Tips & Tactics for Career Success

Career Success:

- The attainment of a desired professional aim or purpose
- The achievement of prosperity or distinction amongst professional colleagues

Traits of Career Success:

- Excellent compensation
- Professional pride in work and accomplishments
- Being highly respected by colleagues
- Popularity and recognition
- Achievement / career advancement & growth
- Self-satisfaction / gratification of work
- Work / Life Balance
Formula for Career Success on the “Fast Track”

Professionalism
24 / 7 / 365

Mastering the Game of Politics

Personal Brand Differentiation
Definition of Professionalism:

- A person engaging in a specified activity involving specialized skills, prolonged training, formal qualifications and possessing an elevated level of competence in such activities.

- Behaving “appropriately” during the performance of specified professional workplace activities.

- Striving to be the best employee possible and achieving the goals of the organization.
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

- Create a professional image
- Behave appropriately and professionally 24 hours a day, seven days per week, all year long regardless of circumstances.
- Take suitable or proper action within the existing circumstances
- Be charming
  - Use your best manners in every situation
  - Be on your ‘best behavior’ in every situation
- Demonstrate good judgment and common sense
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

- Create a professional image
- Communicate effectively
  - Avoid miscommunication
  - Speak and write properly and eloquently
  - Master public speaking
- Be cautious of how you utilize technology to communicate
  - Keep all written communication professional, concise, clear, correct, and kind
  - Use proper English
- Excel at interpersonal communication
  - Be a good listener
  - Be empathetic
- Practice public speaking
  - Learn to speak up when you have an idea or opinion
  - Do not be shy
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

- Create a professional image
  - Dress appropriately at all times

- Dress similarly to a person in the organization who holds a position that you aspire to attain

- Always dress well enough to have a meeting with your boss or a client

- Always err on the conservative side when choosing professional attire
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

- Create a professional demeanor
  - Be respectful of others ALWAYS

- Treat others with courtesy, dignity, & respect; no matter what the circumstances!
  - be as nice to the cleaning staff as you are to the head of the department

- Be sensitive of a diverse work culture

- Be respectful of other people’s precious time
  - do not waste it
  - do not take advantage of it
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

- Create a professional demeanor
  - Realize that you are not entitled to respect—you must earn it.
- Do not expect special treatment regardless of your previous status or accomplishments
- Be humble and realistic of your capabilities
- Be flexible / adapt as needed
- Be willing to do what is needed – you are not too good to perform any task
Create a professional demeanor

- Have integrity--be ethical, dependable, & reliable ALWAYS!
  - If an employee lacks integrity…all other qualities, skills, and abilities are meaningless.

- Practice “The Golden Rule”
  - “Do unto others…”

- Create your own “Code of Ethical Behavior”
  - follow your code no matter what others are doing

- Do what you say you are going to do
  - follow through on your promises
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

Create a professional demeanor

- Maintain emotional self-control
  - Be unflappable while in the work place—no matter how much pressure you are under

- Maintain your composure at all times
  - Control your tone of voice
  - Stay calm, cool, and collected

- Do not cry, shout, or be aggressive at work

- Never let coworkers see you ‘freak out’

- Maintain your ‘poker face’
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

Create a professional demeanor

- Maintain a positive attitude at all times
  - Positive employees are happier and more successful throughout their careers.
    - Happy employees = productive employees
    - Productive employees = successful employees

Internal locus of control:
- "I am in charge of my destiny."
- "I am not a victim of circumstance."
- "Anything is possible!"

Do not complain or whine about work place situations
- Always have a suggestion for a viable solution if you do make a complaint.

No one wants to work with a ‘Negative Nelly’

Negativity is mentally draining and a physical ‘downer’
**PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365**

- **Create a professional demeanor**
  - Understand the dynamics of workplace relationships
    - Realize that workplace relationships develop due to shared proximity and experiences and create a false sense of familiarity.

- **Things to consider:**
  - Your boss is *not* your friend, spouse, parent, or therapist.
  - Your coworkers are *not* your playmates.
  - Your coworkers really do *not* want to know about your personal problems nor do they truly care—so keep it private.
  - **NO** "TMI", please!
PROFESSIONALISM – 24 / 7 / 365

Realize that you are part of the team

- Understand how your job is related to and affects the entire organization
  - You are a “link in the chain”
  - You are “a part of a machine”

Manage teamwork effectively:

- Do your part / pull your own weight
- Share responsibility & accountability
- Share talent, skills, knowledge & information
- Cooperate to accomplish goals
- Be sensitive of diverse team members
- Practice conflict resolution to solve problems
Create “Brand You” to differentiate yourself as a ‘star employee’

- **Brand You** = the unique identity and coherent message that sets you apart from your competition
  - **Brand** = name, term, or symbol that identifies one firm’s products and sets them apart from the competition’s products

Benefits of creating “Brand You”:

- You understand the utility that your features bring to the organization
- You have a strong identity that you can communicate to advance your career
- You are able to adapt to constant changes in the work environment
- You are able to maintain life-long employability
BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

- Be in a constant state of learning
  - Constantly upgrade and improve your skill set and areas of expertise and knowledge
  - Understand that you will make mistakes—learn from them and move on

- Know what is expected of you in your job
  - What is required for you to perform your job successfully?
  - Determine how you can meet or exceed these expectations.

