

HOW TO PUT YOUR 100 PERCENT AT WORKPLACE



We've all read about the work hard vs. work smart dichotomy. Still, it's difficult to get our heads around what's more effective and why we can't do both. Every so often, we are caught in the dilemma of perception that if you choose either, you must do without the other.

In the early days when the work hard doctrine was ubiquitous and when most of our forefathers were blue-collared workers, all you needed to do to succeed was to put in long hours. However, it seems that the only way to succeed today is “working hard at working smart” and finding the right formula to get things done. Many times, we hear mentors and parents saying, “practice makes perfect,” leaving out another important point that practicing the right formula makes it a perfect formula.

All of us want to be good employees and most of us want to excel at our jobs. To be a successful employee and excel at work, it is not simply a matter of being good at what you do. Being a successful employee also involves issues such as professionalism, attitude, and teamwork.

Let us examine some tips to remember

- **Learn how to perform your job well**

There's a big difference between just doing your job and doing your job well — and with pride. Making the extra effort, ratcheting up your game a

notch or two, and taking steps to fill any voids in your work will all help you shine in your job.

- **Work hard**

It used to be that just showing up for work was enough to get by in some companies, but those days are long gone. Today, you not only have to show up and be at your job the full day (arriving on time and not leaving early), but also put in a full day of work. Keep personal calls, emails, texts, and the like to a minimum.

- **Act professionally**

No matter what your job, it's important to be serious and focused on what you do — and act professionally in all situations. There's a time and place for fooling around, and it is not the workplace. Professionals follow the rules and are courteous, friendly, and tactful. Acting professionally also means dressing appropriately for your job.

- **Express positive attitude**

You don't have to be "Cheerful Sally" — in fact, don't be or you might not be taken seriously — but having a positive and go-get'em disposition is important. People like working with — and helping — co-workers with a positive attitude. People with negative attitudes — "Debbie Downer" — drag everyone around them down.

- **Take initiative**

You may be very good at your job — and that is important — but do you ever try to push the limits of your work? In other words, do you ever consider better ways you could do your job — or better ways your department could work — and make suggestions to your boss? Just do not confuse taking initiative with knowing it all.

- **Be a good team player**

To be successful in most jobs today, workers must also be good team players. Review how well you work in teams, examining key issues such as communications, working relationships, team successes (and failures). For a reality check, you might consider asking a few teammates for some honest feedback. You might also want to take our free teamwork assessment, *Are You a Team Player? A Quintessential Careers Quiz*.

- **Know your boss**

You don't have to be best friends with your boss; in fact, you don't even need to like your boss. You should, however, know your boss. In other words, the better you understand how your boss thinks, acts, and manages, the better you perform your job to his/her expectations and demands.

- **Understand your employer**

Some people work at their jobs for years without really knowing or understanding their employer. Taking the time to understand the organization's mission, goals, strategies, and products/services will help you better understand your role within it — and the value of the job you provide.

- **Take (constructive) criticism gracefully**

One of the hardest things for all of us to learn is how to handle constructive criticism — and how to use these critiques to improve our performance on the job. Yes, some bosses are truly nit-pickers, wanting everything done their way or not at all, but most bosses are simply providing feedback so you can perform your job better... so you can excel at your work.

- **Cultivate relationships**

Having workplace friendships with some of the folks who work with or near

you is usually a positive element in job satisfaction — which should result in greater motivation to perform your job to the best of your abilities. Just be sure you make friends with positive people who, like you, are focused on excelling at their work.

- **Take opportunities to learn new skills, jobs**

The longer we work at one job, the more likely we'll get bored with it — perhaps just going through the motions — until we are no longer excelling in our jobs. One way around this problem is taking opportunities for additional educational and training when your employer offers them.

- **Be part of the solution**

Don't be the worker everyone hates — the one who is always quick to point out the problems... while offering no solutions. Instead, when possible, strive to be a problem-solver. Problem-solvers are a valuable commodity in every workplace.

- **Avoid gossip**

It should go without saying — but we're saying it anyway — that it's always best to turn a deaf ear to gossip and rumours. No matter how good a worker you may be, getting caught in the web of gossip will quickly downgrade your standing with your boss and employer.

- **Volunteer for new projects**

Whether to seek a little variety with your job or to try to score some points with the boss, volunteering to take on additional work and responsibilities can lead to greater job satisfaction, better work performance, and perhaps even a new direction for your career.

- **Mentor new employees and younger workers**

One of the greatest goods in the workplace is when an experienced worker mentors a younger, inexperienced worker. Helping the new worker learn the ropes will provide you great personal satisfaction — and will also put you in good standing with the boss.

For most of us, it's important to strive to be the best worker we can be — to excel at our jobs. It's not necessarily about impressing the bosses and obtaining a promotion (though you may desire that down the road) — it's more about having a sense of accomplishment for a job well done. Finally, remember that when you are the person that's new to the job — or learning a new task — it's always better to ask questions (even repeating the same ones until you fully understand the answer) than to proceed blindly and stumble so badly that you have no chance of recovering. While there is no such thing as job security anymore, following the tips in this article should help you become an indispensable member of the organization's team.

For you to engage your staff in providing the best service to your guests, clients or partners, you must enrol them in your vision and align their perceptions and behaviours. You need to get them excited about where you are taking them while making sure they know what's in it for them. The challenge lies in making sure you are both leading your team as well as managing your day to day operation. Those who can do both, will create a competitive advantage.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The key to greater productivity is to work smarter, not harder. Working smarter saves precious time and energy for the things that really matter — your life goals, your personal growth, your health and your relationships.

Stop working for more hours and start working smarter!