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Thursday, July 24, 2014

“Rocket Science 101: Engineering and Propulsion”

Larry de Quay, Aerospace Engineer,
John C. Stennis Space Center, NASA

Dr. David Harwell, Assistant Director, Industry Member
Programs, American Chemical Society



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Insights on the Mid-Career Move: How to Advance Your Career



Dr. David Harwell
Asst. Director of Industry Member
Programs, The American Chemical Society

Dr. Dennis Guthrie
Associate R&D Director,
External Technology,
The Dow Chemical Company

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Insights on the Mid-Career Move : How to Advance Your Career



Dennis H. Guthrie, Ph.D.

Associate R&D Director

External Technology

The Dow Chemical Company



Introduction

- **Your degree has provided you with...**
 - Hard Skills – Knowledge
 - Opportunities to apply your skills & knowledge (classroom/lab)
 - An element of differentiation (GPA)
- **Success in the Real World is...**
 - NOT based on GPA or Class ranking
 - NOT just skills & knowledge

***We all know smart people who are not successful.**

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Disclaimer:

- There are **no guarantees** for success.
- It is **hoped** that the **thoughts** provided in this presentation **will help you** personally and in your career.
- **These are my personal learning's** over a 30+ year career - **not those of my company.**

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD

Audience Survey Question

I am.....

- new to my position but want to keep my future in mind.
- ready to advance my career along the traditional path.
- ready to advance, but want to switch career paths.
- just here for advice / ideas



Success

- If you ask a person: **Do you want to be successful?**
- The answer will be – Well yes, of course!
- But the **real answer** is often:
- **Well yes, of course – as long as** I don't have to work harder, longer or move out of my comfort zone.

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



The Bottom-line:

- **If you want to be successful**
 - You must work at it!
- **If you are not willing to work at your success...**
 - then be comfortable with an average or lucky career.
- **There is nothing wrong with an average career.**
 - Just don't be upset if your career is not above average.

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD

To Advance Yourself and Your Career!

Key Areas

- 1) Improve your communication skills
- 2) Find/Develop mentors
- 3) Make yourself a known entity via networking
- 4) Make/Have an impact on the organization

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD

Audience Survey Question

My biggest obstacle is...

- choosing a path to take
- soft skills
- hard skills
- networking
- making my presence known



1) *Improve Communication Skills*

- **This will require work**
- **No matter how good you think you are...you can and need to improve**
- **Both written and oral communication skills**
 - Email has damaged everyone's written skills
 - Texting is even worse
- **My encouragement to everyone is...**
 - Write more effectively – practice and learn from others

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Oral Communication

- **The MOST effective form of communication is ORAL communication.**
 - A presentation immediately conveys
 - Competence
 - Confidence
 - Capability
- And often the **only “you” management knows is the you they see during a presentation.**
 - Therefore, perceptions are often set/based on a presentations.
- If two people have similar skills & knowledge, but one communicates more effectively than the other, **who do you think will be more successful?**

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Glossophobia

- **The fear of public speaking**
- **74% of people** have a fear of public speaking
- You must **“face your fear”**
 - improve by doing!
- However, **most people do just the opposite**
 - they fear it, so they avoid it
 - those people will never improve
- Get out and **DO IT!!!**

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Communication “Helps”

- **Seek out opportunities to...**
 - speak out more with friends
 - give presentations to your small work group
 - speak more in small social groups
- **Take a class or join a club...**
 - Take a speech class
 - Take a Dale Carnegie course
 - Join Toastmasters

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



2) Find and Develop Mentors

- **If no one has volunteered to be your mentor...**
 - then it's time to go find one or two mentors
- There are at least **2 types** of mentors
 - **Informal**
 - More experienced work friends, usually not “acknowledged”, but mutual
 - **Formal**
 - You ask or they volunteer, but you both formally acknowledge a mentor/mentee relationship

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD

2) Find and Develop Mentors (Continued)

- Personally I'm not an advocate of “assigned” mentor/mentee relationships. If you are in one, fine, but **seek out others**.
- **Strive to reach as high in an organization as possible.**
 - But also have mentors at other levels above you
 - Another reason to have more than one



Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Mentor “Helps”

- Can be from **work** or **outside** of work
- **Have at least one or two from work**
 - they better understand your work environment
- **Ask for guidance**
 - What should I do or how should I develop?
 - What do you think I need to improve?
- **Seek out counsel**
 - What is realistic in my career, now and in the future?
 - How do I seek out a job change?
 - How do I handle a sensitive situation? etc.

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



3) Make yourself a known entity via networking

- Some people think, networking **“happens”**
- Many **don’t think** about networking at all
- **My suggestion:**
 - Develop a networking plan!
 - Don’t leave this to chance
- **You had an educational plan...**
 - Now develop a networking plan

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Networking “Helps”

- **Introduce yourself to at least 2 levels of supervision**
 - 15-30 minutes discussion
 - Introduce yourself, review your role and responsibilities
 - Ask them at least one business related question - E.g.
 - What is their view of the group or company future?
 - What do you see as the most important tasks for our group or for me as an individual?
 - **Be sharp** and on your toes; **convey energy** and interest
 - **You will be setting a perception**

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



4) Make/Have an Impact on the Organization

- **Get out of your comfort zone**
 - Look for ways to make an impact
- **Ask to be involved** on a big project
- **Seek out the hot activity**; learn about it, see if you can get involved
- Strive (**work at it**) to have an impact on the organization

Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD



Make/Have an Impact “Helps”

- **Relish the “little” assignment or “chore”**
 - The one no one wants
 - Then do that assignment or chore extremely well¹
- **Seek out responsibilities others run from**
 - Note taker (there is power in the pen)
 - you are viewed as a de facto project manager¹
 - Take on the leadership role in a volunteer organization
 - often an opportunity to meet recognized leaders and learn or be exposed to leadership skills

¹Peters, Tom. *Reinventing Work, the project 50*. New York: Random House, 2000 Dennis H. Guthrie, PhD

Lessons Learned...Take Action!

- 1) Improve your communication skills
 - **Take action** to do more talks or take a class/club
- 2) Find/develop mentors
 - **Take action** to identify mentors; be proactive
- 3) Make yourself a known entity via networking
 - **Take action** to introduce yourself to 2 layers of management and others
- 4) Make/have an impact on the organization
 - **Take action** to make an impact

And now back to Mike...



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