

# DEFINING SUCCESS FOR YOURSELF, SETTING YOUR OWN COURSE

**K**icking off the City Bar's 2007 Professional Development Breakfast Workshops, Kathleen Brady of Brady & Associates Career Planner, LLC, speaking to an audience of more than 100 young attorneys on "Knowing Your Options/Controlling Your Destiny," urged participants to define success for themselves and then set their own course.

The first step, says Brady, is to ask yourself what does success look like? It is different to everyone. For some it may mean being content with your life, for others it may mean achieving some measurable accomplishment or leaving a legacy or having a positive impact on those around you. Once you have your goals defined, says Brady, you can begin moving toward those goals by following this five-step success formula.

## I. Know what you want

Understand how career development fits into your life, Brady advises. Be aware that over time your career goals will change and different things will take priority in your life. In your twenties and early thirties you are just beginning to commit to an occupation, and perhaps to a life partner and are looking to future advancement. In your late thirties and early for-

ties, says Brady, you may begin to think about what is next and are more concrete about what it is you want both in your career and in your personal life. In your late forties and fifties, often now with significant experience under your belt, you may readjust your career and life goals again.

## II. Focus on your assets

Brady suggests conducting a career/life audit. Ask yourself what are your abilities, what are you good at and remember, says Brady, not to be too humble. To help you determine your abilities start by benchmarking your achievements, successful projects and things you are proud of. This means writing them down on a piece of paper. Start doing this as early in your career as possible, suggests Brady, so two, three, four years down the road you won't have to ask yourself, What is it exactly that I have done over the years?

## III. Stay connected

Be in career-building mode at all times, advises Brady, not just when you don't like your job. Pay attention inside your firm, read the newsletters, walk the halls now and then, talk to fellow associates and be in the loop. Also pay attention outside your firm. You can do this, suggests Brady, by attending at least three functions every three months. This can mean going to a CLE course, a bar association committee meeting or an alumni event.

Stay apprised with what is going on in the world of work by being aware of the trends in your area of practice and which firms seem to be hiring. This may sound time consuming, remarks Brady, but really it should not take more than 15 minutes a week.

Find out what opportunities are offered outside your firm. Get involved in the bar association or your law school by going to programs and

asking how you can volunteer. By participating in these events you will be building your network and expanding the pool of people you can turn to for career advice. Perhaps one day they may present an opportunity that helps you reach one of your career goals.

## IV. Develop and implement an action plan

Think about your lifetime goals, says Brady. What do you want to have? Money? A house? A successful marriage? Children? Write all your goals down, suggests Brady, and once a year take a look at your list. Check off the things you've accomplished and add to or delete things from your list.

Next, develop an action plan by asking yourself which of these goals can I accomplish this year, which in the next five years. Then ask yourself what am I going to do to make this happen. Once you write it down, says Brady, a goal can become a lot more real. Remember, says Brady, as you implement your action plan be flexible. At different times in your life different aspects of your life may take priority.

## V. Be patient

Finally, says Brady, be patient. Planning and moving ahead in your career takes time. Experiences or transitions you don't expect may arise and delay or alter the course of your plan. Just remember, says Brady, you can control your own career destiny if you are prepared, patient and flexible.

For more information on the Professional Development Breakfast Workshops and a complete schedule of upcoming sessions, please visit [www.nybar.com](http://www.nybar.com).