

10 (Make that 15) Commandments for Excelling as an Employee

1. Be on time — whether it is in showing up for work, returning from breaks, going to meetings, or turning in assignments.
2. Call in if you know you will be tardy or absent. Most companies consider it a much more serious issue if you don't provide them with forewarning when you know you're going to be late or absent.
3. Try your best. Always finish an assignment, no matter how much you would rather be doing something else. It is always good to have something to show for the time you have spent at work.
4. Anticipate problems and the needs of management. Your supervisors will be grateful, even if they don't show it.
5. Show a positive attitude. No one wants to be around someone who is a “downer.”
6. Avoid backstabbing, gossiping, and spreading rumors. Remember: what goes around comes around. Joining in the office gossip may seem like the easy thing to do, but almost everyone has much more respect — and *trust* — for people who avoid spreading stories.
7. Follow the rules. The rules are there to give the greatest number of people the best chance of working well together and getting the job done.
8. Look for opportunities to serve customers and help coworkers. Those who would be leaders must learn how to serve.
9. Avoid the impulse to criticize your colleagues, your boss, or the company. It is easy to find things wrong with others; it is much harder — but more rewarding — to find constructive ways to deal with problems. Employees who are known for their positive attitude and helpful suggestions are the ones most likely to be remembered when completing evaluations and considering raises.
10. Volunteer for training and new assignments. Take a close look at the people in your organization who are “moving up” — chances are they are the ones who have shown themselves to be willing to do undesirable assignments or take on new duties.
11. Be a good team member. Avoid focusing on what makes you different from others; rather focus on how you fit into the company team. You will look like someone who is focused on the needs of the customer, the team, and the company.
12. Avoid saying “that's not my job.” Many if not most managers earned their positions by doing work that was refused by coworkers complaining that it wasn't their job. Employers appreciate employees who help get the job done, whatever it may be.

13. Show pride in yourself and respect toward others. Never let yourself be heard uttering ethnic slurs or other derogatory terms in reference to yourself or to others. Use of such terms perpetuates undesirable stereotypes and inevitably disturbs others. It also tends to make others doubt your maturity and competence. The best way to get respect is to show respect toward yourself and others.
14. Distinguish yourself. Pick out one or more things in your job to do better than anyone else. Become known as the “go-to” person for such things. Managers will remember you favorably at times when you really need to be remembered.
15. Be prepared. Know the tasks that you are responsible for during the day and the week. When attending meetings, know the meeting topic and bring relevant information. Create lists and prioritize the important tasks that need to be accomplished.