

BALANCE

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What An Employer Wants

It is helpful to take a look at what employers say they want from new hires. Here is a checklist that may not be in writing, but one an employer will surely have in mind during an interview if you are new to the workforce or moving up the ladder.

Initiative: It's at the top of the list of desirables. Employers want new hires to have energy and aptitude displayed by a willingness to act without being told, complete assignments on time, observe the needs of the organization and act in its best interests.

Work ethic: Closely related to initiative is work ethic—behavior that demonstrates that you are not a clock-watcher. You will do what it takes to get the work done on time.

Personable: Do you come across as friendly, mature and dependable, with a strong character? Look your prospective employer in the eye when you shake hands or speak, or you risk losing some points in this area.

Personal development: Do you seek continuing education to further develop your skills and abilities?

Quality of work: Do you deliver above and beyond what's required, without errors and omissions?

Skilled communicator: Do you speak clearly and listen well?

Leadership skills: Do you have the ability to lead others and feel comfortable directing a larger group of people toward the completion of a common goal?

Step Into Your Boss's Shoes

Your supervisor doesn't give much feedback on your performance, so you assume you're doing a good job. But your boss may see things differently. When it comes to their employees, managers' top pet peeves include workers who waste time in personal conversations, fail to share information and refuse to take initiative. Some supervisors will quietly tolerate such behavior rather than confront you. Meanwhile, your reputation may suffer. Impress higher-ups by taking steps to solidify your image.

First, limit your chatter. Exchanging pleasantries with colleagues is fine, but don't dawdle in the hallway telling long stories that have nothing to do with work. As a test, image your conversation being broadcast. Would you come across as a task-oriented dynamo or an unmotivated procrastinator?

Second, make your coworkers and boss look good. Anticipate their concerns and address them. Share insight and information that help them solve problems. Genuinely praise their contributions to team success.

Finally, tackle projects head-on. Don't wait for people to tell you what to do if you can make a positive impact on your own. If you have an idea to advance the organization's goals, conduct research on your own time and stage experiments. When bosses see that you're a self-starter who embraces challenges, they will give you better assignments and view you as a valuable asset.



Powerful Public Speaking

Meet your goal of becoming an effective public speaker by understanding what is included in good public speaking and recognizing a couple of myths. The most common roadblock to public speaking is fear of making a mistake or of embarrassment. What you may not know is that the key to great public speaking is not avoiding these things, but overcoming them with class when they happen. For some public speakers, normal mistakes become spontaneous entertainment and can add to their desirability as speakers. Try incorporating the following desirable traits of public speakers or use it as a checklist to assemble your presentation. You will increase the likelihood of getting invited back as well as earning a good reputation.

- 1) Enlightening your audience with things they don't know about or connections they have not made regarding your topic;
- 2) Entertaining with your presentation (not the same as a joke) to keep people focused;
- 3) Provoking thought in your audience by what you say or offer;
- 4) Educating and providing useful information your listeners have not heard before, which can be applied to their lives once they leave;
- 5) Adding a story to illustrate a point; and
- 6) Being appropriate but thought provoking in the material you present. There are hundreds of resources on improving public speaking, and the above are only a few tips. Consider talking to the EAP about your fear of public speaking and discover whether other resources would be recommended to help you reach your goal.

About the EAP

Chronic Pain: The EAP is a possible source of help if you suffer from chronic pain. There may be resources in your community to help you manage your pain which sometimes can be treated using alternative methods. There are mental health professionals who specialize in working with chronic pain. They use a variety of often-effective techniques—from hypnosis to biofeedback. Talk to your EAP to learn more.

Don't Quit Your Job Yet

If things aren't going well at work and you are thinking about quitting your job, a meeting with the EAP may help you look at your situation from a different perspective. There may be a course of action you have not thought about. Common issues that could benefit from a discussion with the EAP include the following:

- 1) You believe that your relationship with your supervisor is damaged.
- 2) You've stopped having fun and enjoying your job.
- 3) You have behaved in ways that are considered improper at work (such as missing too many days, developing a reputation as a poor performer, or slacking off).
- 4) The stress level at work is so high that it is affecting your physical and mental health.

Personality Might Determine Financial Attitude

Your attitude about money reflects your personality. If you're a take-charge optimist who welcomes change, then you'll manage your money well. But if you resist setting goals and you lack discipline, then you may make not-so-wise financial decisions. To make the most of your money, set budgets and track your spending. Beware of buying things as a way to feel better about yourself. Such good feelings rarely last and can lead to frequent, and ultimately, hollow purchases. Bolster your self-worth through volunteer work, creative pursuits or the development of new skills or hobbies. Also, make regular contributions to a rainy-day fund. This will give you peace of mind as you plan for worst-case scenarios such as a sudden job loss or a costly health crisis. Experts say that you should invest money based on your own personal beliefs about financial risk.

