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# How To Accelerate Your Career During Uncertain Times

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# How To Accelerate Your Career During Uncertain Times

#career #codenewbie



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Does the current situation have you wondering whether your career has come grinding to a halt? According to experts, growing professionally during a pandemic can be challenging but not impossible.

## View career paths as fluid

The steady climb isn't the only way to accelerate your career. Think also in terms of the sidestep, backstep, and all-important slingshot. Suppose you find your career plateauing. Consider moving sideways into a position of equal rank and pay, in an organization or division that promises more advancement opportunities. Or you could take a backstep, working for less pay or a less prestigious title, at a more innovative startup that offers new hands-on learning opportunities. A slingshot entails doing both a sidestep and a backstep at the same time—making fewer instantly-gratifying moves, and more choices that help you advance towards your career goals. When you apply the knowledge, experience and skills gained through these moves, you increase your chances of leaping far ahead of where you started.

## Focus on stretching yourself

Think you're short on job security? Researchers at Boston University found that the most successful contract IT and filmmaking professionals—among those careers most lacking in stability—pursued "stretch work," roles that emphasized learning new skills over increasing their income. Over time, they came out ahead of their peers. It pays not only to push yourself to learn new things but also to emphasize long-term personal growth over immediate financial returns. If a volunteer position helps you expand your work portfolio or make important contacts, don't be afraid to contribute. None of this time is wasted. You're building resilience and elastic skills that can be applied in any context.

## Leverage your network

Successful people understand that if they want to overcome significant challenges and

accelerate their careers, they need to surround themselves with a strong network of diverse individuals. And they are continually working to build those relationships. If you are one of the many people searching for a new job in the wake of Covid-19, don't be afraid to ask for help. The more you make others aware that you're looking for work, the better off you'll be. If you're shy about connecting with peers, find an excuse to be in their inbox, even if it's just to share an interesting article. You can also proactively network and make introductions between your connections, especially if they have similar interests or complementary skill sets.

### **Keep pushing forward**

Continuous change is the new norm. To thrive in these fast-changing times, change with them. To future-proof yourself, become more flexible. Today, winning isn't about having more resources, but rather being more resourceful. Getting ahead isn't about being a genius, but more ingenious. To succeed in unpredictable environments, find the courage to take chances. In unexpected times, everyone wants to be risk-free. Instead, create a competitive advantage by being risk-averse. Recognize that change is coming and make calculated bets that can help you gain the insights or talents today that will be in-demand tomorrow. Whatever your goal, pick a portfolio of promising growth activities to try—attend night school or take online computer programming courses. Just don't sit still while trends and competitors are evolving. Staying ahead of the curve is easier than it sounds, as long as you're staying in constant motion.

Self-isolation and social distancing can make professional advancement more difficult. Yet, despite these challenges, you can still accelerate your career. All it takes is a bit of creativity, initiative and the willingness to believe it's possible. Focus on these strategies now, and you'll be ahead of the curve when things inevitably take a turn for the better.

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