



Basic Life Skills and Job Success



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Basic Life Skills and Job Success

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Basic Life Skills and Job Success (Based on the Skill Power Mini-series)

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Getting Started

Positive Mindset

A primary goal for most people is to increase personal success and happiness. Unfortunately, many people do not associate employment with happiness or satisfaction. For them a job is a necessary evil – simply a way to get money for food, shelter and / or leisure activities.

In reality, work can be a great source of happiness and satisfaction. It can also be a huge self-esteem builder, if used to increase self-respect, self-confidence and sense of achievement.

Yes, there are times when a job is taken for the sole purpose of putting food on the table or maintaining a place to live. But even in these situations, committing to a job should mean committing to doing the best job possible. Not just for the employer's success, but for personal success in life. You can benefit from *every* job you take.

If you are learning something – how to be better organized or how to communicate with different people – you are increasing chances for personal success. And if you are accomplishing goals you set for yourself, no matter how small, you are building self-esteem.

Evaluate every job in terms of your personal plan for success. Are you really happy doing what you are doing? Do you see yourself staying or moving up in this environment? Is this simply a training or knowledge building position? Is this a temporary position while you pursue outside education or training?

This book will help you develop the skills needed to increase success in any workplace. Your personal success in life depends on you, however. Develop an overall plan for *your* future and use employment opportunities to move you closer to your goal.

General Skill-building Tips:

- Keep in mind that skill-building is a personal journey and a life-long process.
- Focus on skills that will bring the greatest personal success.
- Seek out new information and adapt to personal situations. If one thing doesn't work, try another.
- Remember that small changes in thought and actions can greatly alter situations and interactions.

Chapter One

Assertiveness and Job Success

Define your



Individuality

Respect is the Key

Respect for self and respect for others are essential elements of assertiveness. Lack of self-respect can lead to consistently passive behavior; lack of respect for others can lead to consistently aggressive behavior. On-the-job assertiveness also includes respect for the workplace environment and respect for the positions held by others.

Assertiveness can increase job satisfaction by providing a means for becoming more involved in workplace activities. Respectfully sharing information builds a strong work unit that encourages individual ownership of workplace goals.

This chapter provides information that can be used as a foundation for building personal assertiveness.



Things to Remember about Assertiveness

- Every person has a right to be heard.
- Everyone deserves a basic level of respect.
- We cannot expect others to know what we are thinking.
- If we do not define who we are, others may draw false conclusions.
- If we refuse to participate in a decision, we cannot criticize the outcome.

Current Views on Assertiveness

(For use as both a pre-test before reading this chapter
and a post-test after you have read it)

Using the following scale, indicate your level
of agreement with the following statements:

**Strongly
Agree**

**Strongly
Disagree**

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▪ I can be assertiveness without being aggressive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I cannot be successful without being assertive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I can be assertive while respecting other views. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ It is okay to be passive sometimes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ It is okay to be aggressive sometimes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I can be aggressive without being cruel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Generally I am an assertive person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I value assertiveness in my work relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I know the boundary between assertiveness and aggressiveness. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Relationships are better if both people are assertive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Evaluating your pre-test answers: If you *Strongly Agree* with most of the answers, you understand the meaning and value of being assertive. If all of your answers are #1 then the following information can serve as a reinforcement of your beliefs.

Evaluating your post-test answers: The purpose of this chapter is to increase or reinforce your basic knowledge and understanding of how assertiveness affects job success. After reading through the chapter, review your answers to see if you can move some closer to *Strongly Agree*.

Assertiveness Basics

Self-Respect:



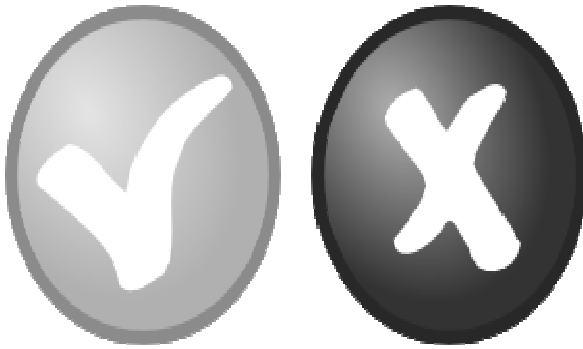
- Feelings of value and self-worth.
- Pride without arrogance.
- Faith in abilities.
- Not self-destructive.

Respect for Others:



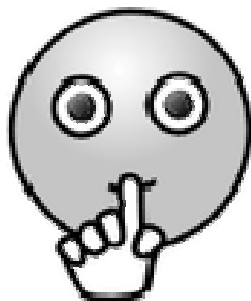
- See value in others.
- Acknowledge and accept the rights of others.
- Interact with co-workers in a professional manner.

Able to say “No” when appropriate:



- Know when to say yes.
- Know when to say no.
- Set boundaries and priorities that will best achieve workplace goals.

