

Recharge: The one week plan to power up your career

Written by Julie Desmond
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Welcome to spring weather season. When the power goes out during a storm, it creates a small list of items that need to be addressed: Did an electrical surge fry the computer? Did the food in fridge go bad? Does the security system still work?

Dotting the campus at Duke University in North Carolina are charging stations for electric-powered vehicles. They look like tall, sexy gas pumps dressed in white and lime green. My friend who knows about such things says these pure electric vehicles are going to catch on, especially on the coasts. Not the Midwest? No, she says, because they have a battery limit of 120 miles, meaning a trip across a place like South Dakota or Montana is impractical, if not impossible. If your enthusiasm for your career is running low on juice, you might feel like you are stranded on the side of the road somewhere in Montana, where a recharge seems impractical, if not impossible. The problem with my friend's prediction is it assumes the charging stations have to be located in large metro areas. Do ranches, gas stations and stores in the Midwest have electricity? Could a few new stations be added along the way? Adding some zip to your career can be simple, too: just add a few extra opportunities to power up.

The main charging venues we all think of on a career path are raises and promotions. Along the way, though, are other perks that make a day and a job more interesting. Try working a career recharge into your to-do list this week.

On Monday, read a new section of the newspaper, find a new blog about your industry or follow someone new on twitter who does what you do. Power boost: notice where your successes jive with their ideas. Are your techniques better than theirs? Do you have expertise you can share through a comment or discussion forum?

Tuesday, come up with a new way to use your company's product or service. Power boost: put your concept into action.

Wednesday, move a tool you use regularly – phone, stapler, tape, whatever. Taking a simple habit out of autopilot actually fires up new connections in your brain, leading to changed perspective. Power boost: clear your area completely and start over. Shedding the extra weight of papers, files and tools you no longer need can free you up to work more efficiently.

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Thursday, speak to someone new who does what you do. You might find this person on LinkedIn or through that blog you read on Monday. A quick phone call or email to introduce yourself will bring new energy to a tired routine. Power boost: find a speaking opportunity; many organizations welcome experienced professionals who have information to share.

Friday, take your career pulse again. You should be energized enough to create a list of other aspects of your career that you can start to work on next week.

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