

How to Climb the Accounting Ladder

Many people express their desire for advancement in the accounting field, but are unsure of what it takes to get there. Some accountants start off in entry level positions and never get much further, even though they wish to advance and have the basic skills to do so.

There are plenty of different opportunities awaiting you and knowing what employers are looking for that can set you apart from the rest is very important in determining your progress.

Based on an interview with Mike Wicke, a CPA and director of insurance practice at PricewaterhouseCoopers, here are 5 tips to help you rise to the top in the accounting industry.



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1. Find Your Passion

There are many different job opportunities for accountants that can tailor to a variety of your personal needs. The important thing is to find what you enjoy doing most and pursue it. It may be that you like sitting at a desk doing paperwork, interacting with people and leading a group, or traveling abroad and exploring different business cultures. Whatever your particular passion may be, pinpointing what you enjoy most will allow you to determine what type of accounting advancement would suite you best.

2. Be Driven to Succeed

Recognizing your passion will help you to determine the types of accounting positions available that fit your needs. Whether your goal is to advance into a group leader or the CFO of a large company, identify it and strive to achieve it. Throughout his entire career, Mike Wicke has always had a drive to succeed and he credits all of his advancements to it. By staying motivated, keeping your focus on your goal, and going above and beyond to prove to yourself and others that you deserve a chance will open up many advancement opportunities for you.

3. Overcome Adversity

If you have ever been in a situation that has knocked you down and you feel as though you will never recover from it, turn that misfortune around and use it to your advantage. While working as an accountant with a company, Mike Wicke was unfortunately laid off as a result of cut backs. Instead of dwelling on his hardship, Mike used that time to take a few classes and expand his knowledge. He was finally offered another position that was better than his last and was able to advance his accounting career. His employer

attributed his success in landing this position to his ability to overcome the adversity he faced. Employers like to see how you react and respond to an adverse situation. By showing that you can overcome adversity, it gives the employer an insight of your problem solving skills and ability to handle tough situations.

4. Specialize in a Specific Topic

By specializing in a specific topic of accounting, it makes you more marketable to someone who is looking for your set of skills. This will set you apart from other accountants who are only aware of the general guidelines of accounting and who do not have any further training. Mike is also a subject matter expert in multiple topics of accounting and attributes his success to his continued education in his specialized area. There are few people who are qualified for his position and he stood above the rest of the applicants by being very knowledgeable in a specified topic.

5. Learn a Different Language

Depending on the type of accounting position you have in mind, it could be very beneficial for you to learn a different language. The auditing and consulting positions in the accounting field most often require the accountant to travel. With advancement in these areas, the likelihood that you will need to travel overseas to provide services to companies worldwide greatly increases. Learning a different language will help you to be well-rounded in different countries and cultural aspects. A new language will help you to advance in your accounting career by showing your employer you are dedicated and willing to learn new things for your job.

Taking the additional steps needed to improve your ability to succeed and learn new things will ultimately allow you to climb the accounting ladder and move on to more advanced positions.

Word count: 709