

# Accepting Temp Work when You are Seeking a Permanent Position



If you're like most Americans, you're going to switch careers or employers at least four times in your life. When this happens and you're not sure of your next move, the uncertainties and unknowns can be stressful. What if you have to relocate? Do you have enough money to get by in the interim? How long will it take to land another position? Are you qualified enough for the type of job you want? The questions are endless. With that said, one of the most important things to consider is what do you do in the meantime? Obviously, you're going to look for new opportunities. But what if a temporary offer comes along? Should you take it? Or will it distract you from looking for something long term? It's a tough decision but we have some ideas.

## Reality

Although taking a temp assignment or two isn't what you want to do for the rest of your life, it might not be the worst idea. The reality is that more and more, employers are looking to hire contract workers because they don't have to offer employee benefits that hurt their bottom line. As a result, it might take you longer than you'd like to find that lucrative fulltime position with all the extras you're after.

## Financial Help

Even if you're set and can survive for a while without a salary, it's a comfort knowing that you can rely on some steady income at least for a while. As much as

you might not like it, you have to think in both the short term and long term. That's especially true when it comes to your savings. Even if you have enough money to get by for a few months, not having to burn through it in the short term means you won't have to replenish it later on.

## Opportunity to Learn and Grow

We get it, taking a temporary position might bruise your ego a bit. But guess what, more often than not these opportunities give you a chance to learn something new, refine your skills and get paid. Let's be honest, adding new skills and more experience to your resume is never a bad thing.

## No Employment Gap

Because employers are hiring more temporary or contract workers, it can take longer to find permanent employment when you're looking for a new job. And guess what? When you finally go to apply for that permanent position, the [hiring manager](#) doesn't want to see any significant gaps on your resume. That's another way temporary work can help. Instead of having to explain why you've been unemployed for 10 months, you can show that you've kept your skills sharp until the right opportunity came along.

## Networking

Even as a temporary employee, you're going to have the chance to meet and work closely with people in an organization. As you build professional relationships and prove your worth, others are going to notice. These folks know other people and can prove to be a great resource in connecting you with their networks and be great references down the road.

## It Might Lead to Something Permanent

It's amazing how many times temporary gigs turn into full-time positions. What starts out as a three-month contract to implement a new project or handle a spike in workload often times turns into a permanent role with a pay raise and benefits. The logic is pretty simple. Organizations prefer to hire internally when a new

position comes open. Even if you're on a contract for a limited time, you will already have been thoroughly vetted and given the opportunity to prove yourself. So, as long as you put forth your best effort and get results, you never know what might happen.

Temporary work is just that, temporary. And sure, you're going to want to find something permanent after a while. But is it really all that bad? Would you rather spend your time between jobs worrying and draining your bank account or sharpening your skills and gaining valuable experience? At the end of the day, temp work might not be your dream job. But if you're willing to swallow your pride and seize the opportunity, the experience can prove to be a catalyst to propel you in the right direction.

If you are an experienced employee in the [Life Sciences industries](#), contact me, Jeff King for help finding a high quality position in the [pharmaceutical, medical device or biotech fields](#). I am here to help. You can reach me at [jking@rqfocus.com](mailto:jking@rqfocus.com) or (541) 639-3501.

---

## How-To Know It's Time to Make a Career Change



If there's one thing that's constant in this day and age, it's change. And it's something that most people have a hard time with. The crazy thing is that it inevitably happens to all of us, yet we resist it. Our brains are hard-wired to tell us that there is safety found in predictability and routine. The unfortunate part is that if you refuse to change, you end up stagnating, get bored and your

[productivity suffers](#). This is especially true in the workplace. The bottom line is, change can be good a thing if you're no longer happy in your current post.

### **It's Time for a Change if You're Bored to Tears or Overwhelmed**

In order to be your most productive at work, you need to be challenged in the best ways possible. When you're bored, you aren't being challenged enough and conversely, if you find yourself overwhelmed, you either have too much on your plate or the job you're expected to do might not be something that fits your skillset. Pay close attention to symptoms of both stress and boredom. If they show themselves on a regular basis, it's probably time to look for something different.

### **If Your Mind Wonders, It's Time to Move On**

Do you ever find yourself sitting at your desk staring off into space and thinking about what it would be like to be anywhere but where you are? This is an obvious sign that you're no longer happy with your current situation. If this goes on long enough, you might even start to complain to family, friends and even colleagues about what's missing. If this is the case, you'd best take decisive action, or someone else might make the choice for you.

### **No One Wants to Feel Underappreciated**

When you started your current job, you were eager to share your thoughts and ideas with your colleagues and superiors. They even asked for your input on important decisions. But now you feel like everything you have to say falls on deaf ears. And what about that overtime you put in to meet a critical deadline? No one acknowledged your efforts or thanked you for all your hard work. It sucks when this happens. Whether you're simply not a good fit for the culture or you actually are being walked on, take it as a sign that there are greener pastures somewhere else.

