

The 10 New Career Commandments

SECRETS TO PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS
IN AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY

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Welcome!

This e-book is the first step towards greater career control.

The following 10 new career commandments offer honest insight into the best way for us to create true career satisfaction on our own terms in today's economy.

Let's begin...



Table of Commandments

1. EVERY Job is Temporary
2. Diploma ≠ Your Golden Ticket
3. SAVE or MAKE Money... That's It
4. Solve Problems = Employability
5. We're All Businesses-of-One
6. Forget Online Job Search
7. Work-Life Balance Doesn't Exist
8. Career Paths Are Dead Ends
9. Hiring IS Discrimination
10. Stop Embracing Behaviorism



1. EVERY Job is Temporary

Gone are the days of long-term, full-time employment. The average American will have multiple careers in their lifetime. In fact, the average college grad has as many as seven jobs in the first 10 years of their lives.

FACT: We are all just temporary workers on extended assignments.

The upside is we are now encouraged to switch gears and course correct as needed. The expectation to stay at an employer for a lifetime is gone. We are free to pursue satisfying career paths on our own terms. Better still, when we approach a job hunt as a search for a mutually beneficial partnership, the work is:

- More enjoyable.
- Builds our skills in areas we want to excel at.

However, it also changes our mindset, and gets us to contemplate the question:

“How do I look for projects to contribute to, instead of jobs to work at?”

hire
me!
(Please!)

Action Step: Embrace Reality

- Accept your next job definitely won't be your last.
- Focus on finding work that supports short-term goals that will get you a step closer to your long-term ones.
- Anticipate the day will come when you'll need to move on to maintain career satisfaction.



2. Diploma ≠ Your Golden Ticket

Over 3 million students graduated from college last year – less than 25% got job offers. An estimated 5M Americans are currently considered "underemployed" and working in jobs they are viewed as over-qualified for compared to their educational status.

FACT: A college diploma does not guarantee a good paying job or professional security.

However, a bachelor's degree still seems to be a pre-requisite for most professional positions. Which means, researching and pursuing an affordable degree (expensive schools aren't always better), that is clearly going to be useful across a variety of career paths is still a solid financial investment. And, for those over-degreed and under-utilized, the question becomes:

"What can I do to get on a career path I feel is worthy of my accomplishments?"



Action Step: Check Perspective

- Expect to prove to employers your degree has advanced your skills (a.k.a. quantify your experience).
- Example: Provide real-life examples to validate your education - think practical application over theory.
- REMEMBER: Talent can't be bought. Don't assume or act like paying for your degree entitles you to more. Instead, showcase how you've made the most of your investment in a degree.



3. Save or Make Money... That's It

Companies only stay in business when they make enough money to cover their costs. They can't hire us just for fun. To justify our job, they need to believe out of all available candidates, we offer the best value.

FACT: Hiring managers need to hear us articulate how we will either SAVE or MAKE them money – enough to pay for our salary.

The old saying, “actions speak louder than words,” actually applies in job search - at least in terms of how we must present ourselves.

Employers need to hear proof we aren't just nice-to-have, but rather, a complete must-have for their company. Examples of past success that offer statistical evidence of our ability to save or make a company money must be part of our personal brand. In short, we ask ourselves:

“How do I prove to employers I will be a valuable asset?”



Action Step: Quantify Yourself

- Be able to articulate how you save or make money in quantifiable terms.
- Use statistics and numbers from your accomplishments to prove your value.
- Nobody likes to over pay for something – hiring managers are no exception. You must prove you are an incredible value for the \$\$\$.



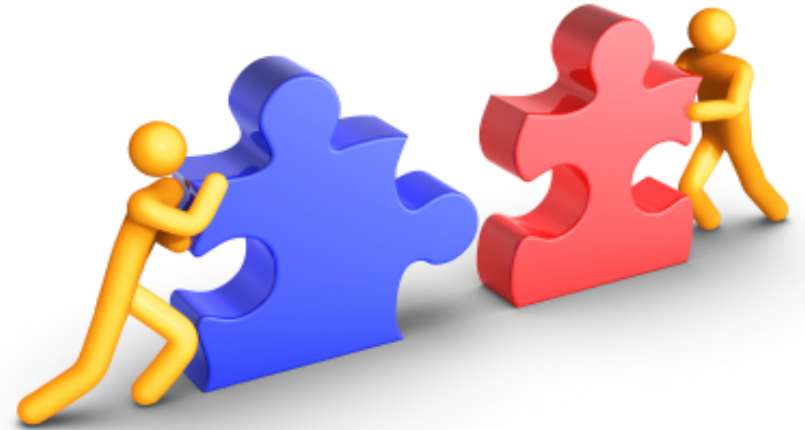
4. Solve Problems = Employability

Nothing makes us feel more satisfied than solving a problem. It provides us with a surge of energy. Given how much time we spend on-the-job, work that has us solving problems we care about ensures we stay engaged and motivated. More importantly, it builds our marketable expertise!

