

## CHAPTER 8

# STUCK IN A DEAD-END JOB? WHAT TO DO TO BREAK OUT

Not all jobs leads come with career advancing opportunities and it is highly likely at sometime during your career that you will find yourself in a dead-end. The job may lead to nowhere and if you stay in this job, your career will be on hold until you move. One good way to find out if you are in a dead-end job is to ask some simple questions about the position.

1. What happened to the person who had this position before me?
2. Where are they now?
3. What is the path to my next promotion if I stay in this job?
4. Is anything new planned for the job?
5. When does the present work end and what will I be doing next?

If you get the following answers to the questions, then it is a clear indication you are in a dead-end job and need to take some aggressive career actions.

1. The person who had your job left the department.
2. The person who had your job left and received a raise or promotion in doing so.
3. There is no path to a promotion or better job; there are no other job openings that you could be promoted into.
4. Nothing new planned for your job, the plan is to keep doing what you are doing now, only faster and better.
5. The job runs out when we stop making the product. The plan is to make the same product until the demand for it ends. Hopefully, this is for a couple of years.

If you received these types of answers or something similar to the previous questions about your job, then it is safe to say that you are in a dead-end job and it is time to make some career moves. Here is what you should be doing.

*Have a Career Discussion with Your Boss.* The first action is to have a career discussion with your boss. Find out what is planned for the department, the job, and your future in the department. Discuss how you want to advance and see if you both can identify an action plan to realize your goals. The boss may have other good things planned for you and simply has not had the time to discuss them with you. Discuss your performance and improvement areas. From these interactions you should be able to identify a path forward to new and better opportunities.

*Investigate Obtaining New Training.* New training to increase your skills can open up new opportunities for you. Maybe you are just one or two classes away from another career advancing job. Explore this option with your supervisor for moving out of the dead-end job. This may also include returning for further education in the form of another degree. Obtaining another degree is a sure method of opening up new opportunities to you.

*Volunteer to Take on New Responsibilities and Tasks.* Sometimes supervisors just assume you do not want to do any more work and never consider giving you more. If you volunteer to take on more work it shows you have more capabilities and are open to taking on new jobs. Volunteering to take on new responsibilities and work may open up new and better job opportunities.

*Start Searching the Company Job Postings for Other Opportunities.* On your own time, start searching the company job postings for new opportunities. Your department simply may not have any better opportunities for you and other departments just might. A simple transfer to another department in the company is an easy way to get out of a dead-end job.

*Network with People in Other Departments.* Another good career action to get you out of a dead-end job is to network with other people in the company and find out what departments have openings and possibly even better opportunities. Getting a coworker to recommend you for a better position in a new department is always a good career move out of a dead-end job.

*Ask Your Mentors for Help.* It is always good to discuss your job situation with your mentor and get advice on how to get out of a dead-end job. More than likely they have also faced and successfully overcame this situation in the past.

One note of caution: while you are looking around for a way out of the dead-end job, do not share what you are doing with your department coworkers. If you mention how you feel about your dead-end job and how you are looking, you are more than likely going to start the rumor mill running. People in your department will be talking about you and your

actions. When this happens, it is only a short time before the boss finds out and then you have to do some real career damage control. Keep your feelings to yourself and be discreet about your actions and spend your time and energy on positive actions to help your career.

Have you identified any career actions you want to take as a result of reading this chapter? If so, please make sure to capture these ideas before you forget by recording them in the notes section at the back of the book.