

CONNECT

LEADERSHIP



Getting Results Five Leadership Skills You Can't Do Without

If this article caught your attention, chances are your career is on the upswing. Your opinion matters with colleagues. You manage your time well. You hit your numbers. You don't worry too much about your career going off track as long as you keep doing the things you've done to get this far.

And that's precisely why you should worry.



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For more than 40 years, the Center for Creative Leadership has specialized in leadership development and research. By annually developing more than 22,000 leaders from 2,500 organizations across 120 countries, CCL helps organizations and individuals develop creative leadership—the capacity to think and act beyond the boundaries that limit potential. www.ccl.org

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For nearly 30 years, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®), a top-ranked, global provider of executive education, has studied executive derailment, or why high-performing leaders across the globe see their careers falter. The short answer: It's usually because of blind spots—serious leadership weaknesses that executives ignored (or never even noticed at all) in the headlong rush to make their numbers.

CCL senior faculty members Craig Chappelow and Jean Leslie documented why derailment happens and what can be done to prevent it in their guidebook *Keeping Your Career on Track: Twenty Success Strategies*. Through extensive work with executives, they found that staying on track means staying focused on interpersonal skills, adaptability, team leadership and bottom-line results.

Here are five key ways to make that happen:

1) Never stop getting feedback. Solicit it on a routine basis. Periodically ask your manager and others, “Am I working on the right things?” After a meeting, when you’re walking back to your office with one of your colleagues, you

might ask, “How do you think that meeting went? What could I have done better?” Ask for feedback that describes the situation in which you were observed, what you did and how it affected the person giving you the feedback.

2) Become more self-aware. Recognize your emotional reaction to changes, know your values and don’t let success go to your head. Your feelings of power can interfere with your willingness to learn from mistakes. Take time out



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to review the thoughts and feelings connected to your work. Under constant pressure to produce, some leaders believe reflection is a waste of time, but looking for patterns and getting perspective helps you remain flexible in the face of change.

3) Understand your organizational culture. Knowing how your organization thinks is critical for aligning yourself with its goals—and helps you weather the changes that occur in every organization over time. How do decisions get made? What assumptions does your organization make? But be careful not to

become too political in navigating the culture. Building on your interpersonal relationships means building trust.

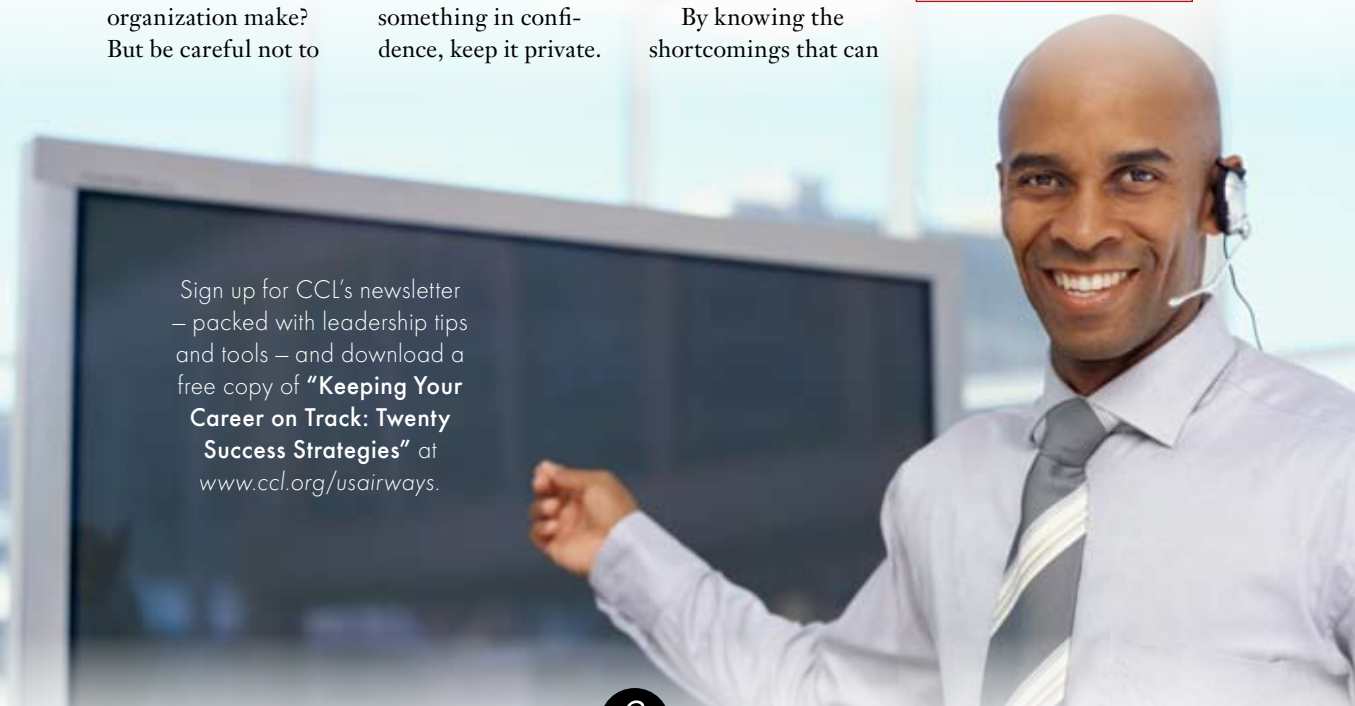
4) Show empathy. Your direct reports, peers and bosses are all human beings worthy of your respect. Listen without judgment. Don’t cut people off in the middle of a sentence. Take the feelings and perspectives of others into account. If you’re talking to a direct report, for example, be aware of the balance of power in the relationship and the effect it can have on your interaction. If someone tells you something in confidence, keep it private.

5) Learn to listen. Hearing isn’t the same as listening. Turn away from e-mail and the pile of papers on your desk and focus on the person in front of you. Separate what you think about the person from what he or she is saying. Ask questions to make sure you understand. If the person talking to you says something intriguing, make a note on it and get back to listening. Make it a goal, by the time the discussion is over, to summarize what you just heard from your colleague — without passing judgment or making snap decisions.

By knowing the shortcomings that can

knock your career off track—and conducting an honest self-assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses—you can start making adjustments right now. The sooner you do, the longer you’ll keep your career on an upward climb.

Be a more effective leader with resources provided by the Center for Creative Leadership. Just go to www.ccl.org/usairways, sign up for their monthly newsletter and download a free copy of “**Keeping Your Career on Track: Twenty Success Strategies.**”



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