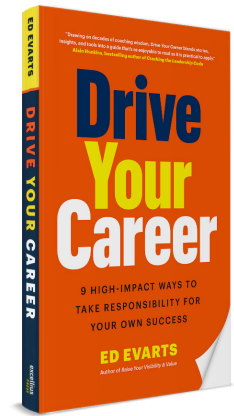


Drive Your Career

9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility
for Your Own Success

by **Ed Evarts**



Contents

Introduction

Page 2

No One Knows You Better
Than You Do

Page 2

Be the Most Curious Person
in the Room

Page 2

Colleagues Are Your Best
Resource

Page 3

It's All About Feedback

Page 4

Actually, It's All About
Empathy

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Too many people enter a career and let that career drive them. They stay in jobs longer than they should, or fail to make an impact in the opportunities they do have. Whatever the reason, more and more people from entry-level positions up to management and executive roles are looking for ways to take command and take charge of their careers.

That's where leadership and career consultant Ed Evarts comes in, with his book *Drive Your Career: 9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility for Your Own Success*. It's for the ambitious and talented who are ready to take their careers to the next level, but aren't quite sure where to start. In *Drive Your Career*, you'll find a set of 9 powerful principles designed to provide the empowerment and personal insight to steer your career where you want it to go. From developing a stronger relationship with your boss to asking essential questions of yourself, harnessing the power of curiosity to delivering better presentations—it's all inside of *Drive Your Career*.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to create a positive relationship with your boss and harness positive relationships with colleagues to further your career.
- The power of curiosity, and why it's better to listen first and speak second.
- How slowing down can get you to your goals faster, and why it's important to ask yourself key questions before starting a task.
- How to lead with empathy to inspire the people around you to greater heights.

Introduction

The goal of *Drive Your Career* is to make readers better captains of their careers and help them make positive progress at work. A simple set of behaviors and actions can help everyone, even if people don't always believe it. While the specifics of each client's situation are unique to them, at the core of addressing many work-related issues are common behaviors and actions that, if practiced regularly, can help anyone make progress in their organization, earn the respect of their co-workers, and be more productive and happier at work.

While you may not need to implement all nine ideas in this book, you likely need to apply many of them. Meanwhile, the ideas are not presented in order of importance and doing something recurrently matters more than doing it frequently. Keep all of this in mind as you learn about the career-driving tips to come.

Have a Positive Relationship with Your Boss

When you have a positive relationship with your boss, many wonderful and career-enhancing things—opportunities, praise, promotions, pay increases—are possible. Your life as an employee is easier, you have more impact, and you're in a stronger position to drive your career forward. The benefits of having a good relationship with your boss can be remembered using the acronym HELP.

H is for Harness

A boss with whom you have a positive relationship will help you harness your skills and apply them effectively in your organization. If your workplace is like most, you're probably working on dozens of things at once and your energy and focus are diffused. A positive relationship with your boss can help you concentrate your energy on the things that impact your career the most.

E is for Evolve

As the saying goes, "Things that don't grow, die." Your boss can help ensure that your ideas grow and evolve in ways that benefit your organization and ultimately advance your career.

L is for Learn

To move forward in your career, you need to be different tomorrow from how you are today. In many organizations, professional development falls more on the shoulders of individual employees than on the training department. A boss with whom you have a positive relationship can help you learn how to do your job better.

P is for Proactive

Organizations will love you if you prepare them for an ever-changing marketplace by always thinking about what's around the corner. A boss with whom you have a positive relationship will remind you to do exactly that.

No One Knows You Better Than You Do

In today's workplace, people are so focused on goals, objectives, projects, and getting to meetings that they don't spend enough time with the person who knows them best—themselves. As a result, few people are actually aware of what they know about themselves. When you have low self-awareness, you can't effectively manage your strengths and weaknesses, achieve your goals in the workplace, or drive your career forward.

To increase your self-awareness, you need to spend time with yourself, thinking about what you should do to make progress and be successful. This process could be called 'thinking with yourself.'

Imagine that you're sitting down with yourself and discussing your goals, dreams, desires, and next steps. You are not here to think about yourself, as if you're a voyeur of your own life. Thinking with yourself is much more creative and action-oriented.

Work on building your self-awareness of your strengths and weaknesses. With higher self-awareness, you'll be able to actively manage your behavior to maximize your impact. Who wouldn't want that?

Be the Most Curious Person in the Room

If you ask questions about the weather forecast before taking a trip, you can plan your trip better. Similarly, when you ask questions before sharing an idea or giving an opinion, your idea or opinion will be better. Asking questions before you speak allows you to learn why someone feels the way they feel, or whether they have a different opinion from yours, or what they know and don't know.

Asking questions is the best way to discover more about what others think or know before you share what you think or know.

The solution is not to be the first to speak—it's to be the

most curious person in the room. The most curious person in the room will come to better conclusions, share better ideas, and help others.

That said, someone who is curious but a poor listener will never be an effective leader or driver of their career. If you ask a question and don't listen to the answer, you will severely limit the benefits of being curious. Why? Because powerful questions lead to powerful answers, which lead to powerful questions, which lead to more powerful answers.

Focus your energy on listening more and demonstrating curiosity. Those who wait will participate more effectively than those who go first.

