

Keys to Success In Any Job

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While it is true that nobody is indispensable, it is also true that some employees are more valuable than others. And while the reasons this is so are myriad, there are a number of characteristics that every successful employee possesses in greater degree than do unsuccessful employees. These include the following:

COMMON GOAL

All jobs exist for a reason. And except for self-employment jobs the primary reason is never to provide the person filling the position with an income or livelihood. In industry, profit is always the bottom line. Someone created the business to make money and if the company stops making a profit it will not be around for long. Most government funded jobs, meanwhile, exist to provide a service. Successful employees understand these reasons for being while those who encounter problems often don't, or at least act as if they do not. Being personally in synch with the employer's bottom-line goal not only makes it much easier for the employee to be seen as valuable, but also contributes to job security for everyone. An easy way to recognize whether someone is contributing to the bottom line is to ask the question "what if everyone did that?"

RESPECT FOR LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

Most clients seen at the Behavioural Sciences Centre through a mandatory referral or as part of a "last chance contract" have issues with their superiors. Many believe that they have been treated unfairly by their superior(s) and do not hesitate in volunteering the shortcomings of others, including their bosses. Most also continue to argue their case even though the battle

was lost and remedies prescribed at the disciplinary meeting. This all changes when the individual is reminded that the purpose of the counseling is not to help them gain an ally in an already lost fight but to help them avoid similar worksite job-site problems in the future and, sometimes, even to save their job. Such employees have often lost sight of the basic reality that superiors also have a job to do and that keeping track of their immediate subordinates is an important part of their position. In fact, it is estimated that monitoring the work of subordinates constitutes two-thirds of the average supervisor's role. Recognizing and accepting the legitimacy of a boss's "need to know" then can prevent misunderstandings about supervision and can make life easier for any employee by preventing the development of self-defeating negative attitudes about authority. Successful employees go even one step further. They not only do not resist or resent oversight but take it upon themselves to ensure that the boss is always informed about the work they are doing, problems they are having and, most importantly, complications or customer complaints that might follow. Determining just how much and how often one should inform the boss about your activities usually has to be a judgment call based on one's understanding of the boss's management style. But there is one universal rule and that is that there should be "no surprises. This is especially true for actual or potential problems or client complaints. Of course, keeping the boss informed about one's work and accepting oversight is much easier when things are going well and you feel that the boss either likes you or is happy with your work. Ironically, however, this practice is most when things are not going well or you are already in the boss's bad books.

HELPING THE BOSS TO SUCCEED

Employees who help their boss to look good and succeed in their job are invariably seen as assets, while subordinates who diminish the boss's image or status or are seen as obstacles or threats are not. The need to promote the boss's best interests is a hard pill for many employees to swallow. And it is especially difficult if they do not already like their boss, for whatever reason, or believe the boss as unfair or "gunning" for them. However, you do not have to like your boss to be successful and contributing to his/her success is not for the boss's benefit alone. It is an essential component of self-interest. Everyone benefits when the person in charge is happy and feeling successful. And if the boss chooses to take all the credit for him-, or herself, so be it. Even narcissists remember who is useful to them. And most people understand that it usually takes more than one person to make an undertaking successful. But even if the proper recognition is not given it is still much better to be seen as an asset by one's boss than an impediment.

CREATING WIGGLE ROOM

Employees who only work to rule have little to fall back on when they need a rule to be stretched or bent for their sake. The reality is that if one merely does only what the job description or contract requires then one is already fully compensated through the salary and benefits. Successful employees understand this and secure wiggle room for themselves by going beyond the "call of duty" when required. Employees who have to be constantly motivated to do what is expected or give the boss attitude or grief when something extraordinary is asked of them should not be surprised when they get some of their own medicine back from the boss when they need a favor or break.

ADDING VALUE

Improving a product or how a job is done has general benefits. It not only adds to one's self-esteem, personal worth and sense of accomplishment, but also is a positive antidote to boredom and routine. It

is also usually the quickest and surest ways to get noticed by superiors. As all advertisers and promoters know, packaging and presentation are extremely important. So paying close attention to detail and the visual appearance of any completed work product is an important start. A sloppy or carelessly compiled report will always detract from the content. And it is human nature to project qualities upon a person based on his/her tangible works. If sticking to the status-quo is required then one should avoid creative expression. If, on the other hand, the completed work can take different forms and how one gets to the end is not chiseled in stone then it is wise to always be looking for improved efficiency or end product. A good rule is to think of everything we do as having our signature on it and a product that will be compared against the status quo.

MASTERING TECHNOLOGY

Most work related technology is designed to either make the job easier or improve the end product. But learning how to take maximum advantage of each piece of workplace equipment is not only critical for maintaining efficiency and productivity. It also creates a "halo effect". The employee who masters all the features of the office telephone system, photocopier, alarm system, paging system, etc., etc., is invariably assumed to be a genius or near genius. And while there is no upper limit to computer proficiency, just knowing one thing more about the computer than someone else can create a profound impression in that person.

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