

# **Behaviour to climb the stepping stones to career success**

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This "fruit for thought" article is for all human beings, who somehow find themselves in the role of breadwinner and striving to improve their living standards.

The heading of this article could just as well have been "How to position yourself for promotion" or "How to position yourself for career advancement" or "How to climb the success ladder" or something similar.

The answer on how to cultivate good work ethics is simple. Make yourself one of the linking pins in your organisation. A linking pin is someone to whom everybody turns to, to get information and advice from. It is also someone who can link persons, sections and departments for better co-operation. But most important of all, it is someone who can exert influence upwards, downwards and sideways in the organisation structure. In other words you must be able to influence people around you to carry out the wishes, policies and strategies of top management, by earning respect through your display of expertise and thoroughness. You must also be able to represent the valid wishes and needs of lower levels to top management. You can become a linking pin by striving to attain the following traits:

### **Career builder step 1: Cloak yourself with expert knowledge in your technical field of operation.**

If you are an electrician, do not only be satisfied with your qualification. Try to gain more in depth expertise in this technical field of yours, to distinguish yourself from other electricians.

If you are an accountant, avail yourself of in depth knowledge about bookkeeping practices by studying or reading up on subjects pertinent for your field of technical expertise.

You can bluff your way during interviews, but once you have been appointed, people expect from you to perform. This is where the cookie crumbles or you succeed. The point is you must not only perform at an average level, but you must display exceptional or above average expertise, so that others can start to rely on your opinions and advice.

### **Career builder step 2: Produce accurate work.**

Cultivate a habit to carry out your work correctly with a minimum of mistakes. Sloppiness or tardiness must definitely not be present in your attitude, personal appearance or any of your work outputs, be it notes, memo's, letters, spreadsheets, conversations or anything related to your work.

Imagine what will happen if debits and credits are being processed the wrong way around in a financial department. It will have disastrous consequences. Strive for professionalism in what you do.

### **Career builder step 3: Be quicker than most.**

This is one of the best ways to demonstrate your superiority and efficiency. By executing duties and tasks speedily, you are being more productive and can entice more important tasks your way and thereby not only increase your merit ratings, but also your ultimate job rating. If you can perform your duties speedily, do not wait and stay idle, but present yourself to your superior for more work. Find a balance to be both quick and accurate.

### **Career builder step 4: Display awareness of productivity.**

This must start with your own self-evaluation. Ask yourself constantly if you are giving more back to the organisation in value, than what you are being paid every month. Although not easy to calculate, just thinking about it may have enough of an impact.

Just imagine for a moment if your organisation were to be solely dependant for profit on the output of human beings only. In other words nothing to sell or produce but labour output. If you can do more, it reflects directly on profit. Luckily a lot of organisations have machines that make up in productivity for what is lost by unproductive employees.

But being more productive in what you do as a human being, can contribute significantly to the profits of any organisation. As salaries are one of the highest cost elements in any organisation, this is one of the first cost elements that come under scrutiny during times of cost reduction efforts. You have to show your worth in order not to be included in downscaling of the labour force. But more positively, you have to show your worth to be counted in for consideration for promotion.

### **Career builder step 5: Get rid of time wasters.**

Arriving late for work, stretching of tea and lunch breaks and elongated private conversations on the phone, are not only wasting your valuable time, but are a reflection of your poor awareness of productivity. Private conversations on the telephone are one of the most abused methods of stealth stealing from your employer. If you cannot be trusted on the use of the telephone, what else can you be trusted with? Are you a role model for getting rid of these time wasters or for abusing it?

Are you earning respect for your ethical conduct in eradicating time wasters or are you just one of the crowd? If you discipline yourself and others around you on the economical use of time, you are on your way to earn a respected leadership role. Others must detect a sense of urgency in your execution of duties to begin to respect and follow your example. Do you want to be a follower or a leader?

Do you want to stay obscured in the crowd for the rest of your life or do you want to be recognized? There is such a thing as telephone ethics, you know. If you are prepared to pay for your use of the employer telephone, you are not abusing it. Do you really know what you are costing your employer for using the phone? You are not supposed to use it for private purposes in the first place. It is a privileged instrument entrusted to you to help you in your work and not to cause financial loss to You employer.

### **Career builder step 6: Be open-minded and ready for organisational changes.**

Whenever changes are announced, be positive and display a leadership role in executing the new policies and strategies. If you participated in the planning of the changes, then you were forewarned. But even if you experience unexpected changes, be first to look out for positive reasons for such changes and to influence others around you to accept it with positive attitudes. Defending superiors and higher management will increase your leadership status and trustworthiness. In a political sense it will display your role as siding with management against the disgruntled crowd.

### **Career builder step 7: Arrange and organise your paperwork.**

A good filing system allows you to retrieve required documents and information fast for own use or for use by other parties. It is a reflection of your efficiency and your ability for sound logic thinking. If you surround yourself with paperwork to impress on others how busy you are, you are making the mistake of your life. It can be interpreted in many different ways, like you cannot cope with the workload,

you cannot delegate, you spend too much on time wasters, you are too slow and worst of all you cannot manage yourself or others.

If you cannot get rid of papers, you will not find the time to attend to the needs and development of your subordinates. You will also not find the time to liaise with colleagues or to discipline your section or department. You will be a walk over and ripe for being misused by subordinates not respecting you. Rather be a reliable source of information with the time for training your subordinates and others. Clean up your desk to make time for others.

### **Career builder step 8: Read up on the principles of supervision and management.**

Familiarise yourself with the knowledge on how to be a good supervisor or manager. If you can display management capabilities, you will sooner be identified for promotion. It is better to be promoted for your managerial capabilities than for your technical proficiency. It will allow you to perform your managerial duties better. Apart from being technically proficient, prepare yourself in advance for possible promotion. Make yourself ready and available for your employer and the future needs of your organisation.

### **Career builder step 9: Confidential information.**

Your treatment of confidential information is going to be a good gauge of your character. You only have to make one mistake in this area, not to be trusted ever again. If you have a problem in this area, rectify it quickly. Your superiors and employer have to trust and rely on your discretion with confidential information. Some information must be kept confidential or secret until it is time for disclosure.

You must prove your ability for discretion with this type of information, so that they know they can trust and rely on you. Let them know and understand that you are part and parcel of management.

### **Career builder step 10: Show initiative.**

Make suggestions to improve methods of work and systems. See problems as opportunities for improvement. Do not just report problems, but analyse it wisely and make recommendations for improvement. Recognise opportunities for improvement and development and utilise it.

### **Career builder step 11: Be honest, open and direct.**

Harbouring a secretive attitude of slyness with hidden agenda's, will not remain a secret for long. Other persons will eventually detect it and despise you for it. You can just as well fire yourself, because that is where you will end up. Nobody will trust you after you have been exposed. Be open and direct in your communications and handling of conflict situations. Do not be afraid to air your opinions, as long as it is genuine and true. Truthful mistakes can always be remedied later on.

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