

# The Workplace

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## A Fact Sheet

### Strategies for Job Success

#### Highlights

Strategies for success on the job include:

1. Approaching your job as a learning opportunity.
2. Having and practicing a good work ethic.
3. Having outstanding communication skills is a third strategy for success.
4. Being ambitious.

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Whether you have just started your first day on your first job or are a veteran worker, the way you conduct yourself while you are at work may mean the difference in being perceived as a success or a failure. Co-workers and supervisors alike watch how you handle various situations at work. Your approach to dealing with the responsibilities of your job and your professional relationships as well as your general attitude toward work establish your professionalism.

Although what is considered success or failure may vary to some degree from company to company, there are a few basic strategies that work well in most working environments. One strategy is to approach your job as a learning opportunity. According to a study conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), employers reported that the most valuable skills needed by employees is the ability to know how to learn. Get to know as much as you can about not only your job, but the jobs of those around you. Develop an understanding of what other departments do and how their work relates to yours. Read trade and company publications. In other words, try to establish yourself as an authority in your area.

Another strategy is to have and practice a good work ethic. Remember that your behavior reflects on your company, department, position and you. One way to do this is to begin your work day at the scheduled time, limiting personal phone calls and business to personal time. Other ways to demonstrate a good work ethic is to:

1. Arrive at work prepared.
2. Notify appropriate individuals when illnesses or emergencies occur.
3. Volunteer for tasks, particularly those that benefit your group or department.
4. Develop a positive attitude; even when you are having a bad day, look for the brighter side. Keep your opinion to yourself.



Having outstanding communication skills is a strategy for success. Communicating effectively means knowing when to speak and when to listen.

5. Find it within yourself to be supportive. Openly criticizing the actions of others often destroys relationships and can destroy careers. Even when you disagree with a decision, policy, work assignment, etc., publicly give your support.
6. Follow through on tasking. Be realistic when establishing a time frame for com-

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pleting a job. Consult with others who may be relying on you to complete their job assignment.

7. Respect the privacy of your employer and your co-workers by not spreading or adding to gossip about any individual, including yourself, or the company.

Having outstanding communication skills is a third strategy for success. Communicating effectively means knowing when to speak and when to listen.

Get your message across in the briefest manner possible. Ask questions. Form a habit of keeping management as well as co-workers informed. Such communication should include milestones reached, anticipated problems and plans for future jobs or projects. Make sure to inform all who might be affected if any mistake should occur. A professional knows with whom to communicate and under what circumstances. It is always best to go through the appropriate

channels of communication. Doing otherwise can be damaging to both budding and mature careers.

A fourth success strategy is being ambitious. Ambitiousness can be both a strength and a weakness. Trying to leap ahead before you are ready or pointing out the faults of others can be lethal to careers. Take your time to learn as much as you can before applying for a promotion. Set your career goals high; make a career action plan, and then put your plan into action. A plan might include:

1. A timeline for where you want to be in one year, five years, 10 years, and 20 years.
2. Asking someone who is already successful to be your mentor.
3. Develop one or two areas of expertise.

Show your supervisor that you are willing to work hard by readily accepting new assignments. Go beyond the minimum of what is expected of you. And when you are faced with a problem or have to report a problem to your boss, as everyone does at one time or another, turn a negative into a positive. Rather than complaining or pointing finger at others, have possible solutions ready to discuss and do not. Most in positions of authority appreciate having employees who can find possible solutions to problems.

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**Sources:**

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