

### Five Tips to Stand Out at Work

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Many of us feel like we have too much to do. We don't even want to think about taking on anything extra either in the office or after hours. But if you want professional success, commit time every day to both personal and professional development. Here are five very "do-able" tips that will help you do just that and stand out at work.

**1. Spend time on your social media in the morning. Do it either before you pull out of the driveway or get to work ten minutes early for social media time.** Using social media to build relationships is time consuming – and some workplaces don't understand the value of the time we spend tweeting and posting. It can be tough to fit in when we are expected to meet other job requirements. So get on [LinkedIn](#)

before you leave for work and aim to connect with three new people each week, comment on some group posts, and ask for a recommendation from a colleague, former colleague, vendor or client. If you're a Twitter person, pre-load some industry-relevant tweets, retweet a couple tweets you like and follow two or three new people.

**2. Learn to say, "Yes, but..." instead of just "Yes" or "No."** Many of us are crowd pleasers. We say yes even if a requested project or activity isn't our top priority or something we should really be doing. The result can be that we take on too much. Does this sound familiar? (Please note that I used "we" in the past sentences but could have easily substituted "I.") When we do this, we risk failing to meet all expectations resulting in negative perceptions in the workplace. Learn to say, "Yes, I'd be happy to help you, but I can't even talk about it until next Tuesday. Can it wait until then? If so, I'll be happy to discuss it." When you do that you have 1) made the asker feel great – "Hey! He will help me!"; 2) communicated clearly about your ability to take on work; and 3) saved yourself a great deal of stress.

**3. Seek out educational opportunities.** In order to have the career you want – and gain the respect you deserve – you need to continuously learn about your field of expertise; about related fields; and about how to build professional relationships. Dedicate time each week to professional and personal development: read blogs, subscribe to e-newsletters, and join

relevant groups on Linked In. Research conferences and webinars and aim to attend at least one a year. Don't let a year pass that you don't access any education funds in the budget.

**4. Be the follow-up person.** We're all busy. We all let "to dos" fall by the wayside. But if you are the person who consistently completes those to dos (or at least communicates about them), you will be seen as someone who can get things done. Here are three ways to ensure that you "get 'er done," as our friend Larry the Cable Guy says:

1. Make sure there is buy-in on assignments at the end of meetings – including that you verbally commit to tasks and projects.
2. Create a tickler system: Use your calendar system or database – or, if you're old school, your day planner – to create "must dos" on certain dates. Then do it.
3. Communicate with people. If you are responsible to a task that you aren't going to get done on time, call or e-mail whomever is responsible for the overall project and let them know you are committed to the task but won't be able to get it done until X time. Then get it done.

**5. Understand your strengths – and use them.** If you are in a job and are unhappy every day, it could be because the position does not utilize your strengths. Let's face it: We can all get through life and work in jobs that do not match up with our personality traits, intellectual strengths and interest areas. However, the more you can use your attributes in your career, the happier and more successful you will be. Find ways to use your strengths:

- Join work committees – such as a United Way committee, wellness, or safety committee;
- Meet with your supervisor and suggest new job responsibilities (and see if you can give up others);
- Educate yourself: Enhance your skills in your strength areas so you can then apply for the job you want.