Once You Have The Job…..

Tips For Success

Professionalism: Tips for Success

Do...

- **Be dependable** – be at work every day and on time.
- **Cooperate** with your supervisor and co-workers.
- **Be organized** and keep your work area clean and free of clutter.
- **Ask questions** when you need more information.
- **Be honest** – don't lie or hide the truth.
- **Plan ahead** and let your supervisor know if you will be absent.
- **Take responsibility** – admit when you've made a mistake.
- **Use your time productively.**
- **Be open-minded** about new people, assignments, and ways to do things.
- **Dress appropriately.**
- **Take pride** in your work.
- **Return phone calls and e-mails** as soon as possible.
- **Give and take phone messages efficiently.**
- **Listen carefully.**
- **Show initiative** – learn new skills and take on new tasks.
- **Display a positive attitude!**

Don't...

- Gossip about other co-workers or your supervisor.
- Have your family and friends come by to visit you.
- Fight with co-workers.
- Come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Use the phone or computer for personal business.
- Nap or sleep in the workplace.
- "Borrow" anything from the company.
- Listen to your headphones while at work.
- Be absent without notice. (If you're sick, call your supervisor right away.)
- Take an extended lunch or break without permission.
- Bring your personal problems to work.

Attendance and Punctuality

"Unfaithfulness in the keeping of an appointment is an act of clear dishonesty. You may as well borrow a person's money as his time."

–Horace Mann

Have you ever had a friend who never showed up on time and never bothered to call to tell you that he or she would be late? Maybe you have a friend who forgets completely about plans you've made. If so, you can understand how frustrating it can be to deal with people you can't depend on.

A dependable person is someone you can count on to do WHAT he or she has agreed to do WHEN he or she has agreed to do it.

Both the "what" and "when" are important. If your friend promises to give you a ride to work at eight, but doesn't pick you up until nine, you are late, and the ride is of little help. If your friend promises to help you fix your car at noon, and arrives on time but without his tools, he is no help.

Dependability is an essential characteristic that an employer looks for.

- Show that you are dependable: Go to work every day. Always arrive on time. No matter how good your excuses, after a while they don't matter.
- Your employer counts on you to do your job.
- Being late disrupts co-workers.
- Being late says that work is not important to you.

Four Basic Rules of Attendance

The WHY Rule:

Always attend work unless you have a *good* reason to be absent. Most excuses from students are not *good* reasons. A death in the family, illness, or an occasion such as a relative's wedding are acceptable reasons for being absent. Spending time with friends is not.

The WHEN Rule:

If you will be absent, you need to let your employer know *as soon as possible*. For instance, if you wake up sick in the morning, call your supervisor right away. If you know of an upcoming event such as a wedding, let your supervisor know as soon as you find out about it.

The WHO Rule:

When you call in, make sure you talk to your supervisor. Don't ask another employee to take a message. If you get your supervisor's voice mail, leave a message, and call back later.

The HOW Rule:

When you talk to your employer, clearly explain your reason for missing work right away. Be respectful. Apologize. Remember that you are inconveniencing your employer.

Choose Your Words Carefully

The way you talk to your friends is different from the way you speak to strangers, especially strangers in the workplace. The following are suggestions for use in any professional situation:

Words and Phrases		
	Instead of...	**Try...**
Where are diapers and baby blankets? They seem to have moved.	I have no idea.	That's a good question. Let me check and find out.
I need to return this game but I don't have the receipt any more.	We can't do that.	That's a tough one. Let me see what I can do.
I can't get the soda dispenser to work.	That's not really my concern.	I understand how upset you are.
The salad bar is out of lettuce.	Yeah, yeah, I'll get to it.	I'll take care of that for you personally.
I wanted you to know that I'm returning the bathroom key.	Thanks.	Thank you. Have a great day.

Actions or Gestures	
Instead of...	**Try...**
Crossed arms	Smiling
Deep sighing	Making eye contact
Pursed lips	Gentle nodding
Eye rolling	Leaning forward
Looking around the room	Making "listening noises" such as "Mmmhmm"
Clenched fists	Open, relaxed posture
Frowning	
Shuffling around papers	
Nodding quickly (trying to get the speaker to hurry)	

On the Phone

Instead of...	Try...
Who's calling?	May I ask who's calling please?
What's your name again?	Could you please spell your name?
What's your number?	May I please have your phone number?
What should I tell her?	What is the message I should give her?
I don't know.	That's a good question. Let me check and find out.
We can't do that.	That's a tough one. Let me see what I can do.
He'll be back later.	He will return to the office around five.
Hang on a second.	It may take me a few minutes to do that. Would you like to hold while I check, or would you like me to call you back?

Eliminate Common Quirks

A quirk is a particular expression used repeatedly; a word, term, or behavior that annoys or distracts the listener. When listeners hear quirks, they often miss the true meaning of the conversation because they are distracted. It is important to recognize these quirks in your own patterns of speech and try to avoid using them in the workplace.

Poor Grammar

- It ain't like that.
- She didn't do nothing wrong.
- He just has to get hisself out of that mess.

Sounds

- Lip smacking
- Gum popping
- Interrupting

Pay Attention to Body Language

Communication isn't only about the words. Your posture, facial expressions, and gestures all communicate more to a customer than what you are saying.

In face to-face conversation:

- 55 percent is body language
- 38 percent is tone of voice
- 7 percent is word choice

Handling Criticism

Feedback
Evaluative information about you, your behavior, or the results of your behavior

Positive Feedback
Involves praise and tends to reinforce your behavior

Constructive Criticism
Involves judgment about your behavior that is intended to help you change your behavior for the better.

- **Don't take criticism personally.** Your supervisor isn't out to get you. He or she is only making suggestions so you can improve your performance and improve the overall quality of your company. If you were hiring people to design your wardrobe or repaint your car and they weren't doing a good job, you would say something too! Consider the criticism an opportunity to learn something.

- **Maintain your self-control.** Take a deep breath or two before responding to criticism. If you have to, walk to the bathroom, get a drink of water, or step outside (if possible) for a minute. If you feel the urge to shout at or hit someone, excuse yourself immediately and politely. Don't pout, whine, or blame someone else.

- **Admit your mistakes.** This is a major step towards responding well to criticism. It is normal to feel embarrassed about a mistake, but you must not get defensive. We all make mistakes. By taking responsibility for them you can regain self-respect and win the respect of your supervisor and co-workers.

- **Choose your "sounding board" wisely.** Do not complain to other employees about how angry or annoyed you are with your supervisor. Chances are, your words will get back to the employer and you'll be fired. If you need to talk it out with someone, ask for a five minute break and call your job coach, a teacher, or another adult who understands the work world and who will respond to your feelings as an adult. Calling a friend may merely increase your anger, especially if the friend takes sides with you. It is very important to call an adult who will help you handle yourself maturely.

- **Take the criticism seriously.** Do not ignore the criticism or simply write it off as being "unfair." Whether you agree or not, your employer is usually right. Follow directions or suggestions people may give you along with the criticism. If you are not sure about the steps you should take to improve, be sure to ask.

20 Ways to Lose Your Job

- Gossip about other co-workers or your supervisor
- Have your family and friends come by to visit you
- Fight with co-workers or supervisor
- Come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Use the phone or computer for personal business
- Rest or sleep in the workplace
- "Borrow" anything from the company
- Listen to your headphones while at work
- Be absent or late without giving notice
- Take an extended lunch or break without permission
- Bring your personal problems to work
- Be rude to a customer
- Disobey the dress code
- Refuse to complete work on time
- Surf the Internet for pornography
- Forget to mail an important package