

## Post COVID-19: Ways to Accelerate Your Career

Despite all the challenges faced in the COVID-19 era—potential health crises, distressing news reports of loss and despair, being sequestered in your house, no opportunities for real-world water cooler chats—there is a copper lining to this pandemic (COVID-19 can't survive on copper surfaces). You likely have a little more discretionary time right now—you save on commuting if you're WFH, and many work-related events are being canceled or postponed. When you make a plan to use that time wisely now, you'll blast your career upward and be ready for a relaunch when things go back to normal—the new normal. Here's what you need to do now:

1. **Aspire.** Decide what's next. The speed of business rarely affords us the luxury of introspection. It requires constant doing. Now's the time to put your small-scale do-list mindset on hold and spend some time reflecting on what's next for your big picture. And don't think "what's next" means just pursuing a promotion. What's next could reflect how you want to evolve your role so that it becomes more fulfilling or gives you increased opportunities to connect with your life purpose. Get clear on your "what's next" career goal, and then write it down and post it somewhere you'll see it every day.
2. **Learn:** Pick one major development goal and pursue it. It could be to earn your project management certification or become more proficient in a foreign language or master the finer points of data analytics. Or perhaps you want to boost your soft skills like emotional intelligence or personal branding. Whether it's hard or soft skills you seek to build, identify one development goal, then research options, prioritize and focus. A scattershot approach may be tempting, but this time of retreat gives you a rare opportunity to devote intensive energy to one goal. You'll return to the office with new, true expertise to showcase. When you tie your learning goal to your big-picture aspirations, you're on track for turning those dreams into reality.
3. **Be social.** It's time to grow your social media presence. If you've been saying, "I wish I were more active in social media, but I just don't have the time." Now's the time to adopt a virtual brand-building habit. To do that, start with one social media platform that meets two important criteria: it interests you and it's where you'll find the people you seek to influence. Then set aside a small amount of daily time (I recommend 9 minutes a day), and jump in.
4. **Master video.** You're likely doing a lot of Zoom calls right now with your colleagues and managers. Video conferencing went from occasional use to almost mandatory use at the speed of the spread of this virus. And when COVID-19 is behind us, video will remain one of the most prominent and important communication tools you'll have to build relationships and build your personal brand. Become a star on video so you can show up as confident and competent in all your future meetings.
5. **Build relationships.** People are feeling isolated, afraid, out of sorts. They're struggling with new ways of working, juggling kids, ailing parents, financial stresses and other responsibilities. Empathy is the skill that will help you maintain and strengthen relationships. Take the time to connect with your colleagues, clients and others on a human level, understanding what they're feeling right now in the middle of this global crisis. Show your own vulnerability so you can build trust and bolster authentic relationships—reducing stress along the way.
6. **Lead.** It's during a crisis that true leaders emerge and become acknowledged by those around them. New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo gained national recognition for the leadership he is demonstrating during this crisis. If you've been wanting to show up as a leader, it's your time to shine. Check in with

and acknowledge others, and become the self-appointed chief communication officer for your team. Think about how to prepare your team for the post-COVID-19 world.

7. Reduce. With many of your protocols and projects on hold right now, this is the perfect time to decide what you can eliminate. This way you'll have room for new, more valuable activities when this is all over. Answer these questions: What have you been doing just because it was habit? Has it become clear that some of your efforts and outputs just aren't that important? What activities will you reduce? What will you eliminate entirely? What will you delegate?

During this incredibly challenging time, it's important to practice self-care, connect with others and consider what you can do to prepare yourself so that you'll be poised to excel when the new normal arrives.

Credit: <https://www.forbes.com>