

Trailblazing: Ten “Award-Winning” Strategies for Charting a Successful and Fulfilling Career

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1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT SCRIPT

- **Drama or comedy? Do your research**
 - Know your strengths/areas for growth
 - Determine your values and define success
 - Set goals
- **Be selective yet flexible**
 - Choose a field and environment that speaks to your values and strengths
 - Are your organization's values aligned with yours?
 - Can you create a path for success for yourself?
 - Adapt to change

2. PERFECT YOUR CRAFT

- **Become a recognized expert in your field**
 - Publish, speak and publish some more
 - Be active in NALP and other professional organizations
 - Build your credibility to strengthen your internal network and profile
- **Seek work from multiple sources**
 - Scientists have proven that women are better multi-taskers (but remember that Wonder Woman is a fictional character!)
 - Don't wait for a well to run dry
 - Build a community of satisfied customers



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3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT DIRECTOR

- **Mentors make all the difference**
 - Identify professionals who embody qualities you admire
 - The recipe for a successful mentoring relationship: TMA
 - Be proactive and reach out
- **Diversify your portfolio of “investors”**
 - Different mentors serve different purposes—have a personal Board of Directors
 - Younger professionals provide valuable insight and motivation
 - Individuals from another profession or organization lend a fresh perspective
- **Watch and learn**
 - Study what they do right and make it work for you
 - Understand what they did wrong and how they bounced back



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4. CHOOSE THE RIGHT EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

- **Everyone needs a champion**
 - A mentor guides while a champion advocates
 - Even senior professionals have someone looking out for them
 - They can help you to navigate office politics
 - Benefit from their influence by association
 - Remember the recipe: TMA
- **What's in it for them?**
 - Make it worth their while
 - Add value to the relationship—it will come back around



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5. SELECT THE RIGHT PUBLICIST

- **Be seen and be seen often**
 - Out of sight, out of mind, out of work
 - Working in the legal profession is a team sport—no one will pass you the ball if you aren't there
 - Reliability and stability engender trust
- **Campaign to win**
 - Toot your own horn!
 - Be consistent in word and deed
 - Develop and communicate your brand



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6. BE RED CARPET READY

- **Never underestimate the power of presentation**
 - One chance to make a first impression
 - Are you the total package?
 - Verbal communication
 - Nonverbal communication
 - Appearance
 - Your delivery should bolster your image
 - Business casual starts with “business”
- **Professional doesn’t have to mean personality-free!**



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7. HAVE A “SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK”

- **Learn the rules of the game—written and unwritten**
 - Learn your organization’s business model and financial structure
 - Know your value and communicate it
 - How can you help your cost center to be profitable?
 - Articulate your value and “ask” often
- **Become a key player**
 - Join a large national organization and *get active*
 - Distinguish yourself from others in your area by developing a niche
 - Establish a development plan with attainable goals—work on it every month!



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8. SHOW “TRUE GRIT” AND CREATE YOUR OWN “SOCIAL NETWORK”

- **What doesn’t kill us...**
 - Law firms and law schools are uniquely challenging work environments
 - Learn to self-acknowledge
 - Got boundaries?
 - “No” is a complete sentence
- **Have an outlet**
 - Create your own cheering squad of friends and family
 - Participate in hobbies that challenge your body and mind
 - Remember who you were before entering the legal profession!

9. DON’T LEAVE ANYTHING “UP IN THE AIR”

- **Strategize, strategize, strategize**
 - Approach your job performance and career development strategically
 - Be honest about yourself and your environment
 - Craft short- and long-term goals with deadlines
- **Map it out**
 - You wouldn’t drive without GPS on unfamiliar roads—don’t work without a game plan
 - Seek input from valued advisors (and be open to their feedback)

10. ALWAYS “DO THE RIGHT THING”

- **Do the right thing by your customers**
 - Especially when no one’s looking
 - Protect their interests (even those they don’t know they have)
- **Do the right thing by your employer**
 - Be an ambassador at all times
 - Never burn bridges
- **Do the right thing by you**
 - Follow your intuition
 - No one cares more about your success than you

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- ***Brag: The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It* by Peggy Klaus**
- ***Getting More: How You Can Negotiate to Succeed in Work and Life* by Stuart Diamond**
- ***Reinventing You* by Dorie Clark**
- ***Taming Your Gremlin* by Rick Carson**
- ***The Power of a Positive No* by William Ury**
- ***Women Don’t Ask* by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever**

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