Ten Habits of Highly Effective Employees

Description

Great employees are the key to great companies. Not only do they have a high level of competency around the product and their job, they have a natural rapport with customers and other employees. They make it look easy, but when others try to replicate their magic, they quickly find that it's much harder than it looks. What I've noticed in working with countless great leaders and employees over the years is that what makes someone a superstar is usually just good habits around a few fundamentals.

Here are just a few of the most powerful habits I've noticed from watching high performers. We should all cultivate and practice them every day.

1. **They know what the *what* is for their boss (and act on it).** When an employee knows what matters most to the boss, they can laser-focus on meeting their needs in this area. Let's say they've noticed negativity drives their boss crazy. The boss just can't stand griping and complaining. Once they realize this, they can make an effort to frame their communications with them in a positive way.
2. **They know that the ball is always in their court.** Once the boss gives an assignment, they may mentally mark it off their to-do list. They may even forget about it. It's up to the employee to do what they need to do to move it forward quickly. Great employees *never* let themselves be the hold-up. They check in with the boss regularly on the project so they don't have to bring it up.
3. **When they're not sure, they ask *why*.** Let's say the company implements a major change in the way it captures and processes customer feedback. No one likes the new system. It's harder and more time consuming than the old way, and they've noticed their coworkers seem resentful. The problem is that no one told them *why* the system changed. Rather than assuming the worst, great employees just ask.
4. **They go out of their way to be likeable and make people happy.** When employees make a point to be friendly and helpful, they contribute to the "emotional bank account" at work. These deposits have a big, big impact—and they reduce the pain of the inevitable withdrawals. When an employee goes out of the way to be a positive force in their coworkers' lives, their coworkers will forgive them when they make a mistake.
5. **They resolve coworker issues one-on-one.** This is a tough one for many employees, because they tend to avoid confrontation. Yet taking a conflict to the boss, who then must discuss it with their boss, who may then have to get an HR rep involved, is time consuming and unproductive. Yes, there are times when they have to go through official channels and involve HR, but often an issue with a coworker can be solved with a face-to-face adult conversation. This builds healthy work relationships and shows real ownership.
6. **They apologize when it's called for.** All employees make mistakes. It's what they do afterward—after they've dropped the ball or missed a deadline or got caught in the act of gossiping about a coworker—that truly determines their character as employees and coworkers. Apologizing shows one's vulnerability, and vulnerability is a powerful trait. It makes people like them. It shows they're human, just like them.
7. **They do the little extra things that make customers happy.** Often, it's the little things that

keep people coming back to their favorite stores, restaurants, or other businesses. It's the server who knows exactly how they take their coffee or the plant nursery owner who calls to let them know a shipment of their favorite flowering shrubs just arrived. Also, when people are buying something—especially if they're spending a good bit of money—they worry that they're making a mistake. Great employees realize this and look for ways to relieve anxiety. This is another example of a little thing that makes a big difference.They go the extra mile, without having to be asked (whether it's in their job description or not).

8. **They see complaints as gifts.** When complaints are handled well, customer loyalty will skyrocket. Great employees don't get defensive when customers complain. They know they're hearing valuable feedback that can help the organization improve its service. They listen, they sincerely apologize, and they take action to make things right. Most customers are quite forgiving in the face of such a response—and they're usually so impressed that they not only return to the company, they recommend it to others.

9. **They never blame, finger-point, or badmouth their company or coworkers.** These habits are deeply destructive to the company's image. *Everyone*needs to be engaged in building the organization's brand. That means it's critical to "manage up" their company, its products, and their coworkers with every customer interaction—and when they're off the clock as well. Negative comments, even subtle ones, make people uncomfortable, and great employees instinctively realize this. They are ambassadors of positivity.

10. **They appreciate the boss.** Taking time to say thank you for the little things your boss does to make things better for you makes a big difference in your company culture. Employees are often quick to point out what their boss got wrong or didn't do, but when's the last time they thanked their boss for a flexible schedule, training or personal development, or creating a positive work environment? It's easy to take these things for granted, but the praise and gratitude goes a long way.

There's no "magic bullet" for being a great employee. There are no short cuts. But by practicing these simple, yet powerful habits every day, all employees can become incredibly valuable to their employer and their customers.

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