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# 5 ways to bulletproof your career

Karen Gately helps you prepare for the year ahead and ensure that you don't get taken over by tech



## THE EXPERT

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*.

**Thanks to** technology the world of work is changing quickly. Do you remember the pager? How about the brick mobile phone? 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 EA role has already changed dramatically when you contemplate the transition from typewriters to PCs and now intelligent software with the power to automate.

Take for example the growing prevalence of AI-based calendar software and other automated organisational software. The good news is as computers do more, EAs are freed up to focus on aspects of the job that are arguably more value adding. Less diary management, disseminating, following up, or entering data allows an EA to invest energy in their leadership role and driving project outcomes.

Get on the front foot and don't wait for the role of EA to change. Bulletproof your career with these changes:

**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.

Understand what capabilities you will need in the future to deliver on your role. The more in control of your development and career you are, the less likely someone can come along and 'pull the rug from under you'.

**2. Build a strong professional brand.** Too often people give little thought to the way they are perceived by those they work with or meet outside of their organisation. Your professional brand is essential to winning new opportunities if 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 want a new job.

Your reputation is especially important if you're looking to build a successful long term career with your boss or organisation. Being able to learn and grow, keep up with the times, and add growing value is key to been seen as the right person for the growing demands of your job.

**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 is one way to step outside of the boundaries of your EA role to learn more.

**4. Connect with people.** Take deliberate steps to build your network and know people across your business and industry who can support you to grow in your career. Build relationships with people outside of your industry whose wisdom you can tap into.

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 and your capabilities. 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. ✖

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