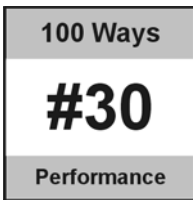


Performance



Don't Sweat the Details

Who has time for details anymore? Let someone else worry about them. Maybe your boss is interested in the details, but you have too many other things to think about.

Problems Created:

- You will make your boss worry about the details of your job
- Your boss won't have confidence that you are doing your job correctly

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- Important details related to your job might be overlooked
- You may be shirking an important part of your job

A Better Strategy

There is an old saying in business, “You have to sweat the details to be successful.” This statement implies that every aspect of the business is important and requires attention. Bosses have a tendency to worry about the details as well, and you need to sweat the details of your job. This is not something you want your boss to worry about. Your boss has plenty of other details of his or her own job to worry about and needs you to deal with your own details and be in control of them.

Don't fall into the habit or trap of depending on your boss to catch any details you have forgotten in your work. Make checklists for yourself of the important details of your work that must be completed. If your boss needs to have this kind of information, review your completed checklist with him or her. This way, your boss will be assured that you have taken care of the details and will have fewer things to worry about.

100 Ways

#31

Performance

Look at Work Only from Your Perspective

We all look at the world from our own perspectives. You view your job through your own eyes, so this is how you see your work situation and your place in it.

Why should you be concerned with how other people, including your boss, perceive the world in which you work?

Problems Created:

- You will only be looking at one side of the story concerning your job—yours
- You will have no idea how your boss may perceive your job
- You may be missing important perspectives of your job other than your own
- You will miss the opportunity to understand your boss and coworkers and how to get along better with them

A Better Approach

Remember the proverb, “You need to walk a mile in the other person’s shoes to really understand where he has been.”

Imagine yourself in your boss’s situation and position. How differently do you think things would look from where your boss sits? When viewing things from your boss’s perspective, do you think that you would make some of the same

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decisions? How different do these same factors and circumstances look to you from your own position? How can better appreciating your boss's perspective help you understand and support your boss's decisions or actions in the future?

Talk to your boss about your different perspectives and how they affect the way you see the same things. Both of you will gain a better understanding about how each of you views the workplace and each other's positions.

100 Ways

#32

Performance

Hide Your Mistakes

Admit it: You sometimes make mistakes on your job. We all make mistakes, but no one wants them to be broadcast to others when we do. The last person we want to know about our mistakes at work is the boss. Perhaps we are afraid that we will appear incompetent or even stupid in front of our superiors. However irrational this thinking may be, it still prevails in virtually every work setting. What should you do? You could try to hide your mistakes, particularly from your boss, or you could try to blame your mistakes on someone else at your workplace.

Problems Created:

- You won't be doing anything to address any problems created by these mistakes
- You may be more likely to repeat these mistakes
- If your boss does discover the mistakes, the consequences may be worse for not reporting these problems yourself
- If mistakes are not corrected in a timely manner, they may become bigger problems

A Better Approach

We only make things worse if we don't acknowledge what we did wrong. Admitting our mistakes is the first step in preventing them from occurring again. When appropriate and

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necessary, review your mistakes with your boss and ask for support in helping you prevent them in the future. Whether it's ever acknowledged or not, your boss makes mistakes too and should be understanding of yours. Your boss will also respect your honesty and your commitment to preventing the same problems from recurring.

100 Ways

#33

Performance

Never Admit You Don't Know Something

Admitting that they do not know something can be difficult for many people, particularly when it relates to their jobs.

We all want to be viewed as the resident experts in our job or field, so if we do not know something pertaining to our work we may be defensive and reluctant to acknowledge this fact. We might fear looking incompetent in the eyes of our bosses and coworkers. The solution to this dilemma is easy. If you do not know something, fake it. Pretend that you are in a poker game and bluff like crazy, so everyone else thinks you know what you are doing.

Problems Created:

- People will have less confidence in the accuracy of your answers
- You will eventually look more incompetent than competent to others
- You will only be able to fake it for so long before being discovered
- People will have less respect for you for never admitting you don't know than if you simply confessed your ignorance from time to time

A Better Strategy

The reality is that it is impossible for anyone to know everything about a job, and trying to bluff your way through life will only get you so far. As humans, we have limitations and deficiencies. No one, not even your boss, can realistically expect you to know everything concerning your job. Your boss will respect and appreciate your honesty in simply admitting when you do not know something about your work. However, you do need to follow up this admission with a commitment to obtain this knowledge, if necessary, and provide it as soon as possible. You will find that your boss and coworkers will accept this honest approach much better than an attempt to bluff your way through something you do not really know.

100 Ways

#34

Performance

Don't Worry About Quality

Quality is just another fad that management consultants came up with to sell their services to businesses. Like all other fads, it will fade away and be replaced by yet another newfangled management philosophy. Why should you worry about quality when it is nothing more than a passing phase?