- Take advantage of any organizational training and development or tuition reimbursement programs offered to increase skills and knowledge

- Participate in industry skills enhancement seminars
BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

- Develop a sufficient level of self-confidence
  - Confidence is a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’
    - “Fake it until you make it”
    - “Act brave—be brave”
  - Realize the value that you bring to the position
  - Be open to continuously improving your skills
  - Be fearless and creative
    - be willing to think ‘outside of the box’
  - Do not fear failure or be afraid of mistakes
    - apologize, learn, adapt, and try again
  - Over-prepare for stressful situations
Master the art of self-promotion

Learn to promote your own successes and to ‘toot your own horn’ without bragging or sounding conceited.

Prepare and practice your ‘elevator speech” or ‘value proposition summary statement’

- Do not be arrogant, egotistical, or cocky!
- Use the words ‘we’ and ‘my team’ to demonstrate your success stories and share credit for accomplishments

Keep an ongoing log of accomplishments & success stories for your performance appraisal
BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

- **Take initiative**
  - Ask for additional responsibility, tasks, and functions
  - Make yourself indispensable to the organization
  - Take responsibility for your own career development

- Become a subject matter expert in one area
- Cross-train
  - Be flexible / adaptable
  - Learn a skill no other employee knows or wants to complete
- Volunteer for additional assignments
  - Be prepared to take on assignments which go well beyond your actual job description
- Participate in extra curricular organizational activities
MANAGING POLITICS

Political Behavior:
- actions (not officially sanctioned by an organization) taken by employees, managers, or stakeholders for the purpose of influencing others in order to meet their own personal and/or organizational needs and goals

Politics defined:
- The struggle for personal power within an organization
- The use of personal power and influence in organizational settings to gain control of others
- “War without bloodshed”
  --Mao Tse-tung
MANAGING POLITICS

- Develop appropriate workplace relationships
  - Respect the workplace dynamic and do not have personal relationships with supervisors or coworkers.

- Do not drink, smoke, or joke with any ‘higher up’ in the organization

- Do not do personal errands for your supervisor

- Keep your personal business to yourself
MANAGING POLITICS

- Develop appropriate workplace relationships
  - Utilize the power of relationship building to manage political behavior

- Learn to effectively and quickly develop rapport

- Network constantly

- Be involved in activities outside of your department in order to be visible to upper management

- Realize that it is more important to be respected than personally popular
MANAGING POLITICS

Seek an experienced mentor

Mentor = a person (usually mature and experienced) who can assist you when you have questions, guide you in your career development, provide valuable insight and advice, and serve as a role-model.

- Find mentors of all types:
  - various areas of subject matter expertise
  - different ages & gender
  - various social and professional status
  - in various departments

- It is a two-way relationship
  - be prepared to assist your mentor
  - be gracious and say ‘thank you’ often

- Don’t be afraid to ask questions or to ask for help if you need it
MANAGING POLITICS

- Build credibility with your colleagues and supervisors
  - Be honest
  - Be helpful
  - Provide support

- Give credit where credit is due
  - never take credit for someone else’s work or ideas

- Take responsibility for your own mistakes
  - Do not make excuses

- Support your boss
  - Try to anticipate their needs in advance
  - Try to make their life easier—not harder
  - Try to make your boss look good to their boss
FORMULA FOR CAREER SUCCESS

STAR EMPLOYEE

MASTER OF POLITICS

“BRAND YOU” DIFFERENTIATION

PROFESSIONALISM
24 / 7 / 365
Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Do not hold on to a sense of entitlement. Do not be egotistical, self-righteous, arrogant, or conceited.
- Do not become romantically involved with coworkers or supervisors.
- Do not participate in gossip. (You should listen but do not perpetuate gossip or rumors.)
- Do not use your employer’s equipment or time to take care of your personal business or chores.
- Do not be chronically late or absent.
- Do not blame others for your mistakes.
- Do not be negative.
- Do not put down coworkers to make yourself look good.
- Do not share your personal problems with coworkers or supervisors.
- Do not ‘tweet’ about or post gossip, data, or information about your organization on social networking sites.
Checklist for Success

- Be in a constant mode of learning. Learn from your mistakes and failures, too.
- Become a ‘subject matter expert’ in one area of your field. Continue investing in improving yourself, your skills, and your experience.
- Watch and observe the company culture, how things are done, and how employees interact. Behave appropriately per the culture.
- Understand who is important in the organization; who has power; and who your need to impress to move ahead.
- Control your emotions. Maintain your composure.
- Focus on doing the job, not on watching the clock.
- Keep your work space neat and organized.
- Keep a personal contact list of important players, clients, & colleagues’ phone numbers and email addresses.
- Work hard, have fun, and be kind.
- Maintain a boundary between your work life and personal life. Keep it balanced.
Thank You!

We appreciate your participation.

- The recording of today’s presentation, along with the PowerPoint slides, will be available on our Career Programming web page by next week:

  http://www.mccombs.utexas.edu/alumni/careers/programming/

- Sources are provided on additional slides at the end of this PPT presentation.


Bohlander/Snell/Sherman (2001); *Managing Human Resources 12e, Chapter 9: The Success System: Career Development*, South-Western/Thompson Learning