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Your career could use some resolutions, too

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Lauren Herskovic's New Year's resolution is to "party more."

As managing editor of CollegeCandy.com, a blog for college women started in Hoboken, Herskovic's responsibilities include writing columns about sex, relationships and partying. Being out of college for a few years now, this lifestyle no longer comes naturally. So she has resolved to "leave the house more, party more and meet more men" in order to have more to write about.



LEE E. MILLER

Most of our careers will not be helped in 2009 by partying more, but they will benefit from being proactive about how we manage them. When most people set goals for the New Year, however, careers tend not to be at the top of the list. According to a recent survey by Franklin Covey, none of the top New Year's resolutions for 2009 dealt with careers.

The top three were to save more, lose weight and exercise more. Since this year is likely to be one of both career challenges and opportunities, along with getting your bank account and your body in shape, you might consider adding some resolutions that will help get your career in shape as well.

Here are some career resolutions for 2009 that you may borrow:

Stay focused on what you can control. Focus your efforts on what is important to your company and what you can change. Do the best job you can. Pay attention to the bottom line. Look for ways to help increase sales or save your company money. Make your boss look good and demonstrate your value on a daily basis by making your boss' priorities your priorities.

Stop worrying about the general state of the economy. If you have a job and haven't been asked to take a pay cut, for you there is no recession, only opportunity. Ignore the pundits who are predicting doom and gloom for the economy. Even 6 percent unemployment means 94 percent of the work force has jobs. House values will eventually go up and so will your 401(k). Take advantage of the opportunities to find values in the stock market or refinance your home at historically low rates. Unless you are retiring in the next few years, the daily gyrations of these markets have very little immediate effect on your life.

Learn a new skill that will help you do your job better. New technology is available to help you become more efficient and serve your clients better. Familiarize yourself with available technology and master new skills that will be valuable to your organization. Whether it is PowerPoint or viral marketing get comfortable with the technology being used in your industry and strive to stay current with advances in your field.

Be visible and promote yourself. Volunteer to take on added responsibilities. Demonstrate a consistently positive "can-do" attitude. Make sure your boss knows about your successes. Increase your involvement in professional associations and activities.

Be prepared in case you lose your job. Even when the economy is booming, takeovers occur, bosses change and people lose their jobs. So resolve always to be prepared for those possibilities. Build your professional network by reaching out to help others while you are employed. Get your finances in order. Have an updated résumé and an action plan ready to begin a job search if necessary.

Help those who have been affected by the recession. Go out of your way to help people who have lost their jobs. Invite them to lunch or for coffee and offer advice and share contacts. Keep them in mind when you hear of job opportunities. Most importantly, listen and offer support.

The biggest mistake people make regarding New Year's resolutions, said life coach Caroline Adams Miller

(no relation), "is not to make any." Miller, the author of "Creating your Best Life," said research shows people who make New Year's resolutions are more likely to be successful in the areas they focus on than those who don't.

So set career goals for yourself this year. Then take the time and effort necessary to carry them out.

A veteran human resources executive, Lee E. Miller is a career coach, the author of "UP: Influence Power and the U Perspective -- The Art of Getting What You Want," and the co-founder of YourCareerDoctors.com, a Web site devoted to career success. Mail questions to Lee@YourCareerDoctors.com.

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