

Spring into 'cleanup'

Career could use a little sprucing, too

By Ed Herrmann
Special to The Register

Spring is the year's traditional time to take on major cleaning. Freshen up the house, clear out the garage and sweep off the back porch.

It's also a great time to evaluate your career. Remove unneeded items that are standing in the way of your having the job you want. Polish up the tools you need to move forward and upward in your career, too.

"If I were to do spring cleaning on my career, I would look at where my particular industry is going and whether I have the skills to be ready for what is needed in the future," said Scott Smith, managing partner for the Phoenix office of Tower Thomas, a recruiting firm.

Spend time reading trade journals, financial publications and annual reports to get a better feel for what is going on within your industry, Smith said. Is it expanding? Has it reached a plateau? Are more jobs, like the ones you do, being done by machines or outsourced to foreign countries?

Next, assess your value within that industry. Are your skills and knowledge what companies are looking for?

Read want ads and large job-posting Web sites, like Monster or CareerBuilder, to see what kind of skills companies are seeking, said Vance Penningville, managing director of the Southside office of Heidreich & Co.

"What will help you identify if there is a gap or if you are well positioned to move



into that next step on the career ladder," she said.

Of course, the major spring cleaning would be complete without updating your resume.

"Turn that off," Smith said.

Be sure to update the list of your most recent accomplishments, as one of your resume's most potent tools of attraction from prospective employers.

"Employers are looking for what you have done, what results you have produced," Smith said.

Spring also is a good time to wipe the slate clean on any conflicts you have with colleagues, said Jean Lovitt, a career coach and author of *Yes, Inc. — Success Strategies to Boost Your Career and Help Your Organization*.

Talk the people with whom you've had issues to meet, explaining that you would like to take steps to find a solution that would benefit all involved.

"When you meet, focus on what the other person's goals are and look for ways

Spring cleaning

Experts say this is the time of year to polish up your career.

■ Suggestions

Deal all your resumes: Update to include your latest accomplishments.

Clear the air: Work out any misunderstandings with colleagues or people in your network.

Polish your shine of the future: Examine your industry in detail to see where it's headed and your place in it.

Refresh your image: Enhance your wardrobe so that you fit with the other stars in your workplace.

Adjust your calendar: Block out summer vacations and events so that other appointments don't break in.

each of you can get what you want." Lovitt said.

Give yourself a personal image makeover. Don't let your hair disguise because your colleagues may think your work is suffering as well, Penningville said.

"Look at your professional image. Is it up-to-date? This might need to do something with your looks," she said.

Take note of what the most successful people in your organizations are wearing, what kind of accessories they sport and their styles, she said. Try to emulate them.