



CAREER VISION

Support Is Key to Reaching Goals

People are our most valuable resource. Not only is that true for organizations, it is true for you! One of the strongest assets to have in this rapidly changing world is a good support network. The frequent fluctuation in the economic environment and social fabric creates a need for people to build connections with others as sources of information, expertise and encouragement.

Historically, our communities, workplaces and the types of knowledge and skills we needed to be successful were relatively stable. There was less mobility and the paths for advancement and growth had greater definition. In today's less predictable marketplace, support networks allow us to leverage our personal reach enabling us to positively influence not only our growth and development, but also that of others. Research demonstrates that good interpersonal relationships give us an advantage by being better informed, making more realistic, goal-oriented decisions and maintaining motivation. Networks bring us opportunities and give us a chance to help others. In addition to our education, health and attitude, knowing how to build a personal support network is an invaluable asset.

What is support? Support is the tangible and emotional encouragement and advocacy we tap into during times of challenge and growth. Support comes from the care, guidance and insights of the people we know or who know and understand our goals. This is not a dependency, but a respect built around mutual good intentions regarding a transition or goal.

What and who are some of the supports available to us? Of course our families often have provided the foundation of our support, from the basic roof over our heads to the encouragement and opportunities to try out, improve or expand our talents. As youngsters, school teachers, park district coaches and other youth leaders encouraged the development and achievements of all children. And our friends offer solace, humor, encouragement and experience as we share our journey.

Over the years, different categories of support have evolved. As the decision points we face over our lifetime have become more frequent and complicated, imposing greater implications for our future, our support requirements have changed. Like organizations that contract or outsource work outside of their core competencies, we now have available a specialized services network to augment our decision-making and personal and professional development. Borne out of our desire to achieve, to stay competitive, and to make the most informed decisions, our support networks have expanded from family and friends to include specialists providing fee-based services and relationships.

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Support Is Key to Reaching Goals Page 2

Once available to a wealthy few, the rise of lifelong learning, personal coaching and consulting, financial planning, personal trainers and other service providers highlight our need for and the benefits of more sophisticated and specialized support. This trend began in our youth as we may have worked with tutors, took private music lessons, attended camps for sports, music, or art and joined classes to prepare us for college entrance exams. These supports all gave us an edge.

As adults, our membership and active participation in professional and networking organizations, in person and online, keep us connected with the trends and opportunities in our fields. Our investment in continuing education ensures our ability to make valued contributions in the workplace, learn about our community and world, and develop new skills. The magic of a thriving personal network is that it is a living system that enables us to manage more effectively and efficiently in the 21st Century.

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