

How to Be a Star at Work

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The differences between college and work are many. You are moving from a world that has been highly structured, flexible, focused on development and personally supportive to a world that is more competitive and less structured with higher expectations. The following nine behaviors have been identified as crucial to being considered a star performer at work.

1. Initiative

- Seek out responsibility above and beyond the expected job description
- Undertake extra efforts for the benefit of coworkers or the larger group
- Stick tenaciously to an idea or project and follow it through to successful implementation
- Willingly assume some personal risk in taking on new responsibilities

Steps:

- Do your current work well
- Ask who benefits from your work
- Stay close to the critical path
- Determine the probability of success and the cost of failure

2. Knowing Who Knows – Proactively developing dependable pathways to knowledge experts who can help complete critical path tasks, share knowledge and minimize knowledge deficit

Supporting Factors

- Knowledge itself
- Organizational support
- Technical/physical environment

Network Nodes

- Mental models of networking: understand different ideas of how the network is supposed to work
- Get network in place before you need it
- Do your homework

- Networking etiquette: small courtesies and considerations are critical
- Do a self-study on as much of the general subject area as possible
- Summarize attempts to solve the problem or find elusive information
- Spend time forming the right question
- Link the problem to a discipline/area of interest intriguing the expert
- Credit lavishly: follow up with a note of thanks & make sure public credit is given for contributions
- Benefits of newness: new employees trying to break into an established network for the first time are given much consideration
- Networking is a two way street, help others with networks

3. Managing Your Whole Life at Work – Develop a portfolio of talents and work experiences so that value to the company increases; know your strengths and weaknesses

Lessons

- Know yourself well
- Know the kind of work you do best and that you want
- Take control of your own career path by developing a plan to connect yourself to the work you enjoy most and to connect that work to the company's critical path

Adopt a system that helps you:

- Plan the entire project
- Schedule your time
- Keep track of your progress ☒ Store and retrieve important information





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- Provide for a backup plan if problems arise
- Communicate your progress and results to important others

Core self-management skills

- Find out what the critical path is for the organization and get on it by adding value
- Choose work where you can leverage yourself, your talents, get into flow, and experience job satisfaction
- Regularly review your personal productivity and devise ways to increase personal effectiveness and efficiency
- Borrow shamelessly – techniques and methods for better self-management
- Don't fear experimentation; try new approaches
- Make compelling case to management for changing job description and regulations that limit productivity
- Adopt behaviors that allow minimization of interruptions with separating from the group
- Work to avoid time-killer crises by planning for problems – building mistake-recovery time into the projects; write up personal damage-control plan
- Develop procrastination-busting work habits – to-do lists, priority plans, building enjoyable assignments around drudge tasks
- Learn to accept occasional unproductive days, even weeks of slump

4. Getting the Big Picture – See in a larger context and through the eyes of the critical others

5. Followership – Be actively engaged in helping the organization succeed while exercising independent, critical judgment of goals, tasks, and methods; work cooperatively even through differences

6. Small-L Leadership in a Big-L World – Employs expertise and influence to convince a group of people to come together and accomplish a task; help create vision, create trust

7. Teamwork – Taking joint "ownership" of goal setting, activities, and accomplishments; help build team, deal with conflict, and solve problems

8. Organizational Savvy – Navigate competing interests to promote cooperation, address conflicts, and get things done; communicate with individuals and groups, avoid conflicts and make allies out of enemies

9. Show-and-Tell – Selecting information to pass along, developing effective format for persuading a specific audience; selecting the right message

