

# Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

## Career Center Tips: **Stalled Career—Turn It Around!**



Many elements of modern-day life require a tune up every now and then: your car, your furnace, your computer, even your career. Assessing your ultimate career goals and plotting out how you will achieve them can really kick your career into overdrive and help you reach professional nirvana.

Here are 10 tips for keeping your career performing like a well-oiled machine:

### **1. Run full diagnostics to examine your life.**

The first step in your tune up is conducting an assessment of where you are and where you want to be in your career. For example, are you at a point in your life where you truly can dedicate more time to your career or are there other areas of your life that need your attention?

### **2. Map out your career path.**

If your goal is to be director of your park department, investigate what skills and accomplishments you need and set out to acquire them. If you know the right career path for you means leaving your current agency, make sure you are prepared to launch a full-scale job search.

### **3. Time to switch gears?**

Sometimes capitalizing on your career potential means not only changing jobs, but completely changing careers. Perhaps it's time to give up the hectic park supervisor life for the enriching experience of teaching. Or maybe now is the time to launch that business you always dreamed of, or to explore your creative side with a job involving one of your hobbies.

### **4. Install career skill upgrades.**

Is there a particular trend emerging in the park and recreation industry? Perhaps a new way of marketing to customers or projecting sales figures? Then become an expert in those areas. It will serve you to be at the cutting edge of industry practices whether in your current job or the one you want.

### **5. Rev up your technology know-how.**

Most industries utilize particular equipment or computer applications that are standard in their fields. Make sure you learn what these are and how to use them. Technology can move quickly. Don't fall behind or you risk being sidelined. View the National Recreation and Park Association and the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association websites for technology related updates.

**6. Maintain learning levels.**

If the next step in your career requires a master's degree, don't hesitate to enroll in the necessary classes. There are so many flexible options today for working men and women who are seeking advanced degrees. Obtain the required certifications and attend professional seminars to keep current.

**7. Polish your résumé and make it shine.**

Always be prepared if a new opportunity emerges -- either internally or with a new organization. Keep your résumé updated and ready to send out at all times.

**8. Test drive your interviewing skills.**

Don't let those interviewing techniques get rusty. Practice in front of a mirror or friend every now and again so you're comfortable discussing your qualifications, even if it's at a professional event or cocktail party.

**9. Apply fresh job-search techniques.**

If the last time you looked for a job you mailed your résumé to a P.O. Box, then it's time to brush up on your job search options. Investigate Internet job sites, career fairs and professional organizations, and keep in touch with your own set of contacts.

**10. Spark connections with your network.**

The best way to find out about new opportunities and assess your marketability is to touch base with other professionals in your field. Reconnect with former colleagues and fellow association members and share information