

## **What Have You Accomplished? Keeping a Chronology of Your Work**

By: Linda S. Jevahirian

*This article was originally printed in the Summer 2003 issue of the NEWSBrief, the Legal Assistants Association of Michigan.*

Do you have a list of your career accomplishments? Can you quantify what you have done since you graduated, except to know what you've deposited and what you've spent? If someone asks you what your work involves can you describe in detail what it is that you do?

Keeping track of who, what, where, when, why and how of your education and experience is a tedious task but one that is well worth it. It makes sense to keep a detailed chronology of your career in the same way you track the facts of a case. A chronology is a tool that can be presented at an interview, at a performance review, and as a way for you to remember what you have accomplished as the years pass. Otherwise, you are going to forget the details and the significance of your achievements.

Pick a format that you can load into your word processor and update on a regular basis. Consider using a table or a database program that can be searched and manipulated for presentation purposes. Categorize your activities to include degrees, certifications, continuing education, achievements in technology, significant work projects, association memberships, speaking engagements, articles you have had published, and anything else that occurs as a result of furthering your career.

For significant work projects keep track of who you worked for, the clients your firm represented, where you traveled, the names of all the parties and their counsel, where you worked, the tasks you performed, your work product, vendors you worked with, judges you encountered, and the disposition of the matter. Remember to keep track of things that worked, as well as things that did not work for your future reference. For benchmark projects have the responsible attorney draft a memo memorializing your accomplishment on the assignment and attach it to your chronology.

The chronology should be very detailed, keeping in mind that if you give the document to a prospective employer or other third party, you can eliminate some of the detail for appropriateness. For instance, if you apply for a new position you may want to use the chronology as a way to refresh your memory on projects you would like to highlight. If you are asking for a raise you may want to give the entire detailed copy to your boss.

Being able to quantify and qualify your accomplishments is as important as goal setting. It is an excellent way to keep track of what you have done, but it is also a way to recognize your own achievements and determine objectively if you are heading down the right path.