



CAREER WOMAN

5 ways to bulletproof your career & avoid robots taking your job

By [Karen Gately](#) on October 20, 2018



Thanks to technology the world of work is changing quickly. Do you remember the pager? Not that long ago the best we had was the ability to alert someone to the need for them to head to a pay phone and call the office. How about the brick mobile phone? Palm pilots? The list of gadgets that have rapidly come and gone is long and varied.

No matter where you work the likelihood is the way things are done will continue to evolve as people work out how to improve efficiency and do more with less human intervention. The harsh reality for many workers is that automation and artificial intelligence are making various roles redundant. Take for example the reduction of manual data entry in most industries.

The good news is as computers do more, people are freed up to focus on aspects of work that are arguably more value adding and in turn rewarding. Get on the front foot and don't wait for your industry or role to change dramatically before preparing yourself for inevitable change. Among the most important steps you can take to bulletproof your career irrespective of the changes that happen around you include these.

1. Get in the driver's seat. Sitting back and waiting for someone else to recognise your potential or develop your skills is unwise. Know what you want from your work life and put the plans in place that will allow you to get there. The more in control of your career you are, the less likely someone can come along and 'rip the rug from under you'.
2. Build a strong professional brand. All too often people give little thought to the way they are ultimately perceived by those they work with or meet outside of their organisation. Your professional brand is essential to winning new opportunities when the need arises. Being known as someone who can be relied upon to work well in a team and deliver in your role, is a powerful position to be in if you a new job. Your reputation is especially important if you're looking to make radical changes in your career. Without a track record of success to point to, it can be particularly challenging to convince people to give you a go. Glowing references can make a big difference to opening the minds of prospective employers.
3. Keep learning. Choose to invest in your own capabilities and build a diverse portfolio of experience by putting your hand up when opportunities to learn arise. Look beyond training programs to other ways in which you can build both your skills and character. Participating in project teams for example can be one way to step outside of the boundaries of your role to learn more. Invest also in your understanding of the thought leadership in your industry. Staying abreast of what industry leaders are thinking will position you well to see change coming and respond when you need to.

4. Connect with people. Relying on recruiters to help you find a new career is hit and miss at best. Take deliberate steps to build your network and know people across your industry who can support you to transition if necessary. Build relationships with people outside of your industry whose wisdom you can tap into if the time comes you need to head in a dramatically different direction. Keep in mind that it's not just what you know, or indeed who you know that matters. Far more important is focusing on who knows what you know. In other words, help people to understand what your capabilities are so they are in a position to see opportunities suited to you when they arise. Don't be shy about sharing with people what you want to achieve in your career and the capabilities you believe will allow you to succeed. While of course humility is essential, so too is having the courage to step into your spotlight and openly share your talents with the world.

5. Embrace change. Resisting the inevitable is only likely to drain you of energy and undermine your ability to move forward. Reflect for a moment on when you have observed someone stubbornly refuse to shift their thinking and adapt to a new world. The simple truth is how we choose to respond to change determines the impact we have on our own future.

ABOUT KAREN GATELY



Karen Gately, founder of Corporate Dojo, is a leadership and people-management specialist. Karen works with leaders and HR teams to drive business results through the talent and energy of people. She is the author of *The People Manager's Toolkit: A Practical guide to getting the best from people* (Wiley) and *The Corporate Dojo: Driving extraordinary results through spirited people*. For more information visit www.corporatedojo.com or contact info@corporatedojo.com