

27 Good Work Habits for a Successful Career

Be Productive, Have Job Satisfaction, and Get Along with Your Boss and Coworkers

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Good work habits are essential for anyone who wants to succeed in his or her job, whether it is an after school or summer job or one that is a step on the career ladder. They increase your productivity and [job satisfaction](#) and help you have better relationships with your boss and coworkers. We asked experienced professionals and parents what good work habits they would tell young adults they must have. Here is their advice:

1. Take Criticism Well

Your boss's [feedback is valuable](#). He isn't necessarily criticizing your performance because he dislikes you. He may be trying to help you succeed.

2. Don't Gossip

Don't contribute to the [gossip mill](#) and remain neutral if your coworker tries to pull you into it or talks behind another colleague's back.

3. Be a Problem Solver, Not a Complainer

If you have a complaint about something, always have ideas about how to make it better. When you turn [negativity into positive action](#), you will sound professional instead of whiny.

4. Be Dependable

Always go to work when you are scheduled to be there. Only [call out](#) if you are truly sick.

5. Be Willing to Go Into Work If Your Boss Asks

If your boss asks you to come into work when you are not scheduled, be willing to make every effort to go. You should also be cheerful about it (or pretend to be).

6. Allow Extra Time for Everything

Always build a buffer into commuting time, as well as your [timeline](#) for working on a project.

7. Be Prepared to Not Know Everything

You certainly won't know everything when you first start out, and you will still have more to learn even as you move up in your career.

8. Put Your Phone Away While at Work

Texts and notifications that pop up on your [cell phone](#) can be a big distraction while you are working. Check your phone only during breaks.

9. Dress for a Better Job

[Dressing](#) for the position you want lets your employer visualize you in that job.

10. Ask for Help and Offer It as Well

No one, no matter how talented, can do it all alone. If you need assistance, don't be afraid to ask for it. Realize others may require it too but may hesitate to ask, so offer a hand when you can.

11. Always Do Your Best

When your boss assigns a task, perform it to the best of your ability.

12. Be Kind

There is nothing to be gained by not being nice to others. [When you are kind](#), it will make others happy, and they will have goodwill toward you. Be especially kind to those who seem the most miserable. They may really need it and it could have a positive effect on them.

13. Do More Than Is Required and Do It With a Smile and a Positive Attitude

While doing more than your boss or customers expect may get you recognition, more importantly, it will give you experience and personal satisfaction.

14. Never Say "It's Not My Job"

Be ready to pitch in when you are needed. It may involve doing something that isn't in your job description, but you will demonstrate that you are flexible.

15. Look at Problems as Opportunities, Not Challenges

When [problems](#) arise, solving them gives you the chance to showcase your strengths and sharpen your skills.

16. Keep Personal Problems Out of the Workplace

Beware of extensively talking about your [personal problems](#). What you tell your coworkers could influence their perception—and your boss's—about your ability to do your job and it could make you the subject of [workplace gossip](#).

17. Ask Questions

If you don't understand how to do something, or how something works, get clarification. You may feel foolish asking what you consider a silly question, but that is much better than making an avoidable mistake.

18. Always Proofread Your Work

It may take a little longer to look over your work, but it is much better to catch your [errors](#) before someone else does.

19. Don't Forget That Work Is Work

While it is important to like what you do, you will be terribly disappointed if you expect your job to be fun and games all the time. There are things you will need to do that won't be glamorous, but as they say, "that's why they're paying you the big bucks."

20. Make Sure You Understand Company Policies

If you don't know what they are, get the facts from someone whose job it is to know them, for example, the human resources department. If you ask a coworker instead, he or she may give you the wrong answer, and you will bear the consequences.

21. Don't Be Afraid to Say "I Don't Know"

If someone asks you a question and you truly don't know the answer, rather than giving out misinformation, be honest. Say you aren't sure, but you will find out. Then do it.

22. Be Organized

It is impossible to do good work if you are disorganized.

23. Prepare for Your Day

Arrive at work early and get ready for the day by anticipating what you will have to do while you are there. Do not get flustered by last minute changes. You may have to modify your plans.

24. Never Ask a Subordinate or Colleague to Do Something You Would Not Do

Delegate tasks if you have the authority to do so but don't expect anyone to do your dirty work for you.

25. Smile, and When Things Are at Their Worst, Smile More

Smiling makes you feel better and it makes others feel better. Of course, don't smile when it is inappropriate to do so, for example when something tragic happens.

26. Listen to Understand, Not React

When someone is talking, [listen carefully](#). Don't think about how you are going to respond, but instead, try to absorb what the person is telling you. You can ask questions later.

27. Stop Procrastinating

Putting off doing your work, even a project you dread, won't make it go away. You might as well get it over with.

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