

## How to Be a Good Employee

Being a successful employee is similar to running a sole proprietorship with low risk and limited customers. You listen around for what your primary customers (leadership) wants to get out of you. Then, you learn and actually get yourself to accomplish the requested tasks. Here are tips to be more successful in the work place.

1. Behave professionally. This is a business, not a playground. People talk, and workers know the difference between a person who is fun to work with and a person who is always fooling around. Fun means a good personality, a joke or two, and a smile. Fooling around is wasting your time and that of others, being frequently off-task, and often being seen standing in the workspace of others instead of in your own.
2. Learn to take criticism gracefully. It will provide you with valuable ideas about what people expect from you, any weak areas, and what you need to work on first. If a boss or coworker criticizes you in a way that hurts or angers you, wait until you cool/calm down and ask them if you can talk with them. Tell them how you felt, but tell them that you would like to fix the issue and want them to talk with you about what needs to be changed.
3. Learn to do your job, and do it well. Whether it's menial and tedious, or tough and high-paying, learn how to do the job, regardless of how difficult you think it might be. Salary is most commonly based upon years of experience, your ability to do your job, tenure with the company, and your educational background. If you do not know how to do something, go find out; do not make excuses for why you did not do it.
4. Cultivate good relationships with the people in your organization; they are the experts in their departments. Treat all co-workers with courtesy, respect, and kindness because they hold more power than you realize, and your reputation with them matters. Do not hang out with other employees who mistreat, disrespect, or talk down to others.
5. When you get the opportunity to learn a new skill, receive training for a different activity, or take a study course paid for by your employer—do it! Cross-training, new skill sets, and further education show that you are intelligent and value life-long learning. If push comes to shove, and people are let go, you stand a better chance of being retained than those who can only do one thing.
6. Maintain a clean job performance record. Do a good job, show up on time, keep a good attendance history. When you find out someone has been let go, you often find out later that there were underlying circumstances that led to their dismissal—including frequent absences, missed deadlines, reprimands for unprofessional behavior, or too many customer complaints. If you do not do that, you do not have room to negotiate.
7. Be on time. Always arrive early. Be at least 15 minutes early every day. That way, if you are running late, you will be on time. If you have to park far away, you will walk in and still not be late. If your client is early, you will be there to greet him or her, and not leave someone waiting for you – even if you arrive on time.

8. Ask your supervisor what the expectations for outcomes are. This will immediately make you stand out from 95% of the other employees. Mean what you ask and follow through on your promises.
9. Be part of the solutions. Quit whining about what is wrong and start being vocal about what is right! A positive attitude goes a long way with many supervisors. When you go to the boss with a problem, go with at least one suggestion in mind for a solution. Even if the boss does not take your suggestion, you will look like a problem-solver, not a complainer. Your boss has their own private lives to leave at the door, so do you. If you keep piling on the emotional baggage, then your boss may see that you can not balance your personal life from your work life. They will not approach you when they want to ask employees about perhaps open door advice when it comes to work related group efforts.
10. Do not drag your feet. We mean this in a literal way. Pick your feet up and walk proud, and get right to your work – do not procrastinate or let things drag up to the deadline, and then jump in to get it done in a fast flurry at the end. It makes your boss crazy. Gain a reputation for having your act together more so than the majority of people.
11. Be quiet and work. Quit gossiping and get to work. Your employer is not paying you to gossip. Of course, you want to establish a good rapport with your co-workers, and a little chatting is inevitable and desirable. But spending a half hour regaling your co-workers with your previous evening's adventures will not make your boss love you. When one of you is talking a lot, two of you are not working a lot. Note: if your boss walks by and two of you are talking, no big deal, but wrap up the conversation so that the boss will not see the same sight on her way back. The same goes for a group of you. If you are part of a group who is talking when the boss walks by, discreetly excuse yourself to return to your area after a few seconds. If your boss hears that you are gossiping behind their backs or planning a secret meeting to approach your boss is not the solution. This may just make you look like a instigator or conspirator.
12. Always be productive. Do not let paper sit on your desk for days on end. Get the work done and move on to the next thing as quickly as possible.
13. Dress appropriately for your job. If you do not know what this means, ask. Coming to work looking (or smelling) like you have not had a bath in days and do not know where the laundry is can be a good way get unfavorable treatment. The company will not want such people to represent it with customers. Your co-workers will not want you around them.
14. Hold your head high and be confident. A calm, assured energy will take you much farther than carrying yourself in a hunched up ball.

15. Volunteer or be active in projects to get the job done. Do not worry about who gets credit – your boss knows much more than you think. Be a team player. In addition, volunteering allows you to choose the part you will play. If you do not choose, chances are it will be chosen for you. Either way, you'll be responsible for some facet, so be one of the first to step forward when you can.
16. Do not spend a lot of time on personal phone calls. Work is for work. Keep cell phones in your locker and limit personal calls on work phones to emergencies. This is especially hard for newly weds and those with a new child. But, if you do not have this job, who is going to pay the bills.
17. Use the last 15-20 minutes of your shift. People notice who runs to the clock out stations prior to shift end. One of the best uses of this time is to organize your work space for tomorrow. Take a moment to put away loose papers, sweep, wipe down surfaces, and locate things you'll need. For those who use a computer, make sure that all work is saved and any sensitive files are closed.
18. Offer junior employees guidance and encouragement. Offer to show them the ropes or offer training tips. Remember how it felt to be the newbie. Be a mentor. If you are not sure someone understood something, be willing to ask if they need assistance. Do not do the work for them, teach them instead. Be careful what you say to new employees; do not air your grievances, frustrations, or interpersonal conflicts. Do not gossip.
19. Acceptance is the **key**. Do not argue a lot, your company's policies are what your boss has to follow. So if you found something wrong, try to understand your boss's perspective, but without arguing. Use a good and quiet way to understand the problem point. You may just realize that things happen for a reason and not necessarily for a season. Policies are implemented for reasons of the good of the whole.
20. Be appreciative, always say thank you whenever a boss or a co-worker does something good to you, it will always motivate them to do more good to you.