FACT: Being viewed as a problem-solver gives us professional authority that can be leveraged to advance our careers.

Employability is our capacity to be employed by many different companies. It's our perceived value as a flexible resource who is vital to the success of the business. When we pursue work that let's us solve problems we care about, the result is greater employability that translates into more opportunity. So, we ask ourselves:

“What are the problems I love to solve that are equally important to employers?”



Action Step: Build Go-to Potential

- Consider what problems you enjoy solving on-the-job and confirm they save and/or make a company money.
- Develop a plan to build your expertise in this area and make it part of your personal brand.
- Market your expertise in all career tools including your resume, LinkedIn profile, etc.



5. We're All Businesses-of-One

In an uncertain economy, it's easy for us to want to focus on finding job security. Yet, no company can offer us that. The rate of change in business means EVERY job is temporary. (Remember Commandment #1?)

FACT: Despite our need for an income, we must remember we are all “at-will” employees. (We're a business-of-one that gets to choose who we work with.)

Instead of viewing ourselves as dependent on employers, we should see them as clients with whom we want to set a win-win relationship. This enables us to approach the job more objectively. It also reminds us to pay attention to making the client happy, keeping in mind we should always be looking for our next client so we don't go out of business. Hence, we ask ourselves:

“Who would get the most out of buying from my business-of-one?”



Action Step: Step Up Sales & Marketing

- Each business offers unique benefits that attract clients. What would make employers want to buy you?
- Every business has core values and a corporate culture. How would you define yours?
- No business relies on just one client to keep them in business. Who are you networking with in the event you need a new employer?



6. Forget Online Job Search

Nationally, there are six job seekers for every job posted online. Job seekers are applying to 100s of positions and hearing nothing back. On the flip side, employers are drowning in a sea of applications from candidates – forcing them to weed through mounds of paperwork to find the few who fit.

FACT: Applying to jobs online is actually a time-consuming, lonely process that rarely provides a decent return for our efforts.

80%+ of all jobs being landed these days are gotten via referral. And, with millions of professionals using social media tools like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, networking is no longer limited by geography. We can actually increase our chances of getting hired by using on-line tools to help us connect with people who can introduce us to hiring managers. Which makes us ask:

“How can I develop and expand my career network both in-person and online?”



Action Step: Strategic Networking

- Identify companies you'd like to work for and start to seek introductions to current and former employees so you can do research on the best way to get hired.
- Make time to attend industry events, trainings and other in-person opportunities to meet like-minded professionals.
- Use social networks to find and follow industry experts you'd like to connect with. Join online associations and groups that bring together like-minded professionals.



7. Work-Life Balance Doesn't Exist

We live in one of the most well-developed countries in the world. Yet, as much as 72% of workers hate their jobs. The problem lies in the fact we see our jobs as a big part of our personal identity. Thus, when we are unhappy on-the-job, we are unhappy in life.

FACT: We are caught up in being able to answer the question, “What do you do?” in a way that gets respect – and it’s costing us happy lives.

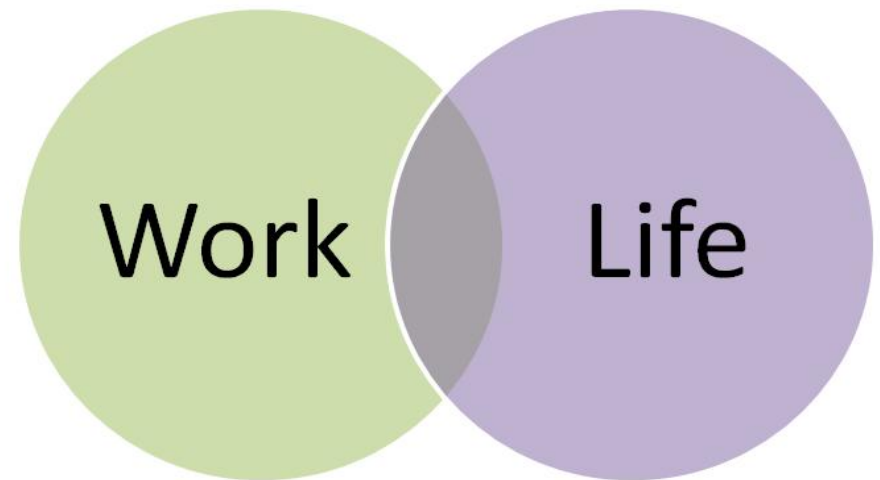
Those who feel a real sense of work-life balance attribute it to defining and pursuing career success on their own terms, not someone else’s. They also focus on customizing their careers in a way that impresses and excites them, as opposed to trying to impress others. In short, work-life balance doesn’t exist. It’s a state-of-mind that makes us ask:

“What’s my personal, authentic definition of career success and how can I make it happen for myself?”



