

10 Practical Tips for Fast-Starting a Successful Career

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Those starting a new business, embarking on an entrepreneurial venture or joining a large corporation may find the following tips invaluable in helping them succeed. As the president of a Fortune 100 Company, Fred Sievert observed and mentored many employees at all levels and developed these tips to help others achieve their goals.

"Even though I managed many employees at all levels, it wasn't until my daughter, Dena, approached me for career advice that I thoughtfully considered how people can rapidly gain a reputation as high-potential employees and significantly advance in their careers," Sievert said.

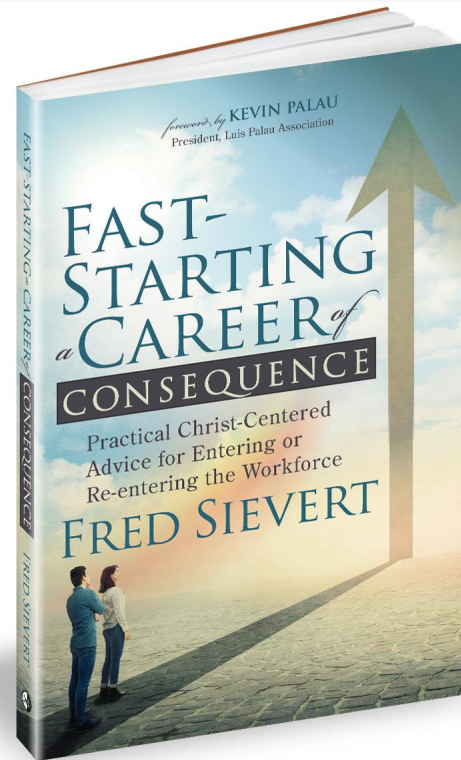
As the president of New York Life Insurance Company, Sievert thought about how he might notice someone within his own organization.

"That process led me to the following tips that can be of great value to you if you are entering the workforce for the first time or re-entering after an extended absence for child-rearing, military service or a COVID-19 furlough," he added.

1. Demonstrate Commitment

To be a future leader, show commitment to the company.

"One of the most tangible ways to demonstrate your work ethic is to get to work early, leave late and remain fully engaged in everything you do," Sievert explained. "In other words, put in the time. Also, seek out more work, complete assignments on time and within budget, and be vocal about your company's mission and good work."



2. Memorize the Company's Mission Statement

Almost every company has a mission statement. Commit it to memory and make decisions that align with that mission.

"Whenever you face a difficult decision, you can instantly recall the mission and test your decisions — and those of your peers and superiors — against the stated mission of the company. It is critically important that decisions align well with the company's mission," Sievert said.

Typically, most employees (even some high-level managers) are only somewhat familiar with the company's mission statement, Sievert said.

"Once people realize that you know the company's mission and are using it to guide decisions about your work, you will immediately gain a competitive edge over your peers."

3. Develop Organizational Awareness

To succeed in any organization, develop a network of contacts across the company.

"This will allow you to learn about their work and understand how they contribute to the all-important mission. Be eager to learn and understand the culture, how the company operates, who does what and how things get accomplished," Sievert said. "Understanding the company's culture will help you navigate the organization and achieve your work-related goals."

4. Develop and Demonstrate Strategic Capability

One of the most important qualities of successful business leaders is their ability to think strategically. To do this, become familiar with the company's products, services and target markets. What is the company's edge over the competition? Can the company sustain it?

Strategy is about beating the competition, so learn as much as possible about key competitors and their strategies. Read the company's annual report and strategic plan. Do the same for the available public information on the company's key competitors.

"If it is affordable, you can even mystery-shop the competitor's key products to compare against



Author and former president of New York Life Insurance Company Fred Sievert.

similar products at your company,” Sievert continued. “Are there consumer needs that the competition or your company are not meeting? Are there demographic segments of the market not being penetrated? By developing and demonstrating strategic capability, you will quickly gain a reputation as a high-potential employee.”

5. Understand the Financial Underpinnings of the Business

Many business owners and leaders simply don’t understand or appreciate the importance of financial results. This shortcoming is often a significant career blocker. Those without adequate financial training or knowledge should ask someone in the accounting department for a rudimentary understanding of the company’s income statement and balance sheet.

