

Improving Your Career Path by . . .

Putting Your Best Foot Forward

Tim Hopkins

What can you do to advance your career path? This article offers 10 tips. While some suggestions may seem elementary, they are important reminders and useful techniques designed to give your career momentum.

1. Professionalism—Be the technical professional—whether it's in the way you speak, the way you dress, or the way you present yourself. Attitude and manners count. Remember that first impressions on a daily basis make the difference in how you are perceived.

2. Communication—It's important to keep everyone informed of the status of orders, repairs, or preventive maintenance. Follow-up with your supervisors, peers, and department contacts. Always maintain a positive attitude. Don't speak negatively about anything or anyone. Don't be a know-it-all, don't be overly talkative, and don't burn bridges.

3. Be a quality and valuable employee—Provide quality service to your customers and supervisors. Demonstrate your desire to excel and your willingness to work hard. To do this, you must have a heartfelt commitment to your job. Be early for meetings and appointments. Be responsive and always return calls. Ensure all reports and documentation are completed in a timely manner, especially when it comes to preventive maintenance schedules and Joint Commission (JCAHO) requirements. Be a team player, but also take the initiative to work independently to accomplish your responsibilities.

4. Competence—You must continue to remain competent in your field and that requires continually learning and relearning. Don't hesitate to take the initiative and learn on your own time and at your own expense if necessary. Continuing with specialty training along with your experience will build your competence and your reputation.

5. Appearance—A good appearance has nothing to do with beauty or the brand labels on your clothes.



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Someone with a good appearance looks clean, proud, and professional. As a technician, you should present a professional image and that should include pressed shirt and slacks. Some technicians are required to wear a tie with their shirts. Dress for the level of the position above you. Daily hygiene is just as important.

6. Attitude—is the most significant factor in one's success. With a positive "can-do" attitude and action, anything can be accomplished. Start each day with an attitude check. If it's not right, make it right before you talk to anyone. Attitude can be just as important if not more important than experience.

7. Good manners—Always be pleasant and courteous with everyone you meet. Smile, offer a friendly greeting and extend a firm handshake. Respect everyone's time by keeping your conversations courteous and short. Also showing up on time indicates you are reliable as well as respectful of someone's time.

8. Invest in Yourself—To move up in your career path and be recognized as an expert in your field, you must invest in yourself. Take on more responsibility, attend seminars that will build on your skills and knowledge, and invest in training and certification.

Certification, for example, demonstrates that you have the knowledge to help ensure a safe, reliable health care environment. It demonstrates to employers that you have made a significant commitment to career and competence. Certification gives you and your clients or supervisors the confidence that you are the expert and that you are the best for your position. As you take on more responsibility, certification gives credibility and puts you above the rest, enabling you to market yourself at a higher level than someone without the certification.

9. Be recognized as a leader and an expert in your field—In today's market, knowledge in health care and technology is vital to your success. Your job and your knowledge of the technical operation of biomedical equipment, the underlying physiological principles, and

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safe application of biomedical equipment repair is critical to your facility and to the patients that depend on it.

In addition to the knowledge, be recognized as an expert in your field. Take the initiative to assume more responsibility and be sure to keep up with your routine duties. The pressure to reduce health care costs has resulted in fewer levels in the organization structures and more demand on employees. Health care facilities rely on the expertise of each department to maintain and improve the standards of care being delivered. Be a professional and show you care enough to save the facility money on repair costs.

10. Specialize—The BMETs and clinical engineers who have the experience and training to specialize in areas such as anesthesia, nuclear medicine, radiology, or imaging are in great demand in today's job market. However, it's important to maintain a firm understanding of the basics of your profession, and stay up-to-date with trends affecting your industry.

In summary, it's important to market yourself by showing you care, are interested, and are committed to

your profession. Continue to be recognized as a leader and an expert in your field. Join local and regional BMET society meetings and attend meetings regularly. Good networking enhances your knowledge and builds good relationships in the industry.

A successful and professional career path depends on you. You are your best asset.

Determining Your Goals

You have the choice in selecting, improving, and shaping your career path. But before doing so, you must determine your career goals and objectives.

Step 1. Evaluate your current position. Make a list of your daily responsibilities and duties and the measurable results you can achieve when completing these tasks. You must be honest and list only those tasks you actually perform.

Step 2. Determine your strengths and weaknesses and what aspects of your position that you like and dislike. How can you improve your weak areas and enhance your strengths? How does this relate to your current performance and satisfaction?

Step 3. List the goals and accomplishments that are important to you and make you feel satisfied. How many of your goals have you achieved? How many are achievable in your current career path and personal career path? What can you change, improve, and enhance?

Step 4. Evaluate and re-evaluate your career goals. Now that you have a good idea of what you have been doing in your current position, think about the types of positions you would really enjoy doing. Research what it takes to get to the next level. Speak with your supervisor and human resource manager, as well as your peers, mentors and friends to gain additional insight.

Step 5. Write down your goals and objectives to achieve your career progression. Ensure these goals and objectives are in line with your personal values. Then write a plan to achieve those goals. Specify when and how these goals will be completed. Once you feel you have developed a good vision of your career path, put those goals in writing and in a place where you can see every day.

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