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## MeetingWorld Update: Concrete Career Counseling

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There has been much buzz lately about how to define careers in meeting planning, but most of the conversation has been esoteric and very little has dealt with the nitty-gritty. As a planner, what can *you* do to further *your* career specifically?

**Cris Canning** answered that very question in an afternoon session entitled “Career Climbing for Planners.” Canning, principal at Hospitality Ink, detailed how individuals can work on defining their own goals, justifying their own existence, and creating a more deliberate path to success—however you may choose to define it.

Some of Canning’s tips were common sense (networking is the best way to a new job) but many were new to the group (studies have shown that networking is not only the best way to find a new employer, but also the best way to find a new employee). She also advocates looking at hard numbers and collecting data whenever possible. C-level executives respond to numbers, so it is often the best way to promotion or salvation, depending on your position.

Because meeting planning as a career is often misunderstood, how can planners expect to explain their value to others if they haven’t sat down and thought about it themselves? Canning advises thoroughly looking at your strengths and weaknesses, as well as outside factors that may play a role in your job (industry trends, etc). She also encouraged attendees to put together a personal press kit of articles you have written or been quoted in and to develop an “elevator speech.” The elevator speech is to be used if you find yourself in an elevator with Donald Trump or whomever you may be awed to share space with. You have 30 seconds to make an impression—what do you say? Stammering your hello is unlikely to impress Trump or the CEO of your organization. Be prepared.