

Impressing Your Boss

By Robert N. Mitchell

If you make a positive impact at work, you'll end up leaving a good impression on your boss. Try taking proactive steps to make the organization a better place to work, or be a role model for others by helping create a constructive workplace.

"To make a great contribution the boss notices, a candidate should be courageous and trust himself; be an owner, not a renter," Janine Moon, a master certified career coach at Compass Point Coaching in Columbus, OH, said. "In other words, step out of your job box and take responsibility for creating a workplace that works. Doing this includes taking initiative, being a team player, caring about your work, communicating and being superb at change ability or change agility."

Moon prefers not to use the words "impress your boss," because there are many reasons to become a more productive worker. "Overall, I look at the things that make you a better person in the workplace, those things that further your career, make you a desirable employee and create as much job security as possible."

TEAM PLAYERS

Moon encourages clients to take the initiative. "Don't say that something isn't in your job description so you're not going to do it. Boundaries such as these no longer exist in successful workplaces," she said. "What's important to bosses is that people who report to them know the organization's vision and direction; they then align their strengths and energy to

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That may mean stepping outside of your job box and looking at what needs to be done and how you can do your job better. "Where can you focus on cutting costs and positively impacting the organization's revenues? How can you improve customer service or patient care in your area of responsibility?" she asked.

It's also about being a team player and focusing on collaboration, knowing your team members, and taking the initiative to develop a strong team. "Sometimes a work environment can get negative, with complaints about the workload or the changes that are occurring, but that's when you can focus on shifting the environment to encourage team members to work together," she said.

Lynn Berger, ►



AMBER BRAMBLE

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MA, EdM, a career counselor and coach based in New York, said it’s important the employee is clear on the boss’s needs. “What’s most important to them? Is it getting to work on time? Is it an expectation that you will work later? You want to get a sense of how they communicate best—is it through e-mail or is it over the phone?” she asked.

Berger said it’s important, “because everyone’s priorities are different.”

COMMUNICATION

As the career coaches spoke with *ADVANCE* they said communication is the most important aspect of whether bosses and employees are successful.

“We still do a lot more talking than listening,” Moon said. “Communication

is the basis of initiative, the basis of collaboration, the basis of emotional engagement, and it’s the basis of the resilience and the ability to make shift when changes are necessary. It’s really the basis of all we do in the work setting ... but we don’t do nearly enough listening.”

Meg Montford, executive career coach and president of Ability Enhanced, a Kansas City career coaching firm, said communication is important in any work environment, “because it’s all about relationship building. It demonstrates respect for the boss’s role and the boss as an individual. If someone does not like the boss, then he will not perform well. The boss has a role she is trying to perform in the environment. I think it’s important to remember that.

“If you don’t already receive a regular performance review, ask for one. This shows the boss that you’re willing to take initiative,” Montford added. “Sit down and talk to your boss; find out what his opinion is, and listen to his suggestions and criticisms. It’s important to always know what your boss is thinking.”

CHANGE ABILITY & AGILITY

The need for changeability and agility is important in healthcare, Moon said. “It’s really about being flexible and adaptable,” she said. A lot of times, people say they have these traits, “but we don’t often train workers on strengthening them. Flexibility and adaptability help people anticipate, implement and adapt to changes.”

Speak positively about your boss, especially to your co-workers, added Montford. Part of this positive speak is thinking of ways to advance and make yourself indispensable. “This includes volunteering for tasks outside of your job description. Offer to help train new peers, and make sure you meet all deadlines. These are all part of being indispensable,” she said.

Another aspect to impressing the boss is to maintain a positive attitude. “Be enthusiastic about your job. Leave personal problems at home, and always mind your manners, including your speech—you don’t want to be guilty of cursing on the job,” she said.

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FOLLOW THROUGH

At the heart of the discussion on impressing your boss is that in healthcare you are delivering a service. “Every individual could take these principles to heart, because I don’t know of a better place to show superb service than in the healthcare setting,” Moon said.

“Healthcare facilities care for people who are ill and often scared to truly serve patients with kindness and efficiency develops loyalty and lasting gratitude. Healthcare workers have the daily opportunity to respect the humanity of their customers and to create award-winning (and boss-impressing) service.” ■

Robert Mitchell is consulting editor at *ADVANCE*.

What You Can Do

- Know what is important to your boss.
- Know your boss’s communication style.
- Be willing to work outside of your job description.

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