



Career Corner

Money Isn't Everything

By Erin Fallon

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I have been recruiting with Alta Associates since the beginning of 2005. Based on my own experience and that of my colleagues, I have become aware that a fairly large number of security professionals focus on compensation as the indicator of their success. What I've come to realize is that using money as the indicator of success is the wrong way to go about it. Although money is nice and we all certainly need it, when it comes down to it, money alone will not steer you in the right path to be successful. I feel that every security professional, regardless of their current position, should take a step back and do a self-assessment. There are three important questions that I feel professionals should ask themselves in order to re-assess their present and future success.

1. Are You Actively Moving Towards the Goals You Set for Yourself?

Have you taken time out from your job and set goals for yourself? If not, be proactive and create the blueprint to your success. Endless studies have shown that creating a list of both short- and long-term goals as a plan of action is very useful. However, you can easily lose sight of these goals if you don't work towards meeting them. The fact is that you need to actively refer to your list and note your progress. It is imperative to check goals off as you accomplish them so that you can note the advances you are making in your career. Checking goals off also encourages you to set new goals for yourself. Almost everyone can tell you what their dream job is, but few people are taking the right steps in order to ensure they get it. Take time out from your day and make your goals a reality by putting together an action plan to pursue them. You are in charge of your own career and its progression. You must be proactive in achieving your goals. No one else will place the same priority on your personal objectives and ambitions as you will.

2. Are You in a Position Where You Are Learning New Things?


Are you being challenged on a daily basis and staying abreast of advances in technology? It is absolutely necessary to round out your skill set so you don't become pigeon holed into a dead-end job. Now, don't get me wrong, it is desirable to become a subject matter expert in a given area, but the most successful ones have experience in other areas to round out their skill set. Although depth and breadth of experience are important, those professionals capable of stepping outside the box, who take risks, and learn new skills, are the most valuable. Keith Ferrazzi, author of *Never Eat Alone*, said it best: "Choose risk and strive for greatness or risk nothing

and be certain of mediocrity." So become aware of your current position, evaluate whether or not you are being sufficiently challenged, and do something about it.

3. Is Your Current Position the Right Fit?

Are you currently in an atmosphere that you can thrive in? It is important to have the "right fit" so a majority of your efforts aren't going towards trying to assimilate, which can be exhausting and frustrating. Seek a culture that you can thrive in. For example, information security professionals working in the financial industry are faced with a much different culture than those in academia. Both are equally respected market verticals, yet the culture is quite opposite. Security professionals need to look within to find the "right fit" which will provide the necessary environment conducive to success. We spend a great deal of our lives at work. It only makes sense that we should seek environments we thrive in. If you're not in an environment that provides you with job satisfaction or upward mobility, there's no time like the present to consider your options.

Summary

It is my job to help people define and achieve success in their careers. In order to be successful as a recruiter, my colleagues and I do a deep screening process to understand both our clients and candidates in order to help them meet their goals and expectations. We seek out that "right fit." The security professionals who have been the most successful in their careers are the ones who haven't made money their number one priority. Compensation is the reward for responsibility and achievement. So if you are following the goals that you set for yourself, in a position where you are challenged, and in an environment where you can thrive, the money will follow. 

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