

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

How to Stand Out at Work for all the Right Reasons

Competition for top jobs in the workplace has become more and more fierce. Because of this, it's also become harder to stand out from the pack and to move up the organizational ladder. Depending on how you play your cards, you may wind up on a very different career path than a colleague who is equally talented. The secret to shining at work isn't simply about being smarter, more driven, confident or motivated. It's about *how* you use the skills, talent and energy you have to stand out.

Realize your potential and leap from the average performer to a workplace standout by following the tips below.

Go above and beyond. Aside from doing your job well, go the extra mile by tackling jobs that don't fit neatly into your job description. Be sure, however, to see these projects and ideas through to the end or you'll be creating extra work for yourself without any of the rewards of doing so.

Stay true to you. Many people try to change the way they do things to stand out. But trying to squeeze into a mold that isn't your own can be hard to maintain. Instead, understand your strengths and weaknesses and use these to your advantage.

Know who knows. You can't know everything so it's vital to turn to others who have the skills you need to get the job done well. Determine what you don't know, what you need to know and who can supply you with this information. Cultivate relationships with key people and show them that you have something worth trading or sharing. Remember though, this kind of relationship building takes time, so ensure you practice more 'giving' before you ask for a colleagues help in return.

Face forward. An average worker finishes a project and then asks her boss what should be completed next. Workers who stand out are always thinking forward and have already identified the next move six months in advance. Continually ask yourself: "What assignments would make me more valuable to the company and my field? What experiences do I need to improve my portfolio or work experience? Be the master of your own productivity by taking a proactive approach to your work.

Think big. Average workers often suffer from short sightedness. They see the world from their own viewpoint and perspective. Try to think bigger. Consider the perspectives of the competition, customers, colleagues and your boss when making decisions, offering feedback or looking for ways to improve processes.

Be a unifying leader. Standing out from the pack isn't about promoting big ambitions, visions and egos. It's about bringing people together to accomplish a task by leading with expertise and influence. This creates a shared vision and an environment of trust. If you take this approach to leadership, your team will want to work for you.

Be a good follower. Average workers are often too focused on their own needs and ambitions. Standouts check their ego at the door, are strong team players, and focus on helping others succeed.

Whether you're leading or following, your goal should always be the same: helping the organization thrive.

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Have "street smarts". Keep your ears open. By listening to the perspectives of your boss, veterans and other "star" performers, you can learn what works and what doesn't work in your organization. Strong observational skills will also reveal who you can trust and who you should avoid. These skills will help you steer clear of conflict and allow you to make allies out of enemies.

Don't over communicate. Bombarding colleagues with unnecessary information can cause people to "switch off." Being selective about the information you pass along and making sure it reaches the right audience at the right time will help you keep a captive audience when you really need it.

In a market oversaturated with talent, you can't simply rely on your skills to set you apart. The good news is that you can learn how to stand out for all the right reasons. By applying some of these skills in your day to day work, you will gain more control over your career path and become a true standout in your organization.