Able to be Passive or Aggressive when necessary and appropriate:



Passive

- When we don't have the facts to back us up.
- When we have no stake in the discussion.
- When others must make the decision for themselves.



Aggressive

- When taking charge of an emergency.
- When setting down non-negotiable rules.
- When giving very specific instructions.

7 Tips for Increasing Workplace Assertiveness

- **Respect the views and opinion of all co-workers, even if you don't agree with them.**

Everyone is entitled to their personal opinions. Personal opinions that have nothing to do with the workplace environment or goals, however, should generally remain personal.

- **Within established workplace guidelines, respect yourself enough to speak up when decisions or plans directly affect you.**

Your input can be very valuable and may positively influence the outcome.

- **Choose to be *passive*, when situations do not directly affect you unless you are asked for input or have critical information to offer.**

Most of us have enough to do tending to our own area.

- **Do not be afraid to *aggressively* take charge of a situation if there is a clear need to do so.**

If you have the necessary training, trust your abilities in times of challenge.

- **Set personal boundaries with the workplace environment.**

Co-workers are not necessarily friends. In situations that are not related to work, it is okay to set limits on how much time you want to spend with them and the topics you are willing to discuss. It is *always* okay to set limits on the amount of physical contact you will allow.

- **Be realistic with regard to workload.**

Staying busy is good for productivity and helps work time pass quickly. Taking on too much, however, can result in loss of productivity and resentment of the job. Respectfully discuss problems with workload before major problems arise.

- **Volunteer for projects that you believe will increase your skills or that you might simply enjoy.**

Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone.

The next steps

- What specific ideas or suggestions mentioned in this chapter are most important to you?

- What will you will to implement each of these ideas or suggestions?

Evaluating your efforts

- Did your attempt to implement the idea or suggestion work?
_____Yes _____No

- If not, what additional action can you take?

Chapter Two

Attitude and Job Success

Look for the Good



Or Look for the Bad

Control the Influence

Some people believe their attitude is determined by the people and situations around them. In reality, we decide to what degree we will allow the people and situations around us to affect our attitude. We can choose whether to be optimistic or pessimistic. And our choice often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This chapter provides information that can help in developing a professional attitude that seeks balance in the workplace and more positive outcomes.



Things to Remember about Attitude

- Others may influence our attitude, but we ultimately determine what our attitude will be regarding a particular person or situation.
- The amount of control we feel we have over a given situation can affect our attitude. It is therefore wise to focus on the things we have the greatest control over: *our* actions, *our* reactions and *our* emotions.
- No one is happy and carefree every minute of every day. We all have personal concerns over which we have very little control.
- In the workplace, our focus should be on successfully completing a job or common goal shared by all team members.

Current Views on Attitude

(For use as both a pre-test before reading this chapter
and a post-test after you have read it)

Using the following scale, indicate your level
of agreement with the following statements:

| | Strongly Agree | | | Strongly Disagree | |
|--|-------------------|---|---|----------------------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Attitudes affect outcomes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ I can choose to be positive or negative. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Attitudes can be contagious. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ It's okay to be negative sometimes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ How I see myself affects my attitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Preconceived ideas can affect perception. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ Situations can change with a change in attitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ New skills can build confidence and improve attitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ A <i>neutral</i> attitude can be helpful in the workplace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ▪ My attitude can affect the attitude of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Evaluating your pre-test answers: If you *Strongly Agree* with most of the answers, you understand the meaning and value of having the right attitude. If all of your answers are #1 then the following information can serve as a reinforcement of your beliefs.

Evaluating your post-test answers: The purpose of this section is to increase or reinforce your basic knowledge and understanding of how attitude affects job success. After reading the chapter, review your answers to see if you can move some closer to *Strongly Agree*.

Attitude Basics

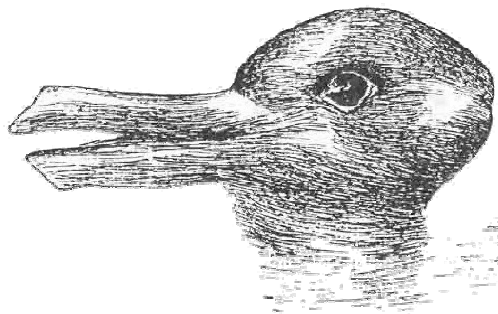
Attitude Affects Outcomes:

- If I believe I am strong and competent, but caring and nurturing, it will happen.
- If I believe I am alone and will never fit in with those around me, it will happen.
- How I see myself will determine my ultimate level of success.



We See What We Want to See:

- Each person's view of the world is unique to him or her.
- Perception of people and situations is based on personal beliefs, background and experiences.
- A positive attitude generally produces positive results; a negative attitude, negative results.



Duck or Rabbit?