### **If You're Constantly Being Told to Work on Your Weaknesses, Adios**

Individual reviews are the norm in the workplace these days. We all dread them, but our hope is that they go well. That's not always the case unfortunately. If you're consistently being told that you need to strengthen this, that or other thing, it might not be worth beating yourself up or feeling inadequate just to make other people happy. Of course, constructive criticism can be useful, but if it's to

the point where you feel like your efforts aren't good enough or you're just being berated, probably time to head for the door and find a better fit.

## **You're Unhappy**

It's a simple fact that if you don't enjoy what you're doing, you probably don't do your best work. People that love their jobs derive happiness from the process of completing projects and accomplishing goals. Sure, they might be motivated by a promotion or a bonus, but they truly enjoy the journey of getting there. If you find the work you're currently doing to be laborious and dreadful, what the heck are you still doing there? It's time to consider some other options.

## **Have the Courage to Make a Change**

Maybe you can identify with some of the symptoms above and know in your gut that it's time to do something else. That's only the first step though. Having the courage to act decisively and follow through is another story. Because of the way we are wired to think, most people are hesitant to take a drastic step because doing so involves uncertainty and going outside their comfort zone. That's ok, no one ever said change was easy. But you have to ask yourself the question, "can I really expect different results if I keep doing the same thing?"

As much as you might not like it, change is something you're going to have to deal with. Sometimes your hand is forced and you don't have a choice except to change. But what about being your own instigator for change? Scary? Sure. Dealing with unknown? Ditto. Just ask any successful person you know and they will tell you that at some point in their life, they took a risk that allowed them to become who they are today. In fact, they probably failed many times along the way. But in the end, failure isn't the opposite of success, it's part of it. So, if you notice any of the signs discussed above, take a leap and make a change. It doesn't even have to be a big step to start. Just be open to learning of other opportunities to see what your options might be. Things will start coming your way then and you can figure out the next step. Even if it doesn't work out right away, you'll set yourself on a trajectory to achieve the things you really want.

I am a [Regulatory and Quality Recruiter](#) that helps people make career changes in the Bay Area. If you are interested in making a change in the [Life Sciences industries](#), contact me, Jeff King at (541) 639-3501.

---

# Words to Include in Your Resume



We've all been there. Whether you're still employed and looking for another opportunity or switching careers entirely, updating and customizing your resume is the first step when beginning the [job hunt](#). You've probably downloaded a template from the Internet and filled it out in chronological order with places of employment, title, lists of your duties and a section at the end that highlights your skills and other interests. Maybe you've even spent hours going over it with a fine-tooth comb to sure it's squeaky clean. This is all good and well, but have you thought carefully about the words you choose? Sadly, the resumes most people submit to prospective employers use language that is either too basic and antiquated or too sophisticated and over the top. To help you out next time someone asks for resume, we've come up with a list of the most impactful words to include.

## Numbers

No, we don't mean the actual word "numbers." We're talking about metrics like revenue you generated, money or time you saved, people you managed, etc. It doesn't mean much when you say that "you reduce the time required to X." Your employer is going to want to know by how much. A better way to put it would be "reduced processing time by 40%.", or "cleared out a backlog in 7 months" Bottom line, if there is anything you did in a previous job that can be expressed in numbers, it better be on your resume.

# Modernized

Maybe a responsibility you had in your last job was to improve existing systems or come up with new ways of doing things entirely. While you might be tempted to write “updated policies and procedures manual” on your resume, simply exchanging the word “modernized” for “updated” is like a switch to the hiring manager. In their eyes, anyone can update a simple document, but to modernize or streamline it? That’s powerful stuff.

# Value

When companies are looking to hire someone for a position, they want a person who will add value to the organization. If you make it known on your resume that you’re hard-working, that only goes so far. Sure, hard work is commendable, but it doesn’t always achieve results. By using the words value or valuable, you make it known that you think about the work you do in terms of how it will improve the company at large.

# Action Verbs

Action verbs are words like supervised, authorized, guided, managed, unified, initiated and designed, to name a few. These words show your ability to succeed. Moreover, they tell a hiring manager that you have been trusted with significant responsibility in the past. When choosing which action verbs to use, it might be a good idea to create an extensive list and carefully choose the ones that best communicate the message you’re trying to get across.

# Orchestrated

Anyone can say that they’ve led a team or organized a charity event. Sure, those are qualities that are favorable to an employer but if you use the word orchestrated instead, you communicate that you were the one in charge.

## **Spearheaded**

The last place you want to appear modest is on your resume. Much like the word orchestrated, spearheaded emphasizes your level of involvement. For example, instead of saying you “created a new submission procedure,” telling the employer that you “spearheaded the modernization of the submission process” is much more specific and conveys confidence in your abilities.

