sport involving your whole body, muscles and flexibility. Moving together with a horse is also a mental challenge. It's a matter of connecting with the animal and forming a relationship so that you can reach a common goal. It's necessary for the rider to take the lead, not by applying pressure but rather by using mental strength. This ultimately promotes body awareness and self-confidence and leads to a more stable personality. This is invaluable at work, as it leads to a more centred and reliable employee. Handling a horse correctly develops leadership skills."

Sleep on the job

Afternoon siesta, anyone? A short snooze of ten to 20 minutes can improve productivity by 30 per cent, benefit your mood and improve your learning ability and your memory, says Christopher Lindholst, CEO of MetroNaps, the maker of special office sleep stations called EnergyPods, used by Google and NASA, among other organizations. Taking three naps per week has been shown to reduce your chances of cardiovascular disease by almost 50 per cent, Lindholst explains. And it's a lot easier than going to the gym.

Employees wishing to snooze are enclosed in a comfy chair and can then be woken up after 20 minutes by music and vibration. The only problem is that an EnergyPod costs between \$8,000 and \$13,000, which may be enough to keep you awake at night.

Go digital

In this digital age, if you and your CV aren't online, then potential employers can't find you. Social media has become integral to the employment process and maintaining an active presence is essential to finding the right job, says Clive France, a digital entrepreneur based in Brisbane and London.

"Candidates should be active in broad-spectrum social media sites like LinkedIn," he says. "But also, establishing a presence and identity within your chosen profession or area of interest is vital and helps establish your credibility and suitability for the post."

16

17

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Text B

Managing your presence across platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can be time consuming. Thankfully, there are tools that can streamline and simplify the task. These include Hootsuite, the website and app that responds to your fans and followers, and analyzes your social-media presence. Sprout is a more expensive alternative.

“Whatever service you use to streamline the task, or whether you manage each profile individually, you need to post often, with authority and respond in a timely fashion,” warns France.

“Prospective employers are watching, and your social media profile can be an important factor in the process of finding a job.”

18 Cheer them on

Female cheerleaders are being introduced in tech companies across China, according to the state-run “Trending in China” Facebook page. Apparently, “pretty, talented” girls are being employed “to create a fun work environment”. The job description includes “buying programmers breakfast, chit-chatting and playing ping-pong”. The female cheerleaders are said to have improved the male programmers’ efficiency and motivation. So how about some male cheerleaders, too, for a bit of balance?

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19 Do a little moonlighting

One guaranteed way to get a foot in the door at a new company is to impress them while working there part-time. So why not consider a little “moonlighting” – doing an additional, part-time job? You never know – they might offer you a full-time position.

20 Ask for support

Unsure about what to do next in your career? Then seek professional advice. Career support centres allow you to explore career options. You can look through hundreds of individual job descriptions to find out the average pay and necessary qualifications for various jobs. And try out a skills assessment to learn what work might suit you. Alternatively, find a course to brush up your existing skills – or to learn new ones.

LOIS HOYAL is a former correspondent for Bloomberg News and has written for many magazines and newspapers, including *The Guardian* and *The Times*. She has also published two books. Contact: loishoyal@gmail.com



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3 Expressions

Find and underline these expressions in the article. Then match them with their meanings.

1. take advantage of
 2. catch up with (someone)
 3. keep in touch
 4. reach a common goal
 5. a timely fashion
 6. get a foot in the door
 7. brush up
-
- a. stay in contact with someone
 - b. in a way that means you are doing something at the right time
 - c. start working in an organization or business, especially when this will give you more opportunities in the future
 - d. practise and improve your skills or knowledge of something
 - e. talk to someone you have not seen for some time and find out what they have been doing
 - f. work together to achieve something that both of you are aiming for
 - g. use a situation or opportunity to get what you want