

# THE RADICAL 1000 RESEARCH

Remarkably little up-to-date research exists on the attitudes, priorities, and beliefs of professionals right now. Clearly, tectonic shifts in the corporate arena have led to mass discouragement and uncertainty as the world of business reinvents itself daily. But what about the people who work in this world? What are their deeper issues? What drives them, discourages them, inspires them? What do today's professionals truly want out of their careers?

Less obvious than corporate changes, yet no less dramatic, are the changes in these professionals themselves. Today's rising stars have a different mindset about success. Instead of being motivated by simplistic perks or immediate responsibilities of a JOB, these professionals are driven by an individualistic vision for a lifelong CAREER. They represent a new breed of professionals who adapt to rules that change every morning, and again by lunchtime.

Enter the rise of a new **entrepreneurial class\***: the careerists.

## How, and why, do careerists succeed?

To develop and execute a proprietary study, I enlisted brilliant strategist Linda Jeo Zerba. Linda's research company, Deputy Consulting, deployed researchers to perform in-person interviews in New York, Atlanta, Portland, San Francisco, D.C., Seattle, and Austin; they also conducted phone and email interviews in metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston and Denver. In all, over 1,000 interviews.

To focus our sample, we targeted the 25-to-45 age bracket: Generation X. Hardly a niche, Gen X represents over a third of the workforce, with 65,000,000 workers. Born 1960 to 1980, the youngest are well into their careers, the oldest are approaching middle age. They're post-college, but pre-Boomer.

**\*ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS:** The emerging class of professionals within companies who take responsibility for their performance, rather than blindly following bureaucratic norms

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

- First, this study wasn't intended to define absolutes. Is this a bulletproof quantitative survey? No. It's a very telling snapshot of current attitudes around work and what it means to succeed.
- Originally we'd intended to cull the careerist subset from the overall sample with differentiating questions. But we didn't need to. To our surprise, careerists were not a subset of the whole; they *were* the whole. In fact, throughout the survey, answers were more extreme than expected. Many questions hit a nerve with 85:15 responses.
- No matter where respondents lived or worked, no matter what their job title, their answers were remarkably similar.

## Conclusions of the Study

### CAREERISTS BELIEVE SUCCESS IS A CHOICE.

Throughout the study, without exception, respondents chose the path of personal control over passive acceptance. They work hard not because they "should," as previous generations did, but because they believe their actions make a difference.

#### Which is the most important in determining success:

Natural talent: 8.8%  
Hard work: 91.2%

#### Which has had the greatest influence on your success:

Luck: 2.3%  
Skill set: 15.6%  
Reputation: 15.8%  
Daily actions: 29.2%  
Attitude: 37.1%

#### Would you rather have a job with:

Security: 15.6%  
Opportunity: 84.4%

### CAREERISTS VALUE RESPECT OVER CASH.

Refusing to be content with merely a paycheck, careerists value acknowledgment, support, and room to do their best work.

#### Which is more important to get from your employer:

Fat paycheck: 11.2%  
Respect: 88.8%

#### Which is your idea of professional hell:

Long hours: 3.8%  
Low pay: 4.7%  
Being micromanaged: 15.6%  
Disrespectful boss or coworkers: 75.9%

## CAREERISTS THINK IN A REVOLUTIONARY WAY.

They actually consume information differently. Raised with Nintendo and MTV, they mentally juggle and multitask with ease, preferring a nonlinear format to rigid patterns. This makes their minds perfectly suited to the Internet, and other forms of unstructured content. (Incidentally, that's why this book functions less like a traditional business tome, and more like a magazine or website.)

### Which describes your approach to your career:

Linear thinker (one thing at a time): 27.8%  
Lateral thinker (multiple ideas at once): 72.2%

### Do you prefer to work:

Within an established structure: 18.7%  
In an entrepreneurial environment: 81.3%

### Do big changes make you feel:

Stressed about the unknown: 11.4%  
Excited about new opportunities: 88.6%

## CAREERISTS OPERATE IN A REVOLUTIONARY WAY.

They fiercely value independence, and refuse to allow their employers to define their futures for them. This isn't sullen rebellion; it's a conscious decision to pursue the smartest option rather than blindly follow the majority.

### Which best describes your approach to your career:

Wait for results over time: 13%  
Create daily momentum: 87%

### Which do you prefer:

Being managed: 4.5%  
Working autonomously: 95.5%

## CAREERISTS POSSESS OPTIMISM AND INTEGRITY.

Unlike the Gordon Gekkonian "greed is good" version of success, careerists seek joy and meaning from work. And while they'll compromise short-term goals for long-term success, they refuse to compromise principles.

### Which would you do to boost your long-term chances of success:

Lie about where you went to college: 13.8%  
Work every weekend for a year: 26.4%  
Take a big pay cut: 29%  
Learn a new language: 92.6%

### At the peak of your career, what do you realistically expect to earn (Assuming 2005 US dollars) per year:

Over \$300,000: 11.8%  
\$50,000—\$100,000: 15.3%  
\$100,000—\$200,000: 23.1%  
\$200,000—\$300,000: 49.8%

# ABOVE ALL, CAREERISTS WANT A CAREER WORTH LOVING.

### Which would you choose:

A job I HATE but make three times the money I do now: 13%  
A job I LOVE and make half the money I do now: 87%

### Power is:

Fame: 2.8%  
Making a lot of money: 12%  
Access to most important people: 16.3%  
Freedom to say no and walk away: 32.3%  
Having complete control over your schedule: 36.7%

## For careerists, "entrepreneurial" isn't a buzzword. It's a way of life.

Unfortunately, conventional corporations often underutilize their careerists. They tend to interpret entrepreneurialism as disloyalty, independence as defiance, and innovation as lack of focus. However, smart companies realize this talent is their most precious resource. They provide careerists with strategy and parameters, but avoid layered micromanagement. Because careerists seek momentum from both themselves and their companies, employers cannot retrofit them into dusty standardized systems.

*The results of this study have expansive implications for anyone interested in hiring, managing, or retaining high-performing talent.*



INFO TO GO

What are the implications of The Radical 1000 study for you? Your company? Your industry? Read the full report, available for free, at [www.Radical1000.com](http://www.Radical1000.com)