Bell Curves Rock

If you do an internet search on the term 'bell curve,' you'll find millions of results, which just goes to show how pervasive the bell curve is in our daily lives. In almost anything you experience, a few data points will be highly favorable, a few data points will be highly unfavorable, and most data points will fall somewhere in the middle.

Consider the bell curve principle in another way—Some will love your idea, some won't like your idea, and some will find your idea satisfactory. Do you focus so much time and effort on selling your idea that you are unprepared when someone pushes back? What has happened to you when you've been unprepared to respond to someone's pushback?

The bell curve will help you refine your ideas, gain support for them, and ultimately make positive progress.

Before presenting an idea, try to consider all the negative reactions your colleagues might have so that you're ready to address them. You are more likely to make progress when you are just as prepared for criticisms as you are for praise.

Colleagues Are Your Best Resource

Organizations are filled with colleagues. They're everywhere! Yet not all colleagues are the same. Some are new to the organization, while others have been there for years, even decades. Some just show up to collect a paycheck, others are deeply committed to the organization's vision and mission.

Know How to Help

Are you so focused on your own role and your own deliverables that the idea of reaching out to a colleague hasn't even crossed your mind? Have you ever thought of connecting this

way? Reach out to tenured colleagues in your organization in order to make progress. There are others around you who have experienced what you're experiencing today.

Play the Hand You're Dealt

When you interview for a new job, or are considered for a promotion in your current workplace, it's highly likely that you'll be led to believe that the situation you're stepping into is better than it really is. After all, the folks interviewing you have a position to fill, so they will typically exaggerate the positives and diminish the negatives. That's human nature.

Only you can assess if you're holding a good hand, a bad hand, or a so-so hand when it comes to your workplace. What you do with that hand depends on where you want to go.

Have you been dealt a good or a bad hand when it comes to your workplace culture? If you've been dealt a bad hand, are you thinking about folding or are you investing in bluffing? How tiring is each of these behaviors?

If your company is not a great place to work, now is the time to take action rather than fold or bluff. What can you do differently today to ensure that you have better experiences in your workplace?

Pausing is Powerful

Pausing does not necessarily mean working more slowly or taking a long time to decide or act. Pausing is a strategic activity that allows you to think more about your agenda, your workload, and your relationships before you interact with others or make decisions. Pausing is about thinking first and acting second.

To be more effective as a leader, and to better connect with your team members, you should use the power of the pause. Pausing will also help you avoid costly or time-consuming mistakes and will ultimately help you, your team, and your organization make more efficient progress. If you move too quickly in your interactions with colleagues, you will likely spend valuable time repeating things you've already explained, correcting errors that your or your colleagues have made, and apologizing to clients for mistakes that have occurred. Pausing will actually help you move faster.

Do you work at a pace that's hard for others to keep up with? Can you think of any situation where your fast pace has led to a mistake, a redo, or the need to explain something again and again?

Practice pausing and you'll find you move more quickly. If you listen to others first and move forward purposefully, you'll see better results for yourself and your team.

It's All About Feedback

The goal of giving feedback is to guide employees to develop their own careers and to make sure the organization benefits as well. Who better than a leader to share immediate feedback about something that could have been done better, or to supply scheduled feedback on an employee's overall performance and how it might evolve? Whether your employees have more or less experience than you, your feedback can lead them to think about the interactions they're having now and how they might handle those interactions more effectively in the future.

Delivering feedback is a win-win activity. Employees benefit by learning from their leader's insights and ideas, which helps them progress in their careers. Leaders benefit from the improved departmental performance that results from their employees moving in the right direction.

Do you give your team members immediate and scheduled feedback on a regular basis? If you don't, how might this behavior be hurting your team's performance and career development?

If you are giving your team members immediate and scheduled feedback, could you make this feedback even better? If you're not doing this and you want to begin, what are the first steps you can take?

Actually, It's All About Empathy

Demonstrating empathy is the ultimate win-win. You benefit and so do the others around you. You need to show empathy to be effective as a leader or to steer your way forward at any stage of your career.

Here are some key tips for improving your instincts for empathy in the workplace:

- Notice the behaviors of others.
- Ask permission to speak with your colleague.
- Be clear about why you want to speak with your colleague.
- Ask your colleague if you can do anything to help.
- Acknowledge your colleague's feelings.
- Reiterate to your colleague that you're there to help.

If you're known for being empathetic, how can you teach others to show empathy more often? If you seldom show empathy, how can you use the suggestions here to start practicing empathy with others?

No one is perfect. But each one of us can become more aware of how we can shift from the passenger's seat of our career to the driver's seat.



Ed Evarts is the founder and president of Excellius Leadership Development, a Boston-based coaching organization. Ed is the author of *Raise Your Visibility & Value: Uncover the Lost Art of Connecting on the Job* and the host of *Be Brave@Work*, a weekly podcast in which leaders share stories about bravery-or the lack of it-in their careers, and the impact their choices have had on their career progression. Ed is a past president of the International Coach Federation of New England, the fifth-largest coaching affiliation group in the United States. www.excellius.com

Drive Your Career: 9 High-Impact Ways to Take Responsibility for Your Own Success by Ed Evarts © 2020 by Ed Evarts. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Excellius Press, produced by Page Two Books 162 pages, ISBN 978-1734500400 Summary copyright © 2021 by Soundview Book Summaries ® www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY.