Job Satisfaction - 10 Tips to Boost It

Plus

Career Development: 10 Savvy Ways to make Yourself Indispensable
4 Career Development: 10 Savvy Ways to make Yourself Indispensable

7 Cyber Career Killers
CAREER

Like your job? Working for a good organisation? If the answer to both is “yes,” and definitely if it is “no” to one or both, the truth is no one is truly indispensable. However, for strong career growth, by working hard at making yourself indispensable, your career will prosper either with your current employer, or you’ll be a top candidate for a job with another organisation.

First, assess your strengths, weaknesses and your value to your group. What is your competition? Now develop a plan with both long and short term strategies to boost your value within the operation.

Following are 10 immediate actions you can take to make you more promotable or make you irreplaceable in the face of downsizing or reorganising:

1. Take ownership of your responsibilities. View your department as a separate company. Consider your actions as if you were president of your company. Look at the balance sheet on every decision you make. Will the decision be seen as an asset or liability? Try to always see the bigger picture.

2. Take responsibility for your career and personal advancement. Be proactive. What are others in the same position doing in other organisations? What results are they achieving? What can you learn from them? How can you initiate those actions within your “company?”

3. Maintain a positive attitude. Look for ways, even under stress, to find the positive in everything. Find options to overcome obstacles and don’t entertain the thought the situation is impossible. Stay away from the naysayers.

4. Consider outsourcing non-critical functions. Become an expert in this area. Lean organisations become more efficient by outsourcing. Let your management know you can effectively run things with fewer people.
5. Find tasks to do better or something that is not being done. In many organisations, especially those in a downsizing mode, responsibilities slip between the cracks. Propose to your boss that you pick up the slack. If you need extra training see that you are prepared. Don’t be bashful about broadcasting the positive results.

6. Let others know what you’re doing. As mentioned in #5 above, if you or your team achieves something important to the organisation let others know. Some managers believe if they keep quiet and blend into the background they’ll be overlooked when and if the axe falls. Don’t believe it. Be wise in spreading the word. It isn’t bragging if you’ve done it.

7. Excel in an area your boss is weak in. Look for opportunities in this area. Your boss is a good speaker but weak on material, there’s an opportunity. Your boss is great on ideas but weak on financial analysis, there’s an opportunity. If your boss is good on people skills but weak on technology, there’s an opportunity. You see the trend, keep your eyes open and this is an area in which you can be truly be indispensable.

8. Leverage outside contacts. Look for opportunities to be a company spokesperson at professional and community events. Get approval in advance and let your boss know what you’re doing. Be sure to brief management on issues or information you learn in your outside contacts.

9. Be a team player. Always support your boss and your team. Don’t get involved in petty jurisdictional fights that could derail the overall success of a program or the organisation. However, remain as independent as possible in choosing your role on the team or what part of the project you’ll be responsible for.

10. Invest in yourself and your career. Stay current in your field by taking training and development courses and seminars. Read inspirational and motivational books, listen to CD’s in your car on your commute, and keep up to date on the economy and business in general.

Now since you’re acting like you are running your own business, you need to keep yourself informed and motivated. Seize any opportunity to sell yourself and show what you can do. Be sure to share information and build up your department by becoming an outstanding contributor. You’ll find that in becoming indispensable you’ll be elevating your career and isn’t developing you career the real goal?

John Groth is a career coach and a long time HR executive. Go to Career Network Plus and find great resources valuable articles about career planning and recruitment and discover up to date career information.

For a: http://careernetworkplus.com/
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The Hub

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Technology should be beneficial for your career, right? After all, with BlackBerrys and other devices, you can stay on top of work developments around the clock. Because e-mail and other technologies are so frequently used, most administrative professionals assume they know the proper codes of conduct. The truth is, however, that few people are as familiar with electronic etiquette as they should be, and when used unwisely, technology can be a career saboteur. Read on to find out how:

Looking for work
When applying for a job, the days of stamps and envelopes have long passed. Today, the vast majority of CVs and cover letters are submitted electronically, making a person’s e-mail address an important piece of contact information. But using a cute, playful or downright inappropriate e-mail address can be a quick way to eliminate your chances of earning a call from interested employers. Consider “partycentral@example.com” or “golfnut@example.com.” While your friends may get a kick out of your sense of humour, those outside your circle won’t be in on the joke. The best type of e-mail address to use for professional correspondence is one that includes your name or a combination of your name and some numbers. Here are two examples: “roberthalf@example.com” and “rhalf1948@example.com.”

Another technology trap to watch out for is attaching the wrong document to an employment application. More than one professional has had their hopes dashed after inadvertently submitting an outdated CV, incomplete cover letter or even documents completely unrelated to the job search. A good rule of thumb: Once you attach a document to an e-mail, open it before hitting send to ensure it’s the correct one.

