

10 PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS AT WORK

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How likely are YOU to be successful on the job? How likely is it that others perceive you as already successful or potentially successful? The following ten attributes and skills--or lack of them-- predict whether you will actually succeed in the workplace or merely stagnate. Make a conscious effort to develop each one of them and watch your career take off!



1. Ability to read other people

You've got to be able to interpret others' facial expressions, body language, words, and innuendos. If you're sitting in a meeting and somebody pushes his chair away from the table, crosses his arms, and looks down at the floor, do you understand what this means? If your colleague isn't looking you in the eye when she's talking to you, do you grasp the message? If your boss listens to your idea in a brainstorming session and simply comments, "Brilliant", when you finish, do you know if she's being sincere? When you're trying to tell a group of folks something and they start walking away from you midstream, do you get the message they're sending? You have to pick up on others' cues and clues. It's part of emotional intelligence, and it has practical implications in the workplace. If you can't accurately read people most of the time, you won't get very far.

2. Flexibility

Rigidity is the opposite of flexibility, and it's rampant in the professional world. You won't get far being rigid either: rigid in your thinking, your actions, your style, your approach, your worldview, your

perceptions, your judgments. You've got to learn to bend. This doesn't mean you give up your core values or change your mind every time the wind blows. This doesn't mean you say you agree with others even when you don't. Flexibility means you do things a different way depending on what the situation calls for. It means you approach Sally differently than how you approach Tom because they are very different people. It means you stay late on a day when a crisis occurs and throws off the schedule. If you're not flexible, you will be miserable—and so will many others who live with you.

3. Honesty mixed with discretion

To make it in the workplace you need to be honest. But you also need to be wise. For example, giving too much unnecessary information when somebody asks you a question may not be a smart idea. Revealing personal details about an individual that could harm that person's reputation without good reason is not good judgment. Telling your boss exactly what you think of him when you're annoyed jeopardizes your job. You have to figure out how to be honest without being reckless or

stupid. Use some discretion as you speak honestly about a situation, a colleague, a supervisor, or a person in the community. And remember that brutal honesty is rarely a good thing. Telling your peer that a Board member is a jerk—even if she is—reflects badly on you. Your comment may have been honest, but it certainly wasn't wise.

4. Attention to detail

What details? Pay attention to every appointment on your calendar, written notes to and from other people, spellings of words in emails, tone of voice in phone messages, facial expressions, body language, emotional displays, offhand comments, and the things people don't actually say. Notice everything. Register everything. Keep promises, or provide an explanation as to why you can't do so. Follow up on projects, tasks, phone calls, and people's questions. Don't let things slide. Folks often say they are too busy to pay close attention to details. You can't afford not to pay attention to them. If you're known for looking at the details and acting upon them, you'll go far in the workplace. Why? Dealing with details conveys to other individuals that you value them, care about them, want to make things better for them. If you want to stand a part from the crowd, zero in on the details.

5. Ability to think strategically.

This one is huge. If you can't or won't think strategically, you aren't going anywhere today. Strategic thinking isn't small and impulsive. It's visionary and considers the whole picture. It's looking at how one thing can fit into the bigger thing. Strategic thinking considers impact upon other people, other departments, company viability, community image. Many employees—even managers—aren't capable of this type of thinking. Many people find it easier to remain in a little self-centered box. Strategic thinking requires more work, more effort, more energy. But when you do it, it's a wonderful experience for you

personally and incredibly valuable to the organization.

6. Dependability

Sometimes people live in the illusion that they are dependable when in fact they are not. Dependable isn't just showing up for work sometime in the morning; it's getting there on time most of the time. Dependable isn't doing what you said you'd do sometime during the month; it's doing it now or as soon as you can within a couple of days. Dependable isn't telling your boss you'll take charge of a project and then farming much of the responsibility out to peers without her knowledge. Dependability has a lot to do with your character. Ouch! Maybe that hurt a bit. If you are dependable, you're holding yourself to a high standard. Do what you agree to do. Do it when you say you'll do it. Do it the way you described you'd do it. Nothing less. No lame excuses.

7 .Inspiring to others

To what extent do you motivate staff, colleagues, and/or your supervisor to be the best they can be? To contribute great ideas? To keep on plugging away when things look bleak? To do that little something extra? To give others the benefit of the doubt? To resist criticizing someone when they don't know all the facts? Do you set a positive example to the people in your work world? Do they want to be more like YOU? One of the ways you can make your own life better is by inspiring others to do their jobs effectively, efficiently, and pleasantly. By inspiring others you not only give something to them but also to yourself.

8. Team player mindset

Many people like silos because working in them is much easier and simpler than working with teams. In a team people have to cooperate, watch out for each other, do synthesis, consider the other guy's feelings, facilitate projects, manage process, and expand their horizons. Sounds complicated, doesn't it? Well, it often is

quite complex. But in the long run, it's usually worth the effort. The quality of the work is richer, and the end result is better than when folks produce something alone. A wonderful by-product of teamwork is personal growth for each member. It's true that human beings develop faster and more deeply when they have to work with each other to reach a certain endpoint. Also keep in mind that silos are quickly becoming a structure of the past in lots of organizations.

9. Trust building

Live each day like this: be your best self and do your best work at all times. While no one is perfect, you can certainly hold yourself to this standard. People notice this behavior in another person. Why not commit to being that kind of person? Tell yourself that, starting today, you will do whatever it takes for your boss and peers to put their trust in you. Trust is as valuable as gold. Think about it. If folks don't trust you to be reasonable, thoughtful, dependable, punctual, good to your word, and able to deliver, why would they want to promote you, keep you, or reward you?

Spend time investing in building trust. It's sort of like putting money in the bank.

10. Centered

Ask yourself if you are a well grounded individual or someone who is unstable. Just how unstable are you? What triggers your instability? Do you need professional help to get this under control so that you can function adequately in the workplace? Do you have an anger problem that unnerves others? Do you need serious help to manage that anger, or is your anger simply habitual, a strategy you've always used to get your own way? Do little things set you off? To what degree do you govern yourself appropriately? Do you have a substance abuse issue? What are you doing about it? Don't kid yourself: you are not centered if you drink too much alcohol, lash out with rage, or demonstrate many inconsistencies in words and/or behavior. Take stock of yourself. How grounded are YOU? Know that you will pay a big price on the job if you lack centering.

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