

When Firing Your Boss Isn't An Option!

27 Free or Inexpensive Ways to Drive Your Career and Build Your Brand

1. **ID your objective / Your Digital bumper sticker.** What do you want to achieve? What's your personal mission statement? Your work style? What sets you apart? Knowing your objective & what sets you apart keeps you focused. Make sure to course correct and amend as your situation changes, but your underlying personal mission statement and guiding compass shouldn't change that much if you are connected to your values and what's important to you. Use [these thought questions](#) to get you thinking.
2. **Join Toastmasters.** Toastmasters has Leadership & Communication tracks. Offers new found confidence, connections, and skills. Allows you to become proficient at presenting, speaking, and leadership with effective evaluation and feedback.
3. **Volunteer.** Volunteer for projects, events, or community service at work, at a local non-profit, for any organizations you belong to, or conferences you attend – volunteer opps exist there too. Gets you exposure and practice (and free entrance to an events and different circles).
4. **Become active on LinkedIn.** Participate on / in Group discussions, In the Answer section or on your feed, Create a poll, Share things, articles, leads with your network, Interview some experts, Find a mentor, etc. Set up Google alerts for your topic interests / keywords and be the first to comment/answer on those topics
5. **Join a meetup.** There are meetups for all kinds of topics, from food and fitness to far off topics. Most are extremely useful. You can build skills for your job, enhance or create new ones. You can make new contacts and build partnerships. Refer work and get work.
6. **Be social.** Reach out to people that have skills or positions you aspire to, would like to get to know more. Make friends. Interesting people that may boost your career or business are everyone, and you don't need to 'sell'. People buy the person, not the product.
7. **Join a Professional Group.** The Encyclopedia of Associations in the Library can give you all kinds of detailed info.
8. **Take an Adult Ed Class or Community Class.** Check with local community college or places like ExtraordinaryED.
9. **Attend a book discussion / presentation at the Library.** These are free and many times provide the opportunity to look at something differently, participate in a lively debate, meet authors and like-minded people.
10. **Watch TED/TEDx Talks on You Tube.** Innovative talks are in every category from business, entertainment, health, the mind, etc. and provide 20 minutes into what might be. They range in presentation type & if you are looking to speak, there are a plethora of learning opportunities from all the presenters.
11. **Attend events outside your local area / comfort zone / knowledge base.** This opens the doors in your mind to think differently, to see things from another angle, to take you out of routine thought. Sometimes it causes you to questions long held beliefs, or to find answers to unresolved questions or challenges.
12. **Attend Symposiums or presentations at local colleges.** Gives you access to new thoughts and research, and access to new types of people. It also gets you back onto a campus to feel the vibrancy of an environment steeped in potential.
13. **Attend a cultural event or cultural activity.** Just for the fun of it. As all of these should be. Allow yourself to become surrounded by the talent, and let go of what's ailing at you – providing an escape, a break, a new way to enjoy.
14. **Take a day trip to a new town or place.** – take the educational tour, exploring is always good!
15. **Learn Social Media tools (or any new technology)** and learn how to make them work for you; Read Mashable or Hubspot; Update all Your Profiles so they consistently reflect 'you³'.
16. **Join In / Listen to free webinars for some of the latest tricks.** You can gain some new info, free, but don't feel obligated to buy. If it's someone of interest, follow them. Another new way to look at your skills and life.

17. **Go to itunes podcasts** and subscribe to NPR, and many other shows inside and outside your field. Listen to while exercising. Expand your mind, see new ways to look at things, expand on your skills.
18. **Outsource some of your non company confidential work.** Teaches you better communication, organizational, and management skills, and allows you to work on tasks that correspond to your strengths. Allows you to get more done, impress others, help in a time crunch (to reduce stress and maybe help you to get to children's or grandchildren's big events & have more of a life). Partner up with people in your network to exchange work or skills.
19. **Get a makeover.** Go to local beauty counter, shop and learn how to update your look. Go see the personal shopper at a local department store. Do not underestimate the value of this. We get stuck in the 'comfortable' many times and don't realize how we 'date' ourselves. By doing so leaves opportunities and money at the door. Men – this goes for you too!
20. **Exercise or meditate first thing in the morning.** Shoot for 30 minutes, but start with 15 if limited, goal is an hour. It gets it out of the way, gets your blood flowing, allows you to clear your mind and plan your day, to focus on what's important. Staying healthy and strong feeds your core system and provides you with energy – especially as you get older.
21. **Work to acquire at least 2 new skills a year.** You can focus to become an expert on one, but the goal is to become proficient enough. Learning new skills will help you stretch your thinking, meet new and different people, and perhaps open the door to creative thinking, new opportunities and increased income potential.
22. **Start a blog.** Even if it's just for you. It improves your writing, gets you thinking, and opens the door for other possibilities. Even if you decide to write on 'A day in the life of an accountant', it can empower to come up with new solutions, think through problems, demonstrate your work as an accountant. (a good writing book is Bird by Bird by Anne Lamott). It doesn't have to be public. Start one as your memoir or biography, and a digital testament to your life – a time capsule for your family.
23. **Follow entrepreneurs on Kiva, and invest in one:** Kiva.org supports solo-preneurs across the globe, looking to support & create a better life for them and their families. It provides incredible inspiration. Look closer to home if that's your style. But becoming invested in another person, helps you become invested in yourself.
24. **Strive to make 3 new contacts a day.** There are at least 3 people in your network right now that can influence your future success. Which relationship can you start, foster, or nurture? Who can you help on their path?
25. **Follow Lifehack** (<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/minimize-distraction-to-get-things-done.html>) or **Brainzooming** (<http://brainzooming.com/project-management-techniques-21-articles-to-better-manage-projects/14566/>) for easily implementable tricks. Follow Springwise for all types of new ideas. Opens the window of what's possible.
26. **Define and hit at least 1 stretch goal for yourself each quarter.** Aim for 3 new stretch goals. Hold yourself to higher standards, and compete with yourself to learn new things, AND, put them to use.
27. **Do your own quarterly performance review .** Track goals and what you want to accomplish in key areas. Have an overriding theme. Don't leave your improvement to someone else. Put time on your side.



With over 25 years of extensive Web, Marketing & Project Management experience at Fortune 500 Companies, I work with clients to develop their integrated Marketing Strategy and bring their business & career to life: from marketing material and coordinated web design, to copy & content development, to SEO, and social media coordination. Your ultimate wingman.

Offering Social Media Coaching & Monitoring, Monthly review calls, Strategy Development, and a whole New Approach to Career, Personal, & Small Business Growth. The world of working is changing – what are you doing to stay ahead of the curve?