



**Glain Roberts-McCabe** sat down with Roundtable Member, **Adrian Vargas**, Supply Chain Functional Business Relationship Manager Director for the Asia Middle East and North Africa Sector of PepsiCo, to get his perspective on how to bounce back when you've been passed over for the promotion you wanted.

## Mentoring **MATTERS**



*I recently discovered that I wasn't selected for the promotion that I was hoping for. I'm really disappointed. What can I do to bounce back?*

Not getting that promotion that you expected has to be one of the most awkward and disappointing feelings you can experience in your professional life, no matter what stage of your career you are in. After all, all you can think is, Why? I have earned and worked hard for that promotion! What went wrong? It almost feels like you are in the TV show "Survivor" and you are completely blindsided as Jeff reads the votes. Putting the blame on others is the most natural and immediate reaction, but eventually you realize that while you were not 100% in control of the situation, you were certainly in a position to influence it. You just did a poor job at it!

The hardest thing to acknowledge is that setbacks are a part of life – they happen, and in most instances, they are not a bad thing. Like the old saying goes: "Life is not about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce". The most successful leaders excel at course-correcting strategies, projects, or businesses that have not gone as planned. Bouncing back from a missed promotion should be no different. Now may be a good time to take a look at all those career management aids and tools that have been collecting dust on your shelf. Here are some of the things that I found useful.

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*Put things in perspective.* Try to put yourself in the shoes of the person that made the decision. First of all, were you aware of who was the decision maker? Do you have access to the same information that the decision maker had? Was the decision reflective of your performance or driven by other circumstances? Understanding the context upon which the decision was made will allow you to determine your blind spots. It should also help you understand if you can truly recover or determine if it is time to move on.

*Look inside.* Invest some time in reviewing all of the assessments you've had: Performance Reviews, 360s, Leadership effectiveness, derailers, etc. Look for trends or commonalities. Is there something that was hard to grasp but now seems evident? This is the best time to really absorb the feedback and find the motivation to put together an action plan!

*Invest some time looking back to prior assessments and look for trends or commonalities that you can build an action plan around.*

*Assemble or reassemble your mentorship network.* I've always praised myself for having great relationships at work; however, I did not realize how little I was leveraging this network. In hindsight, I wish I had formalized my mentorship relationships and identified the type of supporters I have, ranging from advisors to role models. I am confident that if I'd had more formal conversations about getting that next promotion, I would have been challenged to reflect on whether I was really prepared for it, or whether I needed to read the situation better.

*Focus on critical experiences, not on promotions.* It is important to change the paradigm on career management. The days of focusing on becoming a functional expert and growing based on knowledge and levels of responsibility are gone. Organizations have gotten flatter and moved to complex matrix relationships. Work is done cross-functionally and, in many instances, across more than one organization. Borders have disappeared and technology continues disrupting the way we do business. Staying relevant is the new game. You need to anticipate what skills will be required for the job you aspire to, and identify the critical experiences that will get you there.

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*Revisit your moral compass and set yourself up for the next step.*

Once you have overcome the shock and disappointment, focus on your moral compass and strengths. Think of all the things that got you to this point and leverage them to lay out an action plan. Share your plan with as many people as you can and hold yourself accountable.

In summary, getting passed over on that promotion may not necessarily be a function of things outside your control, but rather a missed opportunity to do the absolute best job of managing your career. The good news is – It's never too late! Pick up exactly where you left and move on.



**Adrian Vargas** started his career with PepsiCo in 2003. He is currently the Supply Chain Functional Business Relationship Manager Director for the Asia Middle East and North Africa Sector of PepsiCo. In his role, he partners with the Supply Chain team in shaping and driving the technology agenda to enable and transform the business. Prior to joining PepsiCo, Adrian worked with consulting firms such as EDS and Accenture.



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**Glain Roberts-McCabe** is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.