



SmartStart Success Secrets

The unspoken truth about getting ahead in business

“Today’s learner will have 10-14 jobs by age 38 and as many as 4-5 different careers over their lifetime.”

SECRET #1: Working in the Age of Job Insecurity

For generations, parents have dedicated their lives, resources, and wages to raising and educating children who are expected to one day go forth and get a job. And, for most of us, having a job is not just a major goal in life but an absolute economic necessity. In fact, many people are working at more than one job just to remain self-sufficient!

Accepting a job and entering the workforce is one of the most significant (and possibly life-enhancing) experiences you will ever have. For some men and women, the physical, intellectual, and emotional commitment made to working is even stronger than that made to partnering and/or parenting. Who doesn’t know of someone who sacrificed health or personal and family relationships on the alter of an employer?

The world of work has been an unparalleled influence in my life since September 16, 1967. Remembering that day, I can recall the precise moment I decided what I was going to do with my life in terms of getting a job. And since then, my career has taken many twists and turns, all of which I am convinced were leading me to the work I am doing now in helping you succeed in your career beyond your wildest dreams. Of course, I didn’t know this at the time I started working. But that’s how it has played out.

Throughout the passing years, I’ve been employed as a summer student, permanent full-time employee, permanent and temporary part-time employee, term contract employee, freelancer, independent contractor, and as a consultant been (and still am) an employer myself. Some days I think I’ve seen it all. Other days I can’t believe what I am seeing! And I have to wonder, where is the logic governing the events I see happening to all the people I meet in company after company?

“Your long-term survival on the job depends not so much on what happens to you, but on how you handle what happens!”

Job Loss – Are you at risk?

In the early eighties, I ended up self-employed. It wasn’t planned. It wasn’t my choice. It wasn’t even on my list of personal goals. But when I lost a fabulous management job (after having been on the fast track to the top for 10 years!) through no fault of my own due to a major economic recession, self-employment was my only option.

SUCCESS SECRETS continued

Not being much of a saver when I was young, I had to become responsible for generating my own pay cheque if I wanted to continue with life's little luxuries like paying the rent and putting food on the table. And I had to do it fast! Of course, I could move faster back then because I was a lot younger, wasn't married, didn't have any children to worry about, and I wanted to lose weight anyway! Freedom reigned.

Now I always believed I would one day return to corporate life and the security of a steady pay cheque. But it was not to be. There were no jobs to be had anywhere for almost three years! When the job market finally opened up again, I had lots of interviews. But the people who were interviewing me dreamed of one day having their own careers as independent consultants. They assumed, given my high profile in the media and entrepreneurial success track record, I could never be happy or be challenged enough working as an employee again. To this day I think they were wrong to make that assumption. But the bottom line is no one would hire me because they didn't think I would stay with the company long-term. Can you imagine? Strangers telling you they know better than you what you should do with your life? And what will make you happy? Stonewalling your future like that?

“Unfortunately, no one is safe. The only people with job security these days, are the ones who are self-employed and are out there creating their own jobs and work day after day.”

Fast forward to today's world. Everybody knows somebody who went to work in the morning, thinking the day would be just like any other day, only to find out that it was all over. End of job. Just like that. If it hasn't happened to you yet (and of course I hope it hasn't), you may be one of thousands who report for work every day fearing it might actually happen to you someday. And in this day and age, you will experience it at some point in your career, and perhaps even more than once. You need to be mentally and physically prepared for that!

Unfortunately, no one is safe. People are losing jobs in droves. Faster than they are being created, I think. There is a labour surplus for the most part. Sometimes people don't even know why they lost their job. In the age of job insecurity, the only people who can count on a pay cheque are the self-employed who are out there creating their own work! Sad perhaps, but true!

Of course, self-employment is not for everyone. But this program is not about my story, it's about yours—and what you are going to have to know and do to survive working in the age of job insecurity. We'll look at examples from my real-life experience in the Fortune 500 to show you the secrets for your success. I wish I could tell you if you apply yourself, work hard, do a good job, follow the rules, and make an honest attempt to be an asset to your employer that you will never want for employment. That's how it used to be when I was starting out. It's just not like that anymore. This is part of the reason I decided to create this mentoring program, so you would have every opportunity to stack the deck in your favour regardless of what's going on out there!

TIP #1	SETTING UP YOUR PERSONAL EMPLOYMENT FILE
<p>What to do!</p>	<p>Every person working needs to set up a personal employment file Day 1 on the job. Do not let your first day at work end without creating this critical file! This applies to employees, contractors and consultants alike. And to every job you'll ever have.</p> <p>In this file you keep your employment offer (or contract if you are and independent), your job description, and copies of any forms you complete for Human Resources (e.g., benefits and tax elections, other employment records). You should also keep information HR provides you with about the company and anything your boss shares about the department you'll be working in and the team you'll be working with (for example organization charts, mission and values statements, project or assignment lists, etc.).</p> <p>Over time, you will add other pieces of information to the file such as your annual performance plan, copies of your reviews, and copies of praise and testimonials you receive from others over the course of your employment.</p> <p>Also, put in it any communications from the employer describing changes to your job or changes to your benefits plans and programs and copies of any key correspondence you have with your boss.</p> <p>Forward any electronic documentation of the above to your personal email address. And keep your hard copies and your personal employment file at home and NOT in your desk at the office.</p>
<p>Why?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your offer letter outlines the terms of your employment contract. 2. Your job description explains what you have to do to live up to the terms of that employment contract. <p>It also helps you keep your resume accurately updated.</p> <p>(You should always have a current version that includes the job you are doing now on hand; you should never have to create a resume when you decide to look for another job. I'll explain why in future lessons.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Your job could end tomorrow morning without warning. Don't ever make the mistake of believing it couldn't happen to you! If you are escorted from the building the same day, as many people are, you will not be permitted to take your employment folder with you, nor will you be able to get your hands on the many critical documents you may need for future reference.