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## New Year's Resolution to Examine Your Career?

### Here's How to Conduct a Thorough Career Checkup

PHILADELPHIA, Dec 20, 2004 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Each year, many people make the same New Year's resolution: to take a good, hard look at where their careers are going. However, too often, people make decisions after examining only one or two aspects of their jobs and careers, according to Right Management Consultants, the world's largest career transition and organizational consulting firm.

"A thorough career checkup should evaluate various facets of peoples' professional lives - including an analysis of their employers' situations, the marketability of their careers, their professional development, and any personal intangibles they may want to or need to address," said Doug Matthews, Executive Vice President and head of Career Transition services for Right Management Consultants.

Before making any career move, here are the factors to consider as part of a thorough career checkup:

#### Assessing Your Employer's Situation

- What is your organization's reputation in your industry and community? Will being associated with your employer benefit or harm your own career progression?
- Are your organization's sales going up or down? Have there been rumors about a merger, takeover, or bankruptcy?
- Are demands for your organization's products or services increasing or decreasing?
- Has your company's market share increased or decreased? Has business improved more for your competitors than it has for your company during the past year?
- Is your employer known as an innovator in the field, resting on its past performance, or falling behind your competitors? Is the research and development pipeline full, worrisome, or running on empty?
- Has your organization been keeping up to date with the latest technology, or is it falling behind the competition and/or out-of-date?
- What about your company's strategic plan? Does it exist, and have you seen it? Is it aligned with your personal growth plans?
- What is the compensation structure like at your company? Have salaries kept pace with your overall industry? Or, have they been frozen, or have increases been delayed?

"Employees need to take an up-close, realistic assessment of all aspects of their employer's organization - how it is faring today, its prospects for tomorrow, its ability to keep up with the competition and changing technology, and its reputations in its industry and community," said Matthews. "If the answers to these questions cause you a lot of discomfort, it's probably time to at least update your resume."

## Career Marketability

- What is the demand for your particular job skills? Has this increased during the past year, stayed the same, or lessened?
- How does your compensation compare to others in similar jobs in your industry, or for those at comparable organizational levels in other industries?
- Have you kept your personal skills and professional knowledge up to date?
- Have you been networking with others in your industry or geographic area?
- How long have you been working in your job, in your industry, or for your employer? Would a prospective employer feel that you have too little experience, too much, just right, or you have been with your employer too long or too short a time?
- Have you recently changed employers? Would changing jobs now send a message that you're a "job hopper?"

"Those with the most marketable careers are working in industries that are doing well, performing job functions that are in demand, have kept their knowledge and skills up to date, and have a network of contacts with whom they've regularly kept in touch," Matthews said. "Employees should try to address those areas found wanting that are most within their control - such as keeping their skills current and networking with others in their areas and professions."

## Professional Development

- Are you in a job that capitalizes on your natural interests and strengths?
- Are you regularly learning something new in your current job?
- Have your duties and responsibilities been increasing, staying the same, or decreasing?
- How do you get along with your boss and co-workers?
- Does your boss regularly ask for your input and opinions, and is your advice taken?
- Do you have a role in shaping and improving your organization?
- What is your career progression at your current employer - is it still moving upward, stalled, or heading downward?
- Have you explored changing job functions with your current employer? Assuming new roles and responsibilities? Heading up new projects or teams? Moving to another location? Pursuing alternative work arrangements such as working part-time or flexible hours?
- What is the demand for your particular skills at your current employer? Has there been hiring in your area, flat employment, or recent layoffs?

"Negative answers to most of these questions indicate that you've got a lot of work to do," Matthews said. "A common mistake people make is they don't try to address some of these issues with their bosses, or explore other opportunities with their current employers. Employees should assess the prospects of improving their job situations before considering opportunities outside their organizations."

## Personal Intangibles

- Has your workload been interfering with your personal life - relationships with family, significant others, time to socialize with friends?
- Is your job personally satisfying, or do you dread going into work?
- Do you feel that your employer is making the best use of your skills?
- Have you been thinking a lot about doing something else - switching industries, job functions, working for a smaller company, or in a less demanding role?
- Does taking another job mean having to relocate? What effect would this have on your family?

"Employees may want to try to address any concerns in these areas with their current employers before pursuing other options," said Matthews.

"Those who decide that their current job situations are promising and rewarding will appreciate the validation they receive from conducting a thorough career checkup," Matthews said. "People who uncover areas that they need to work on may want to address these with their bosses. Those with mostly negative answers should realize that their career prospects with their current employers may be limited, at best, and it may be in their best interest to examine other job possibilities."

Matthews offered one final piece of advice to would-be jobseekers. "I can't tell you how many employees make a hasty job change due to one isolated incident, often later regretting their move. Don't make a knee-jerk reaction based on one meeting or one lackluster performance review. The grass is not always greener."

## About Right Management Consultants

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Right Management Consultants (<http://www.right.com>) is the world's largest career transition and organizational consulting firm. From offices around the world, the firm offers a complete range of outplacement services and consults with clients to help design customized solutions for enhanced assessment, leadership development, strategic talent management and strategy execution. In combination, the two lines of business enable Right to help businesses manage the entire life cycle of their employees. Right is a wholly owned subsidiary of Manpower, Inc. (NYSE: MAN).

## SOURCE Right Management Consultants

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