With that understanding in hand, start a quarterly tracking of the following six numbers:

- From the income statement: Revenues, expenses and net profit
- From the balance sheet: Assets, liabilities and net equity

“Few among your peers, subordinates (or even your superiors) will track these six key metrics over time,” Sievert said. “By doing so, you will differentiate yourself. And as your knowledge and familiarity with the numbers increases, go back to your friend in the accounting department and ask what I like to call the Killer Question. That question is, What drives the profitability of our business? If the CEO of your company hears that someone at your level is asking such a question, it is certain to get his or her attention. There’s no better way to get recognized and advance in your career.”

6. Take Charge of Personal Development

Regardless of the position within a company, employees should not assume that their superiors will monitor their development. They must take charge of it themselves by taking the time to attend developmental classes or seminars; staying current within their personal fields of expertise; and being willing to join industry organizations and key committees that will enable interaction with leaders in the same field.

“By taking charge of your own development, you will demonstrate initiative and a commitment to your own career growth, which your superiors will notice,” Sievert said.

7. Over-prepare for Every Meeting

New employees may be invited to attend meetings and, at times, be asked to perform menial tasks like taking notes. Regardless of what is expected (even if the expectation is to sit quietly and listen), take the time to over-prepare. Seek out the presenters, and ask to review their materials in advance. Then follow up and ask questions to get an understanding of the topics and issues that will be discussed.

“Initially, this will be a learning experience, as opposed to an opportunity to display your knowledge,” Sievert explained. “Don’t risk appearing arrogant by leaping into the conversation

inappropriately because perceived arrogance is a major career blocker. Over time, you will be more comfortable engaging in discussions, and in the future, you will likely be asked to lead meetings or cover certain topics of discussion within meetings.”

8. Make Every Presentation a Command Performance

Those fortunate enough to be asked to make a presentation of any kind should always strive to make it a command performance. Do the homework, know the audience, identify the key points of the presentation and then reinforce them three times: at the beginning, in the body of the talk and in the closing, with a recap of the key points and a call to action.

“Use humor to relax yourself and storytelling to make an impact and be memorable,” Sievert suggested.

Never read presentations. Write them out, rehearse them aloud and condense the written presentation into bullet points. Then cycle through that sequence a few times until each bullet point contains only a few words.

“By making every presentation a command performance, you will demonstrate confidence, preparedness and the ability to engage and persuade your audience.”

9. Demonstrate Integrity and Earn Trust

Integrity and trustworthiness are qualities that are essential to future success in any career. Some simple ways to begin to earn trust and demonstrate integrity are being honest, keeping promises, being accountable and admitting mistakes.

“You can earn trust by praising your colleagues’ work, showing trust in others, avoiding gossip, treating coworkers with respect, being humble and using self-deprecating humor,” Sievert said. “Most people rely on the ability of superiors, peers and subordinates to notice those characteristics in them. To fast-track your success, make a conscious effort to demonstrate those qualities.”

10: Balance Faith, Family and Career

This may be the most important of all the tips, Sievert said.

“Whether you are in the early stages of your career or you have advanced into greater responsibilities, the demands on your time can be quite extreme. With today’s technology, we are hyper connected to other people and to seemingly infinite amounts of data and information, available to us in a millisecond. But we all seem to be more overworked, less productive and more stressed than ever.

“We need to focus on what’s truly important in our lives — often a balance of faith, family and career — and then prioritize those elements in our daily schedules. We all need to develop coping skills that enable us to balance the many priorities we are juggling.”

In Sievert's case, effective coping resulted from a combination of the following, which enabled him to achieve a semblance of balance:

- Frequent, dedicated time with his spouse and each of his five kids, including a one-on-one annual trip with each child
- A daily morning routine that included a physical workout, an email or text to each family member, Scripture reading and prayer before leaving for work

"Embracing and implementing these tips will enable you to fast-start your successful career and rapidly gain a reputation as a high-potential employee," Sievert summarized.

Author Fred Sievert is the retired president of New York Life Insurance Company. Following retirement, he earned a master's degree in religion, and he has written three books. His latest book, [Fast-Starting a Career of Consequence](#) is available on Amazon.com and on his website, www.StoriesOfGodsGrace.com.

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