



CAREER SAVVY

EIGHT BEHAVIORS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

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Eight Behaviors for Career Advancement

“Work, hard, know your stuff, and you’ll get noticed. Keep up the good work and you are well on your way to the top.”

Sounds familiar? Sounds like great advice? Problem is this is an old school belief that doesn’t address the realities of today’s dynamic workplace.

Here are three basic realities about today’s work environment:

1. To be competitive at your current level, or to move up in the organization, your strategy must go beyond excelling in performance and knowledge. 2. You cannot expect the organization to orchestrate your career advancement moves. 3. You then must take charge of your career advancement strategy.

So how do you take charge? Your career advancement strategy should include these eight behaviors

1. *Know Your Worth*
2. *Be Visible*
3. *Build Relationships*
4. *Cultivate Your Relationship with Your Boss*
5. *Network with Purpose*
6. *Effectively Navigate the Informal Organization*
7. *Be Office Politics Savvy*
8. *Be Resilient and Balanced*

1. KNOW YOUR WORTH

Identifying Your Skills, Talents and Value Added

It is up to you to clearly articulate the skills, talents and value that you bring to the organization. No one else will do this for you.

Maintain an updated file of your accomplishments and contributions.

You have to know your worth before you can talk with others about your worth.

Value Added and Organizational Needs

Link your skills and talents to what the organization needs now and in the future. Being relevant now and in the future means you keep abreast of trends in your organization and the industry and commit to continuous professional growth and development.

Know your organization's vision, mission, goals and structure. Learn to frame your skills and talents in organizational language.

Master communicating your value succinctly, verbally and in writing.

2. BE VISIBLE – Stand Up, Speak Up, Stand Out

Be intentional about being visible.

- Speak up in meetings, identify yourself and contribute value to the discussion. Propose ideas, options, and solutions. Demonstrate thoughtfulness and forward thinking. Own your ideas as your ideas.

- Find opportunities to be broadly known, demonstrate your skills and talents, show initiative and leadership ability, develop relationships and otherwise enhance your professional reputation.

It's all about self promotion, but self promotion based on your value and worth to the organization.

3. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Build relationships throughout the organization – horizontally, vertically and diagonally. Keep in mind that people tend to support those they know over those they do not know, all things being equal. Be genuine, approachable and respectful with everyone. See every individual and every relationship as important.

Your relationship building should include role models, mentors and sponsors.

Understand the significance of role models, mentors, and sponsors for your career advancement and cultivate relationships with them.

Be mindful that when you work with a mentor or sponsor they are giving you valuable time. Respect their time by being clear about your purpose. In addition find ways to reciprocate, such as assisting with a project or task where you not only stretch, but also add value for them.

4. CULTIVATE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BOSS

Your boss is in a pivotal position to advance or forestall your career. Be purposeful about developing your relationship with your boss. Here are some helpful strategies:

- Put yourself in your boss's shoes. Seek to see things from his or her point of view.

- Key in on your boss's strengths as well as limitations so you can effectively work with both.
- Keep your boss informed. Keep him or her abreast of your progress, the good news as well as challenges and problems. Be a problem solver, but never delay or withhold negative information. Be a credible communicator about critical issues.
- Address issues that hinder a positive relationship. Use good communication and feedback skills and a win-win problem solving approach.
- Above all make your boss look good! His or her success is your success

5. NETWORK WITH PURPOSE

Networking is a vital part of your career success strategy. It's about building connections with purpose. Practice networking

- Within your organization
- Within your industry
- Within professional groups, associations
- Within social organizations
- At conferences and events
- Using your social media

A word about social media: Social media provides an excellent way to connect as well as position yourself as a serious, thoughtful professional by the content and look of what you post. On the other hand you must protect your online image and take care that it shows you in the most favorable professional light.

Do add value to others when you network. **Don't** treat networking as only a "what can they do for me?" opportunity. Be reciprocal.

6. EFFECTIVELY NAVIGATE THE “INFORMAL” ORGANIZATION

The Formal and Informal Organization

The formal organization reflects the positions on the organization chart. Power and influence is based on position. The informal organization, on the other hand, is about personal power. Important influencers may not have a title or figure prominently on the organization chart.

To effectively navigate the informal organization make it a point to

- Identify the influencers and those who have the ear of the decision makers.
- Be intentional about building relationships with influencers

Unwritten Rules

Organizations also have unwritten rules which may differ from or contradict written rules. It is important that you know and be aligned with the unwritten rules as well as the written, explicit rules.

7. BE OFFICE POLITICS SAVVY

Accept the reality that office politics exist in the organization. Your goal is to thrive in the midst of office politics.

You can increase your ability to thrive in the midst of office politics by practicing these “office politics savvy” behaviors:

- Look, listen, observe, especially in a new or unfamiliar situation. Listen and to the buzz after meetings, in the hallways and break rooms, etc., for undercurrents that are not expressed openly.

- Be cautious about expressing your opinions about controversial sensitive or volatile issues. Understand that nothing is private.
- Avoid the mine fields. Know the sensitive areas in your organization to the extent possible, such as personnel issues, internal tensions, active or potential lawsuits, mergers, downsizing, etc.
- Avoid taking sides, participating in gossip or maligning any individual. Doing so may come back to haunt you.
- Maintain your personal integrity, regardless of organizational dynamics. When it is all said and done you want to maintain your professional reputation as a person of character.

8. BE RESILIENT AND BALANCED

To excel and advance over the long term you must commit to a program of self care. Devote time each day and week to self care and balance. Success at work requires resiliency and endurance. These in turn require a healthy body and positive mental outlook. Body, mind and soul need to be reinvigorated on a regular basis. Think “refresh and excel”.