



Archive – June 2001 Presentation to Women in International Trade – Northern California

FACILITATING YOUR GLOBAL CAREER

Thank you for inviting me to speak tonight. My name is Beth Peterson and I'm an executive in a high tech start up. I'm going to give you some very specific areas of focus to ensure that you control your own professional destiny and I'm going to give you an overview of some of the new skills that are required in this global age. My primary goal is for you to leave tonight thinking more about your current job as well as positioning yourself for future positions.

Now, I want to help you to internalize the opportunities presented for the global worker and to give you some guidance and a sense of ownership of your own career. I want you to leave here encouraged by the actual powers within your own control to ensure that you have a meaningful work life.

As the opportunities for women (and men) in international trade expand, it's critical that we all ensure that we all get the most from our current positions. When I say "the most" I mean being rewarded in the work that we do, both financially and professionally. You should get a paycheck for your work and that paycheck should be adequate compensation for the role that you are performing. Additionally you should:

- Always feel a sense of accomplishment in your job
- Sometimes feel a sense of challenge from the work that you do
- Be rewarded over the course of your life's career

So, starting with your current position I'm going to be honest with you - you are never going to get an overwhelming sense of reward from your job unless you work at it. You must have a commitment to success, period.

You may be telling yourself "sure... that may be the case, but there are many forces impeding my ability to actually succeed". If you just thought that - you're not going to find tremendous reward in your career. You have to change your attitude. You must feel enabled to succeed and you can control that. There are basic skills that, I believe, will help you to focus, reduce barriers and excel. These skills are entirely under your control. And the good news is that these skills can even be contagious. I'm a strong advocate of leading by example and these next steps enable you to do so.

I want to tell you about three areas of concentration that will keep you so focused on your success that you may actually start to see those "conspiring forces" disappear.

The first area of focus is on the tasks that enable you to do your job. This is the easiest of the three areas to remember because most of us actually try to do this on a fairly regular basis. Focus on identifying your daily key performance indicators.



How do you measure your own job and the successful completion of your job? If you are at all unclear on measuring your success - have a very open discussion with your manager and maybe even with your peers. Tell them that you want to ensure that you are gauging your success by the same measures. Frankly discuss your goals and objectives. You should take time to compare your job description and the daily activities you perform. You should ask yourself - is my job description and my daily job one and the same? If not, you need to make adjustments to ensure that you are doing what you've set out to do as well as what's expected of you. That said, without a focus on "doing your job" (e.g. a focus on the office politics or a future promotion) you will never achieve a level of success that you can be measured against. If you and your supervisors can't measure your success, your chances for acknowledgment or advancement are severely limited.

The second area of your focus is on ensuring that your coworkers and partners have the information and tools to succeed at their jobs. I have actually nicknamed this area of focus as the Karma focus. By that I mean - what you give will come back to you. The time you spend on supporting your team helps to build an effective team. An effective team frees up more time for you to do your job. An effective team also takes pressure off your manager and demonstrates a skill set that is very much in demand. A way to support your team is by getting involved in project work. It is one of the best ways to demonstrate your capabilities as well as learn from others by becoming an active team member in logistics and trade projects. You'll gain invaluable experience by participating in improvement initiatives. A great example of this is creating a website that enables you to share reference material, training manuals, standard operating procedures and it ensures that the material is up to date and communicated. Another way to support your team is to conduct training sessions and educational seminars. This shares the wealth of your knowledge and expertise throughout your organization. By ensuring that you've enabled people to do their jobs successfully, you actually develop and support resources that will most likely be available back to you.

The last area of focus that I'm going to discuss is quite often the most forgotten. It is to focus on ensuring that you are gaining skills and abilities that are preparing you for your next job. I'm going to spend some time on this because it is essential to you and your overall career and therefore its essential to your overall well being. When you take a new job or as you continue in your existing job, you need to continually ask yourself "What am I doing to grow myself?" "What skills do I need to meet my next career goal"? Essential to this area of focus is the development of your overall career goals. You should take a reality check of your knowledge, skills and experience. Ask yourself, what are the short-term opportunities available to me? Be honest with yourself and determine how ambitious you are? Look at your self and ask "what is your long-term potential"? Take that potential and chart a plan on how you will get there from here. Develop a career plan to achieve your goals. An example of the type of thinking that you should undertake is... if you eventually want to run your own customs brokerage - you should be planning on going for your broker's license. If you want to manage the overseas operations for a global company, financial/budgeting experience and possibly language skills are a must.



When considering your future, please take into account the fact that many companies are willing to sponsor you to improve your education. Check to see if your company does. Many universities and colleges offer part-time logistics management programs. Associations such as the American Society of Transportation and Logistics and the World Trade Institute provide excellent courses in logistics and trade-related fields. You can also keep abreast of new ideas and technology by reading trade magazines and newsletters. Whatever you do, don't forget your future!

These three areas of focus are what I call the ABC's of personal career management. I hope that you can focus inwardly when you think of these because I truly believe that you will benefit from following them. One quick note, if you are a supervisor or manager yourself, I recommend that you evaluate your team using these three areas of focus. It's a great tool to make sure that you are mentoring your employees, ensuring that they are successful as well as a way to build a highly successful team. Your team will grow from the experience and they will thank you.

So, with that in mind, I'd like to discuss the types of opportunities in global trade and stress the new kinds of skills that are required for success. Some of the many positions out there include:

- Analytical roles. These can include business analysts as well as financial analysts. The new spin is analysts used to be used to compile data and information that enabled a business to optimize itself. For example, an analyst used to collect international trade statistics to determine where the highest exposure for duty payment was. Now, an analyst may be using tools to ensure that product is sourced only from locations where no duty impact is incurred.
- There are procurement roles. Global supply commodity procurement is the way that it's done now. You now source outside of your neighborhood. You are now expected to establish personal and deep relationships with people on other continents and in other time zones.
- There are trade specialist positions where you are responsible for specific trade programs. The new spin is that these trade programs are between multiple countries or regions. Another significant role for trade specialists is in the negotiation of global pacts and the establishment of global standards. It's no longer enough to know the Schedule B, you now need to know the Global Forum.
- There are operational roles. These roles encompass logistics, import and export and the new spin is that they quite often include all three areas of expertise or multiple countries for one focus. It's critical now to understand how to import throughout North America rather than just the US.
- Lastly, there are a multitude of legal and consulting roles available to the trade professional today. With the outsourcing that's going on coupled with the mergers and acquisitions of multinational companies - there is no work shortage for attorneys.

A couple of great resources that I've used are:



- Wall Street Journal's Career Journal
<http://www.careerjournal.com/marketplace/career/>
- Career Center at Women.com <http://www.women.com/career/>

Bottom line is - international trade positions used to be very tactical and operational. With the turn of the century and the globalization of our world, the focus is now on global trade, not just internationalization. And with that, we global trade professionals are expected to think strategically, across the organization and manage multiple cultures, regulations and operations. In closing... you are a global trade professional. You make an impact on your company's overall strategic goals. Whether it's indirect or direct, your efforts ensure your company's welfare. Your CEO (whether she or he knows it) does rely on your success for the overall health and success of your company.

Understand your role and the responsibility that you have to your company - but don't forget to ensure your own success. Keeping the company running day in and day out while forgoing your lifetime career goals is not as good as it sounds - for you or your company. It is critical that you are both inspired and challenged by your job. Hopefully I've given you a little insight that helps you to create a meaningful work life in which you achieve career success and satisfaction.