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# Five key steps for conducting a career checkup

**"Talents are common; everyone has them — but rare is the courage to follow our talents to where they lead."**  
— Anonymous

Even though more than six months have passed in 2014, you still have time to conduct a basic career checkup. Think about when was the last time you: Assessed your talents? Asked yourself how you felt about your job? Reviewed how things were progressing? Determined whether you were bored or frustrated? Wondered why you had not been promoted? Decided it was time to move on or to make a transition? Furthermore, even if you're happy with your present career, a quick review of your situation can still be revealing in helping you to establish what steps you can take to make your work life even more fulfilling.

Use these five steps to help you assess your current status and create a plan for the upcoming year.

1. Evaluate last year's progress. Did you achieve your goals? (Hopefully, you set some.) How about partial achievements? They count too. Consider this: If you were to put together a highlight reel of the past year, what would be your "Top Five" accomplishments (i.e., impacts you had on your company)? It's amazing how patterns about your skills, abilities, strengths and interests can be revealed during this process, as well as used for future goal setting, personal brand development and an enhanced online presence.

2. Revisit your career values. This step can be completed by simply asking

yourself, "What do I want out of work?" Examples could include people engagement, intellectual stimulation, close proximity of office location to residence, security, salary/benefits, competition, flexibility, creativity or helping others. Identify your "Top Five" career values keeping in mind these values can drive your decision to accept a job, stay on a job, leave a job or make a total transition to another career.

3. Identify professional development opportunities. Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics Inc., once said, "Don't limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you." So, what have you done lately to move yourself forward in your career? What professional development activities have you been involved in to improve your performance, your credibility and credentials? Research workshops, seminars, conferences and professional organizations in which you can participate to leverage your marketability.

4. Analyze industry outlook. Take a look at the trends. What is the economic state of your industry? Is the market growing or declining? Are the numbers of jobs shrinking or growing? Are there new products, services and technology on the horizon? How do sales look for the coming year? The answers to these questions could possibly impact your job outlook.

5. Update your career materials. Is your résumé up-to-date? Most people don't update their résumés until they

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have to. Avoid getting caught in that trap. Make it a habit to always have a current résumé.

Now, what about your LinkedIn profile? Is it built up to, at least, "Expert" level? Does your profile have a professional portrait? In fact, LinkedIn has said entries in search results with photos beside them are seven times more likely to be clicked than entries without photos. Just make sure you have a professional-

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looking portrait. While updating your LinkedIn profile, I also suggest you Google your name to see what comes up. This search can enable you to make sure all of your online information is consistent, as well as to take measures to eliminate any unwanted information.

The bottom line is in what direction is your career going? Are you satisfied with your current position and accountabilities, as well as your employer, type of company and industry? By conducting a career checkup, you can determine your status and gain information that can help ensure you are getting the most from your work life for ongoing success.

**For more information on Dr. White's programs and publications, visit [www.successimages.com](http://www.successimages.com) or call (225) 769-2307. ●**