Action Step: Develop Realistic Vision

- Recognize work is part of life. Stop blaming it for your dissatisfaction.
- Consider what work would make you feel happy and determine what you'd be willing to give up to pursue it as a career. (i.e. less pay, for more job satisfaction?)
- Stop comparing yourself to others. No two people want the same things – especially, when it comes to work.



8. Career Paths Are Dead Ends

More than 50% of the jobs today's college grads will have in their lifetimes don't exist yet. In the last two years, 1000s of people lost jobs in industries that will never revive.

FACT: Following a proven career path from the last 20 years does not guarantee security. Putting our careers on auto-pilot is risky.

As much as we all want someone to tell us what to do to find career satisfaction, assuming picking a career with a clear path will guarantee success is short-sighted. We can certainly research career paths we find exciting. We can also talk to people who we feel have the career success we aspire to achieve. But, even then we must build our own route to success. As a result, we must expect to make wrong turns and prepare to double-back to get ourselves back on track. This makes us ponder the question:

“How can I make informed choices that will help me get to my career goals faster?”



Action Step: Keep Options Open

- Research several careers of interest and look at transferable skills you could develop that would apply to them all.
- Watch your industry for signs of decline. Get out BEFORE it's too late.
- Taking a pay-cut to get into a field with more opportunity is smarter than hanging on to a high-paying job that ends in a lay-off and no future.



9. Hiring IS Discrimination

While we've come a long way in terms of trying to minimize discrimination against, race, gender, etc. The fact still remains choosing one candidate over another is discriminatory. Hiring managers choose the person they see as being the "best fit," and the criteria they use isn't always objective. Studies show attractive people get more job offers AND get paid more. More than a few hiring managers admit to judging over-weight candidates. A recent poll shows 27%+ of hiring managers have opted NOT to hire candidates based on what they saw in an online search about them.



FACT: We are being judged – not always fairly.

How we present ourselves, both online and in-person impacts our career success. Is it fair? That doesn't matter – it's reality. We choose how we present ourselves, and that determines what opportunities we are given. Which makes us ask:

“How can I develop and expand my career network both in-person and online?”

Action Step: Personal Branding

- Step back and evaluate every element of your personal brand. How do you look? What do you say? What do you offer? It all matters.
- Invest in altering your brand. If needed, seek objective help.
- REMEMBER: You can't please every hiring manager, so focus on a personal brand that attracts the right employer for YOU.



10. Stop Embracing Behaviorism

Years ago, psychologist, B.F. Skinner, came up with the theory of behaviorism. The idea is simple: Do this and you'll get that. We took his incentive model to the extreme in America, applying it to parenting, education and business. The problem is it's really just a bribe – and deep down, nobody likes to be bribed. Stickers, grades, praise, and bonuses are all examples of behaviorism. We like to chase the incentive, but after, we feel let down.

FACT: Long-lasting professional satisfaction comes from being internally motivated to do the work. We do it because it matters to us. Not because someone is bribing us.

To find real career happiness in an uncertain economy, we must stop looking for incentives. The work is the incentive. Which means, we have to focus on work that leverages our unique strengths and offers us things that matter to us – not someone else. Which makes us ask:

“What kind of work makes me feel so good inside I don’t need any other incentives to do it?”



Action Step: Find Your Motivation

- Reflect on your career and see if you have been too focused on the perks and rewards (a.k.a. bribes).
- Ask yourself what work you'd do for free. Then, start to research how to get paid for doing that type of work.
- REMEMBER: An enjoyable career isn't an easy one. Roll up your sleeves and work for what you want – it will make success even more satisfying!



In Summary...

The game has changed. But, that doesn't mean we should give up on finding professional satisfaction. By following these commandments, we can teach ourselves how to take control of our careers.

We only get one life – it's up to us to make the most of it!

Even still, to assume we should do this alone isn't wise. Each of us has a unique set of talents and desires we are looking to apply to a meaningful one-of-a-kind career goal. Given this challenge, it's natural for us to read these 10 new career commandments and ask:

“What tool could help me manage my career most effectively?”



Solution: CareerHMO

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About the Author

Jeanine Tanner “J.T.” O’Donnell is a career strategist and workplace consultant who helps American workers of all ages find greater professional satisfaction.

O’Donnell’s work has been cited in *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, CNN.com, MSNBC.com, AOL.com, CareerBuilder.com, BusinessWeek.com, Mashable.com, Yahoo.com, Monster.com and dozens of other national publications.

In 2008, she founded the career advice site, [CAREEREALISM](#) which is now a top-three world-ranked career advice blog, featuring the best career experts in America.

In 2009, she launched [CareerHMO](#), a virtual career center staffed by experts who help professionals solve their career challenges and avoid making costly career mistakes.

Her book, [CAREEREALISM: The Smart Approach to a Satisfying Career](#), outlines her highly career-coaching methodology. She also works with Dale Dauten to write the career advice column “[JT & Dale Talk Jobs](#),” a nationally syndicated column that appears in more than 130 newspapers, reaching 6+ million households weekly.



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