In the office
It is more likely your employer is saving electronic communications among employees. That’s even more reason business e-mail should be all business. Off-colour or offensive jokes or messages should be immediately deleted and never forwarded to others. Discourage friends from sending them to you in the first place. Also avoid e-mailing about sensitive topics, such as politics or office gossip. Not only could your messages prove embarrassing, they also could land you in trouble with your employer. Don’t be fooled into thinking that your exchange will remain private. According to anti-spam firm ProofPoint, 38 percent of companies with 1,000 or more workers employ staff to read or analyse outgoing e-
mail messages. If you want to send a personal note, use a separate e-mail account that is not linked to your business account and send it from your personal computer.

The same holds true for your Internet activities. Your employer has the right to monitor the activities you conduct on your company-supplied computer and Internet connection — and many do. In fact, a poll by the American Management Association and the ePolicy Institute indicates that 26 percent of companies have terminated employees over Internet misuse. It’s also important to remember to avoid visiting off-limits websites, viewing online video and checking your Internet auctions until you’re out of the office.

Of course, for many professionals, the computer holds less interest than an iPod or other portable music player. If you are one of those administrative professionals who likes to don headphones while performing certain tasks on the job, check with your boss about your firm’s policy before doing so. Even if this activity is condoned, think twice about playing your music too loudly because you may miss an important call or vital information that is mentioned near you. Just don’t spend all of your day listening to hot hits. Show your employer you’re engaged in the job.

Outside the workplace
Even outside the office, support staff aren’t immune to technology gaffes. When meeting with your manager or other business contacts for lunch or dinner, interrupting the conversation to answer a ringing cell phone could immediately sour the mood. A simple fix is placing your cell phone on silent mode and letting voice mail answer any calls. Even if set on “vibrate,” your phone may still make noise. If you must take an incoming call or answer an urgent e-mail, excuse yourself and make it brief.

Also, be sure to keep tabs on your use of your cell phone, BlackBerry or other handheld device. As an administrative professional who sometimes works around the clock, your firm may provide you with these tools. Therefore, you need to follow your company’s usage policy, even if you make calls outside of work hours or to personal acquaintances.

Never before has technology been so central to the way people work. In order to advance in your career as an administrative professional, it is important to be aware of business protocol for e-mail, Internet use and cell phones. If you are, you can be sure these tools work for you, not against you, in and out of the workplace.

Sidebar: Positive Online Presence
With personal websites, blogs, social-networking site profiles, message board posts and newsgroup comments all floating around in cyberspace, you can use the Web to present a hiring manager with a wealth of information about your professional qualifications. The key is maintaining a positive online presence. Here’s how:

Leverage the Web
You can act as your own public-relations agent by launching a polished and professional website or blog related to your career. Post your resume and links to any industry association articles that you have authored or been quoted in, and reference noteworthy accomplishments. By highlighting your communication abilities and demonstrating that you track industry news and trends, you can position yourself as a leader in the field, build a positive web presence and better market your skills to employers. When applying for an opening, note your URL in your job-application materials and direct hiring managers to the information you most want them to view.

Get search savvy
Do you know everything the Internet has to say about you? Seek and you shall find. Type your name into a search engine such as Google, Yahoo! or MSN. If you have a common name, refine the search by placing your name in quotation marks, or add your middle initial, hometown, profession or former employer. Also, be sure to check multiple search engines, as results can vary. Your goal is for references that speak positively about you to appear near the top of the results.

Understand what you’re up against
As many job seekers have discovered, the Internet can be an unforgiving place. For instance, you may be unpleasantly surprised to find a link to a controversial editorial you submitted to a newspaper years ago, an unfiltered rant you hastily posted on an online bulletin board in college or unflattering photographs taken at the end of a wild company party. In cases where unsettling personal references seem to be permanent online fixtures, plan to discuss the topic in a job interview. While your online transgressions might not come up, it certainly helps to be prepared just in case.

It’s critical that today’s professionals routinely conduct online self-searches, and then seek opportunities to build positive references. Taking a proactive approach to managing your web presence could help you leap past other applicants and create greater career options for yourself.

Dave Willmer is executive director of OfficeTeam, the nation’s leading staffing service specializing in the temporary placement of highly skilled administrative and office support professionals. OfficeTeam has more than 300 locations worldwide and offers online job search services at www.officeteam.com.
Our “Day in the Life of ...” series has been very popular with DeskDemon’s users and we would like to extend it! So, we would like to hear about you and your job and as a thank you we will give you £25 Marks & Spencer vouchers, on publication.

We know from our forum boards at the Hub that networking and support is important to you all. Hearing about each other’s work and offering advice and a helping hand can be invaluable. But not only that, it’s interesting to hear about the experience of others. It puts things in to perspective and offers us the chance to see how others got to where they are, overcoming challenges and what they think of their role. And that’s why our “Day in the Life of...” series is so fascinating.

We are looking for PAs, secretaries and Administrators from a wide range of sectors and from the smallest to the largest organisations, so get in touch if you would like to share your thoughts with us all.

If you would like to be featured on DeskDemon’s “Day in the life of ...” series, please visit: www.desk demon.com/pages/uk/career/dayinthelifeof2009