Fight Off Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when extremely hot temperatures pose bodily harm. Take steps to recognize its symptoms and reduce your risk. Signs include frequent headaches, dizziness, and leg, arm or stomach cramps. Mental confusion can set in—and you may even feel chills. Allow time to recover from heat exhaustion. In many work-related heatstroke deaths, employees lose consciousness on their way home. Prevent heat stress by drinking up to two gallons of cool water a day in extreme heat and high humidity, retreating into shade or cooler break rooms periodically and wearing light-colored clothes and a wide brimmed hat when working in direct sunshine. You're more prone to heat stress if you take diet pills, sedatives or tranquilizers. And both caffeine drinks and alcohol increase your vulnerability. Slow exposure to hot environments helps your body adjust. So beware when abruptly engaging in physical labor in 90+ degree heat or returning to a hot work site after time in a cooler climate.

About the EAP

Reality Therapy: If you have avoided professional counseling because you dread talking about your past, you may benefit from working with a “reality therapist.” They focus on the here and now—what you “can do” and “think” to achieve personal goals and desired changes. Most therapists blend methods in the counseling practices, but some lean heavily on a specific approach. A reality therapist will focus on where you are going, not on where you have come from. Learn more from your EAP professional.

Deployment Stress

Military families experience deployment stress that results from separation, uncertainties and challenges faced by one parent playing the part of two. Emotional problems can increase when a spouse is away. If you have had a recent history of family struggles, are a young family experiencing your first deployment or have recently moved to a new duty station, there are helpful resources in most communities to support you and your family. Don't hesitate to contact your EAP for assistance and referral.

The Challenge of A Coworker's Personal Habit

Poor hygiene, weird noises, and strange habits. Nothing beats the challenge of tactfully asking a coworker to change a personal habit or behavior that you find disagreeable. Avoid a larger conflict by asking yourself if the problematic behavior or issue is one that your coworker can control and whether your productivity is adversely affected by it. Consistently foul language or clipping fingernails near your desk can easily pass both of these screening questions, while some personal habits associated with appearance or even personal hygiene may not. Be discreet in your approach. With a multicultural workforce and the trend toward greater acceptance of differences, respectful communication is important. Talking with your manager when you are in doubt, or perhaps with the EAP about your approach, is a good idea. Discuss the validity and importance of the issue, and whether you should confront it or accept it as just an inconvenience.

Facing the Loss of Your Home

The threat of losing your home through a foreclosure is extremely frightening and can cause enormous stress. Feelings of guilt and/or failure, depression and other negative consequences can affect your ability to act in your best interest. You may feel increasingly incapable of making decisions that can very well forestall what you believe is the inevitable auction of your home. Your physical health can suffer, too. Your EAP can play a supportive role in helping to reduce the total sense of isolation you are feeling. This input will give you energy to act, which is often the most powerful benefit of receiving support. The EAP will not judge you...it will help you get through a tough period...one day at a time.



Getting Kids to Do Chores

For many parents, the easiest way to get children to do chores around the house is to say, “Do it—now.” An alternative is to help children learn initiative and self-motivation—a desire to do chores. If you feel up to taking on this challenge, the cardinal rule is to make sure the children don’t learn from the frown on your brow that a chore is boring.

Instead, replace that message with this one: how a task is exciting because of observable results (e.g., an orderly, clean room) and how positive one feels when chores are done. Talk about the feeling and point out what is accomplished. Children will draw the connection and acquire a proactive life skill.

Add more: help children see an undone chore as a challenge. Use the old “don’t get mad at the mess—get even” approach. It may promote a different level of motivation for acquiring the powerful life skill of desiring an orderly world around oneself.

Stress Eating

Stressed employees tend to forgo a well-balanced diet. They eat less at regular meals because they fill up on sweets or high-fat foods throughout the day. Research shows that working long hours under stressful conditions can make matters worse. Mental stress—such as worry resulting from a disagreement with a coworker or fear of giving a presentation—tends to drive people to sugary, fatty foods. Experts sometimes refer to these folks as “emotional eaters.”

Be aware of what and how much you are eating throughout the day. Choose a healthier outlet for your anxiety, such as a brisk walk around the block or ten minutes of deep-breathing exercises. When the craving for sweet or fatty foods hits, try to wait 15 minutes before eating. Your craving may go away. Drink water—it helps to make you feel less hungry, and it is vital for overall health and well-being.

To speak with an EAP professional or to make an appointment, please call:

800.327.2384

