
Golden Rules for Career Success

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WORKING as a business consultant all over the world, I have discovered some basic career-related rules that everyone should know—but many don't.

Business is made up of ambiguous victories and nebulous defeats. Claim them all as victories.

Keep track of what you do; someone is sure to ask.

Be comfortable around senior managers, or learn to fake it.

Never bring your boss a problem without some solution. You are getting paid to think, not to whine.

Long hours don't mean anything; results count, not effort.

Write down ideas; they get lost, like good pens.

Always arrive at work 30 minutes before your boss.

Help other people network for jobs. You never know when your turn will come.

Don't take days off sick—unless you are.

Assume no one can/will keep a secret.

Know when you do your best—morning, night, under pressure, relaxed; schedule and prioritize your work accordingly.

Treat everyone who works in the organization with respect and dignity, whether it be the cleaner or the managing director. Don't ever be patronizing.

Never appear stressed in front of a client, a customer or your boss. Take a deep breath and ask yourself: In the course of human events, how important is this?

If you get the entrepreneurial urge, visit someone who has his own business. It may cure you.

Acknowledging someone else's contribution will repay you doubly.

Career planning is an oxymoron. The most exciting opportunities tend to be unplanned.

Always choose to do what you'll remember ten years from now.

The size of your office is not as important as the size of your pay cheque.

Understand what finished work looks like and deliver your work only when it is finished.

The person who spends all of his or her time is not hard-working; he or she is boring.

Know how to write business letters—including thank-you notes as well as proposals.

Never confuse a memo with reality. Most memos from the top are political fantasy.

Eliminate guilt. Don't fiddle expenses, taxes or benefits, and don't cheat colleagues.

Reorganizations mean that someone will lose his or her job. Get on the committee that will make the recommendations.

Job security does not exist.

Always have an answer to the question, "What would I do if I lost my job tomorrow?"

Go to the company Christmas party.

Don't get drunk at the company Christmas party.

Avoid working at weekends. Work longer during the week if you have to.

The most successful people in business are interesting.

Sometimes you'll be on a winning streak and everything will click; take maximum advantage. When the opposite is true, hold steady and wait it out.

Never in your life say, "It's not my job."

Be loyal to your career, your interests and yourself.

Understand the skills and abilities that set you apart. Use them whenever you have an opportunity.

People remember the end of the project. As they say in boxing, "Always finish stronger than you start."