

# MANAGE YOUR OWN CAREER!

10 tools to help active job searchers and engaged employees become creative, innovative and passionate workers

TOOL 8 of 10

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# Add value

## Tool Overview

Once you have secured employment you may think the hard work is over, but the truth is it's only just begun. Once you are employed you must take the initiative to become a valuable member of the organization. That means coming to work each and every day with the right attitude, looking for ways to add value to the work being done.

As an **engaged employee** you will be an active member of the organization. You will be on the lookout for new ways to get involved and strive to improve the way the organization functions. You will think and act like a business partner with a genuine interest in the success of the organization. Overall you will start out exactly how you intend to finish, an engaged member of the team!

## Self-Assessment Quiz

Use this quiz to identify your strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement.

|   | YES                      | NO                       | SOMEWHAT                 | N/A                      |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I understand the overall mission of the organization I work for.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I understand the work I do and how it relates to the overall operation of the company.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I am always looking for new ways to do my job better.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I am actively involved in the performance review process.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I am comfortable giving feedback to my employer/supervisor and frequently make suggestions for workplace improvements. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Food for Thought

Be interested in **topics and issues that are facing other departments and levels of management** so that you are able to provide great suggestions and solutions to problems.



**SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW!**

## Know Where You Work

- Go beyond what you learn in orientation
- Learn the mission, vision and values of the company
- Determine the goals and objectives of the workplace
- Become familiar with other departments and how they work
- Know how the company makes money
- Understand the competition your company faces
- Always ask questions and find out what you don't know

*"Don't limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember, you can achieve." -Mary Kay Ash*

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INVESTED IN A WORLD-CLASS WORKFORCE

## Know What You Do

Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you so you can be on the lookout for ways to exceed those expectations. You need to be aware of how you fit beyond your workstation and outside of your cubicle in order to deliver the best internal customer service possible.

That means becoming aware of your job description and understanding exactly how your role contributes to the success of the organization as whole. If your company doesn't have formalized job duties it may be a good time to sit down with your employer and discuss your responsibilities.

## Get Engaged!

- Read Press Releases
- Conduct Information Interviews
- Read the Employee Handbook
- Ask about job shadowing
- Read Annual Reports
- Read Internal Publications
- Volunteer for special assignments

Google this: *internal customer service*

## Know How You Contribute

Get ready for a performance review.

### Step 1: Be Prepared

It is normal to be nervous about receiving a review of your performance. Calm your anxiety by preparing yourself and becoming aware of the type of performance review being used to avoid any surprises.

### Step 2: Document It

Throughout the year keep track of all the things you want to discuss with your employer. Make a list and be sure you don't overlook anything that is important to you.

### Step 3: Spell It Out

Stop thinking of your workplace contributions in terms of the tasks and duties you complete. Rather, focus only your accomplishments and the positive ways you impact the company. Communicate these things to your employer and show how you add value to your company.

## EXTRA! EXTRA! BRAG ALL ABOUT IT!

### Give This a Try...

Keep anything that **shows proof** that you've gone above and beyond what's expected of you. Create a portfolio of emails, thank you letters and anything else that shows that you've made a **positive contribution** to the company.



## THINK ABOUT IT!

*While performance reviews discuss past accomplishments the main focus should always be future focused! Think about all the ways you can move forward and do a better job in years to come!*

## Want more? Check out this great read!

**1001 Ways to Take Initiative at Work** by Bob Nelson

View it online @ <http://www.amazon.ca/1001-Ways-Take-Initiative-Work/dp/076111405X>

## IT'S A FACT!

Top employers want employees who add value, show passion for their work and understand how their job positively impacts the company. Think creatively about how you can get more involved!

## Performance Review Preparation

**Instructions:** Think about your workplace performance and use this tool to prepare for a review.

### What do you consider to be your major accomplishments?

*Think about the things you did that went over-and-above your job duties.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### What feedback do you want to gain?

*Consider the information you need to do your job better in the future.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Where do you believe you need more experience or training?

*Take some time and pinpoint the areas you believe you could improve and come up with a plan of action.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Who could help you to do your job better? How could they help?

*Think about co-workers that have a skill set you admire and consider cross-training and mentorship possibilities.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### What do you need in order to grow professionally?

*Consider opportunities for training, mentorship, professional designations etc. that would benefit your work*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Quick Tips for Workplace Success

### Get Feedback

Ask your employer and co-workers for feedback with respect to how you do your job. Better yet, ask to hear what customer have to say. As an **engaged employee** you understand the importance impact feedback has on the ability to perform at a top-level.

### Give Feedback

Let your employer know what you're thinking when it comes to the way you do your job and how the workplace runs. As an **engaged employee** you will not be shy when it comes to making your suggestions for improvements. Your mission should always be to better the company.

### Act on Feedback

Keep track of your progress and set aside time to talk with your employer about the improvements you've made. As an **engaged employee** you will take any feedback given to you with a positive attitude and act in a proactive manner when it comes to making changes.



## Think Like an Innovator

As an **engaged employee** you should always be working to develop new ideas that could benefit the company. With that in mind, you should be working in the most creative manner possible.

Brainstorm with your co-workers and dedicate a small part of your day to solving the toughest problems you face on the job. With this mentality you will be producing innovative solutions in no time!

## Act Like a Business Partner

Ensure that every day you spend at work is a day where you become more involved in the company. That means learning how the business runs, generates income and spends money.

As an **engaged employee** you will express your interest in learning more about to your employer so they can share their wisdom and assist you to grow within the organization.

## Find creative ways to ...

- increase profits
- improve customer relations
- implement new systems
- increase productivity
- develop new processes
- grow the customer base

## Key Terms

**Internal Customer Service:** the service provided to individuals and departments within your organization

**Job Description:** a description of the responsibilities and duties associated with any given job

**Performance Review:** a formal discussion that takes place between an employee and an employer to review past accomplishments and plan future goals and objectives