Problems Created:

- Your work will never promote your career goals until you realize that quality is not a passing fad and will always be important
- Your boss will not appreciate hearing about your sloppy work from others or seeing it firsthand
- There will be just too many negative consequences of ignoring quality at work
- You will be viewed as someone who has few or no quality standards on the job

A Better Approach

Quality is not something that can ever go out of style. Buzzwords relating to quality may come and go, but the principle of performing your job to the best of your ability and to the highest standards will always be in vogue. Pay attention to quality in all aspects of your job, continuously focusing on how you can improve the work that you produce.

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Make your boss a part of your quality improvement plan by soliciting support for your efforts. Set increasingly higher standards for both yourself and your work product and monitor your progress. From time to time, review the data with your boss to make your commitment known and ensure that your standards are consistent with what's expected of you. Don't just give lip service to quality but instead make it an essential part of your job.

100 Ways

#35

Performance

Make Your Boss Your Copy Editor

Bosses are often very good at finding mistakes that are made by those who work for them. Why should you spend the time and energy finding your mistakes when you know your boss will correct them? Wouldn't this just be a duplication of efforts?

Problems Created:

- Your boss has better things to do than correcting your work and will not appreciate having to spend valuable time as your editor
- Your boss will think that you do sloppy work
- Your boss will think that you have poor written communication skills
- Your boss may wonder what other parts of your job need to be checked and reviewed

A Better Approach

Don't send letters and other documents to your boss until you have first proofread them and made all the necessary corrections. Your boss is not your spellchecker or copy editor. Even if you have a boss that is good at finding mistakes, do not fall into the trap of depending on someone else to catch your errors. Do you really want your boss to perceive your work as being full of mistakes and requiring editing before it is sent out?

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Use your personal computer to check your spelling and grammar or ask a coworker to review your work before turning it in to your boss. When your boss is expecting to receive a final copy, that is exactly what you should submit. Of course, you need to remember that your boss always has the right to make changes to your work. This is a boss's privilege. However, you still need to ensure that the changes your boss sees as necessary are not resulting from basic grammar or spelling mistakes that you should have found and corrected.

100 Ways

#36

Performance

Spend the Company's Money Carelessly

Everyone has heard, "You have to spend money to make money." What this advice means is that the more you spend of the company's money, the more the company will make! After all, it's not your money anyway.

Problems Created:

- Your boss will view you as wasteful
- Your boss may think you are equally careless about other aspects of your job
- Spending money won't always make more money, so your philosophy may be seriously flawed
- Wasting any resources, particularly money, will not be the best way for you to get ahead in the organization

A Better Approach

Money can seem to have a different value when it is not your own, especially when you are spending an organization's money. It might appear that a business has an endless supply of money to spend, particularly when comparing corporate funds to personal finances, but an organization also has seemingly endless financial obligations to meet. Your efforts to help your boss keep these expenses under control will be reflected positively. Keep good records of your efforts to save your company's money for future reference and as a possible

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reminder to your boss of your concern for your company's finances.

You can help support your boss in achieving these financial objectives by considering your company's money as if it were your own on the last day of the month before you get paid!

100 Ways

#37

Performance

Insist on Driving

When traveling on business, always insist on driving even if your boss would prefer to be behind the wheel. This way you can feel like you are in control and your boss will also begin to see you in more of a leadership role. This should do wonders for your career, right?

Problems Created:

- You may be evaluated by your boss on your driving skills
- If you get lost along the way, you may never live it down!
- If you happen to get a speeding ticket, you will really never live it down!
- You'll be the one that has to put the rental car on an expense report

A Better Approach

If your boss prefers to drive when the two of you travel together in a rental car, don't object. Being in the driver's seat is a natural role for your boss, and if you drive you will probably be subjecting yourself to more unnecessary critical evaluation. You will probably drive too slowly or too fast, take the least direct route, violate every traffic rule and park too far away from your final destination! Save yourself all this needless stress and hand the keys to your boss, saying something like, "You

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know the way better than I do. Why don't you drive?"
Ultimately, everyone will be more satisfied with this arrangement.

100 Ways

#38

Performance

Never Volunteer for Special Assignments

Why should you volunteer for extra work when your boss already has assigned you enough work to keep you busy for the rest

of your career?

Problems Created:

- You may avoid extra work but you also avoid getting extra recognition and credit
- You may deny yourself a valuable developmental experience or opportunity in the future
- You may have enjoyed the different assignments and experiences
- Others may volunteer for extra assignments and move ahead faster than you in the organization as a result

A Better Approach

An old army motto advises, “Never volunteer for anything.” While this may have been good advice at one time for those in the armed forces, it probably won’t serve you well in today’s workplace or in building a better relationship with your boss. Volunteering for special assignments can expand your horizons and perspectives. You never know where it could lead you.

Special assignments can expose you to parts of your organization you may never have seen. You can meet people

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you would not have contact with otherwise, which can help you build new working relationships. You can receive recognition for your extra efforts and create new opportunities for yourself that would not have existed without the volunteer work. Your boss will also recognize your willingness to do more than is normally required. However, a word of caution:

Make sure that your boss supports your involvement in these special assignments or your volunteer efforts may be viewed as a distraction from your normal responsibilities. You may want to give preference to those special assignment requests you receive from your boss over ones from others in your organization.