

THE MAGAZINE FOR MANAGERS / LE JOURNAL DU GESTIONNAIRE

CANADIAN Manager CANADIEN



Leaders in Management — A Publication of the Canadian Institute of Management — La gestion par excellence

Vol. 37, No. 3 • FALL 2012

EDUCATION

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Nathan Jamail

What makes a top employee?

How to be the best and get noticed

In any economy, especially a tough one, thousands of companies are still looking to hire top employees. The real question is how does one become that top employee organizations and leaders are looking to hire? It is not experience, knowledge or background, though all of these are great benefits. Three things a person can do to be a top performer on any team:

1. **Do what you love**
2. **Maintain a positive attitude**
3. **Make your boss look good**

This is more than a generic statement or a motivational blurb; rather, these are the most common things said when leaders describe their top performers.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

Passion is the most powerful motivator of a person or team. More people will follow you, buy from you or promote you because you are passionate than because you are smart or have experience. Passion can only be created when someone is doing something they believe in or love to do. This does not mean a person must be passionate about the product or service they provide; rather they must be passionate about their actual job responsibilities and serving their clients or team members.

A misconception is that passion is a subjective thing to measure. How can the one thing that every top performer has be subjective? It can't. Either a person has it or not. Everybody has passion- it is an emotion. The question is not whether someone has passion; rather it is 'are they doing what they are passionate about?' If the answer is no, then make a change because, without it, a person will never reach their true ability or desires.

Action item: Write down what you love to do from hobbies to activities. Does it relate to what you do in any way? If not, talk to your boss about your passions and ways you can incorporate them into your current role. They will appreciate the top performer you become when you are doing something you are passionate about.

MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Remember this - having a good attitude is as easy as always remembering to smile and take responsibility for everything both good and bad. It is never saying "it wasn't my fault" or "it's not my job" or blaming the

company or competition for one's failures. Rather, a person with the right attitude knows to be successful, you must first be *grateful*.

To be the best, focus on how to have more fun and be better at serving your clients, peers and subordinates. Remove the life suckers and gunslingers that shoot holes in every new idea and new opportunity by saying "it won't work" or "it has never worked in the past". Most people will tell another person something can't be done because in reality they fear they themselves can't do it. Having the right attitude is knowing you will determine your reality not by what has been done, but rather by what *you will do*.

Action item: Take the time each day to approach everyone around you and smile, encourage and expect the same in return.

MAKE YOUR BOSS LOOK GOOD

Working to please and impress will get a person promoted faster than tenure and experience. A top performer focuses on doing what is right and exceeding their boss's expectations, promoting their leadership's culture and delivering results. Always be willing to help others to succeed, knowing the better you can be at helping others, the more valuable you become. When a person focuses on making the boss look good, they should never worry about being perceived as an opportunist, they should only focus on making their boss look good. The key is to focus on having the right attitude, being passionate about your job and serving your leader and the team.

Action item: Look at your job expectations and *add* to them. If your boss says to be in the office by 9 a.m., try to be there by 8:30 a.m. at the latest. If your boss says to contact 50 prospects in a week, your goal should be 75. Most importantly, do these with integrity. Not only will your boss look good, but you will see results!

Every professional has the opportunity to get promoted and be number one, but only a few will actually do what it takes to get there.

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