

Improving your job performance

Being a good employee is about more than showing up to work on time. These ten ways to improve your job performance will not only help you achieve your career goals, they'll increase your job satisfaction and help you get along with difficult co-workers. And, you'll keep your employers happy...which could lead to a job promotion or raise.

Before the tips, a quip:

"People with clear, written goals accomplish far more in a shorter period of time than people without them could ever imagine," says motivational speaker and author Brian Tracy.

One way to achieve your career goals is to create a vision board, or pin a list of your goals on your bulletin board, bedroom mirror, and on your fridge. The more you see your professional goals, the more likely you'll achieve them! And, check out these ten tips for achieving your career goals by improving your performance at work...

Improving Your Job Performance – 10 Ways to be a Good Employee

1. Prioritize your "to-do" list at work. Yes, you have a million things to do and a hundred clients to please and at least one difficult boss to placate, and everybody's screaming "Give me attention *now!*" To improve your job performance, prioritize your tasks from the most to least important. This doesn't mean you have to do the most important tasks first; in fact, taking care of the smaller ones, such as filing or watering the plants, can be an excellent way to take a break from your more stressful job responsibilities.

2. Be as positive as possible, no matter what. Being positive is a characteristic of a good employee that may seem obvious or boring, but it's *so important*. Negativity drains energy, makes it difficult to negotiate conflict at work, and decreases your job performance. Avoid slandering difficult co-workers or gossiping about your supervisors. Be slow to criticize your clients, employees, or couriers – whether it's to their faces or behind their backs.

3. Polish your job skills. If your biggest qualification for your job is that you've been doing it for ten years, consider taking a refresher job training course. Adult education classes or night school is a great way to improve your job performance and help you achieve your career goals. Added bonuses: you can network with other professionals, learn great career tips, suss out new job opportunities, and improve your self-confidence at work.

4. Sharpen your networking skills. If you're planning to stay with your employer, learning how to negotiate a raise, or looking for a new job, keep networking. You'll learn valuable information, both professionally and personally, if you stay connected to your colleagues and mentors. A characteristic of a good employee is bringing in new business, which is easier to do when you know how to network.

5. Dress professionally and formally. Take pride in your appearance; if you're not into the current fashion, ask your partner or a salesperson to make sure you're well dressed. Even if you're in an entry level job in the service industry, make sure your hair, face and hands are neat and clean. Leaving the nose rings, lip rings and eyebrow rings at home may not improve your job performance, but it will increase your professional appearance – which will help you achieve your career goals.

6. Get good at the fundamental aspects of your job. An often overlooked but *hugely* appreciated characteristic of a good employee is getting to work, meetings, and workshops on time. If you can't meet your deadlines, ask for support. Be reliable, consistent, and trustworthy. In other words, be the employee you'd be glad to hire, supervise, and promote.

7. Find work responsibilities that interest and challenge you. To be a good employee, ask for tasks that motivate you. If you're interested in your work, you're more likely to do a good job – which can lead to more, and more interesting, job opportunities.

8. Assess your accomplishments at work. When was the last time you accomplished something at work that you're truly proud of? What was that project or task? If you haven't accomplished anything you're proud of, then maybe it's time to go beyond finding responsibilities that challenge you...to considering a whole new career.

9. Find out who's hiring in your field. It's important to know what's going on in your industry. This doesn't mean you have to "cross over" to another job or organization. If, for instance, you find out that Business B is hiring New Employee X, and the job description interests you but you don't want to jump ship at your current job, find out if you can bring those tasks to your current position. One way to be a good employee is to re-evaluate your job description to match the industry trends and client needs.

10. Stay as healthy as possible. To improve your performance at work, take care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep, eat nutritious food, and exercise regularly. Deal with mental, emotional, or spiritual issues; don't ignore your problems. Good employees are balanced in most, if not all, areas of their lives.