Are You Set for Career Growth?

Career and business success comes most often to people who aggressively prepare themselves for new challenges and achievements. Do you feel you’re ready to move ahead, to reach out for new accomplishments, to grab success? Specifically, are you poised for career and professional growth over the next five years?

To answer this important question, skim through the “marks of professional growth.” The 25 statements below are attributes that frequently symbolize a readiness to move forward in your business or career.

This is a simple quiz. As you read each attribute, decide whether it accurately describes your own behavior and attitudes. Check “yes,” “some” (sometimes) or “no” to describe the extent to which you see yourself in the statement.

1. I regularly read books and journals in my field of interest.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

2. I’ve taken the initiative on new projects frequently during the last year.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

3. I exchange ideas with my peers and colleagues.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

4. I seek out and maintain lots of contacts who can provide me with business, job or sales leads.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

5. I attend professional seminars and workshops on a regular, planned basis.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

6. I’ve sought out and overcome a variety of business problems over the last few years.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

7. I monitor what others in my field are doing and learn from my competition’s success.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

8. I meet informally with colleagues for social occasions and lunch regularly.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

9. I’ve introduced new techniques and methods to the jobsite.
   - YES
   - SOME
   - NO

10. I maintain an “idea” me.
    - YES
    - SOME
    - NO

11. I keep up-to-date on technological advances in my field.
    - YES
    - SOME
    - NO

12. I maintain an active interest in the innovative activities of subordinates, superiors and business acquaintances.
    - YES
    - SOME
    - NO

13. I use professional controversies and conflicts as learning experiences.
    - YES
    - SOME
    - NO

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24. I critique my performance all the time.
   3  2  1  0

25. I give more than what’s expected.
   3  2  1  0

Now, total your scores and rate yourself. If you scored 62 or above, you’re hired! If you scored between 38 and 61, you show a solid mix of tenacity, drive and commitment to the needs of others. While you may be weak in a few areas, you’d be a very competitive job or business candidate. If you scored below 38, you may still exhibit some very desirable skills and aptitudes—but not always enough in this skill-based age. If things aren’t quite up to par, identify the top people around you. Listen to them. Learn from them. Then, chart your own path to self-improvement and prepare yourself for the increasingly competitive—but exciting-job and business climate in the years ahead.

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14. I’m aware of my professional weaknesses and I seek to rectify them.
   YES SOME NO

15. I seek feedback from people willing to comment on my strengths and my weaknesses.
   YES SOME NO

16. I consciously track my achievements.
   YES SOME NO

17. I make it a point to study quality improvement techniques.
   YES SOME NO

18. People come to me for advice and to discuss ideas.
   YES SOME NO

19. I’m punctual and I can be counted on to meet deadlines.
   YES SOME NO

20. As soon as I reach one goal, I set another, more ambitious goal.
   YES SOME NO

21. I work effectively with people of varying backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs.
   YES SOME NO

22. I stay enthusiastic, even when the chips are down.
   YES SOME NO

23. I keep my résumé and work samples updated.
   YES SOME NO

24. I’ve learned both the art of patience and the art of persistence in equal measure.
   YES SOME NO

25. While I have my own ideas and insights, I’m a valuable team player.
   YES SOME NO

To score your& Give yourself two points for each “yes” answer and one point each time you answered “sometimes.” Each “no” earns a zero rating. Then total your scores.

If you scored 41 to 50, great! You’re on your way. A score of 31 to 40: Not bad. You’ve got a few rough edges in the professional growth department, but with a little extra effort in the years ahead, you’ll do well. If you score below 30, you’ve got some work to do.

Whatever your score, you can always improve your chances for accomplishment and success. If you’re not quite satisfied with achievements over the last few years—or your score on this quiz—pick a few of the “success attributes” mentioned here and resolve to strive toward them each day. One of the best things about these principles is that you can integrate them into your life gradually; as long as you make some progress, you need not fear failure. The other great thing about these principles: however much you make these principles part of your life, they can always spur you on toward more exciting achievements in the future.

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