## **Committed**

Simply put, employers want to see that you’re committed to your work and to your employer from the beginning to the end. While it’s great if you can use this word specifically, using any type of language that evokes loyalty and dedication places you ahead those that don’t.

## **Results**

While stating what you do and what you are responsible for is good, listing what you accomplished while in your role paints a much clearer picture of what you can do for your employer and the impact you can have.

## **Skimmable**

Again, we aren’t talking about using this word specifically. Your resume needs to be skimmable when someone reads it. Interviewers are going to look over anywhere from dozens to hundreds of resumes so you want yours to not only stand out from the rest, but be easy to read as well. Avoid excessively long sentences and exclude any information that isn’t relevant. Remember, your resume is your personal highlight reel and nothing more.

## **Edit**

We can’t emphasize this enough. Your resume is your first impression so you need to make it count. If you have any grammar or spelling mistakes, you might as well kiss the job goodbye. Even though it might be tedious, take the time to edit your resume so it’s perfect. When you think you’re done, give it to a trusted friend to



review.

Ask any interviewer and they will tell you that the number of bad resumes they receive is astounding. While some are just flat out awful because they're riddled with bad spelling and grammar, others just don't seem that exciting because the language is simple, vague and boring. Even if someone else is more qualified than you, the words you use in your resume can paint you in a favorable light and put you ahead of the competition. Next time you have to go polish it up, try using some of the words above to emphasize your accomplishments and abilities. Doing so just might be what it takes to get you the job.

As a [Regulatory and Quality Assurance Recruiter](#), I can help you refine your resume. I help employees find jobs that fit in the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries](#).

---

## Communication Skills in the Modern Workplace



In a day and age where our communications include everything from Zooming, to texting, to talking on speaker phone while driving down the road, there is no doubting that communicating in the workplace and in our homes has become a lost skill. Less and less our communication involves sitting across from someone, making eye contact and having a human conversation. As a result, studies have shown that information quickly gets lost or is forgotten due to our lack of engagement in how we communicate with each other. This can prove disastrous

in the workplace as missing even the smallest detail can end up derailing an entire project or task. For this reason, it's important to realize what [effective communication](#) in the information age looks like and some steps you can take to become more effective.

## **Active Listening**

Even though much of our communication is electronic, you're still going to have to engage directly with your colleagues and employees from time to time. Think about the feeling you have when someone continuously interrupts you, has their nose in their phone, or doesn't seem at all interested in what you have to say. Active listeners avoid all these pitfalls and make it a point to let you know their listening through non-verbal behavior like nodding their head and making eye contact. They also reiterate key points using phrases and questions like "Just so I understand..." or "To make sure we are on the same page..."

## **Positive Body Language**

Something that is easy to overlook but makes a huge difference when you're talking with someone is your body language. When you're talking with someone, do you tend to slouch back in your seat, cross your arms and avoid eye contact? This type of body language subconsciously tells the other person that you aren't interested in what they have to say. On the other hand, if you sit tall, open your body toward the person you're engaging and make regular eye contact, you come across as welcoming, non-threatening, and you let the other person know that you value what they are saying.

## **Show Respect**

Although this one seems obvious, it's remarkable how many people don't convey respect when communicating with others. This is true for both live conversation and electronic communication. If you avoid talking down to others, take time to acknowledge their perspective and ask questions, you show them that they are worth your time and you genuinely want to hear what they have to say.

# Email Etiquette

The vast majority of our communication today is via email or some other electronic platform. While it might seem less personal than talking face-to-face, email is designed for information to be exchanged concisely and quickly. Therefore, you should master the skill of breaking up your emails into bullet points or short paragraphs that are easy to read and understand. If you send long-winded messages that are full of unnecessary filler language and unneeded details, people are not only less likely to read your note, they may find themselves confused with so much information.

Your emails need to also convey respect and the utmost professionalism including a short subject line, the proper salutation and goodbye.

## Be Open-Minded

This is especially true if you're new to a company. If you're going to be successful, this is the time to listen, learn, ask questions, and be open to new ways of doing things. You're going to make mistakes. The key is to be open to constructive feedback and learn from the process. If your employer sees that you're open-minded and willing to learn, you'll quickly be seen in a favorable light and your chances of moving up quickly become much greater.

## Be Willing to Give Feedback

Even if you're the type of person that prefers to put your head down and go, you're going to be asked to give feedback at some point during your career. Whether it's regarding an upcoming project or re-writing the entire policies and procedures manual, being able to give valuable feedback is something many people struggle with. If you're able to provide constructive feedback in a professional manner, you will likely play an integral role in improving your team or organization.

Communication is vital to the success of any organization. Without it, teams fail to work cohesively, production suffers and ideas aren't shared. In short, you have a bunch of individuals doing their own job under the same roof. The way we communicate has changed in the modern workplace. Gone are the days of three

martini lunches and sales meetings where everyone meets under one roof. With that being said, it's still important to remember that how you listen, respond and talk with others can be a make or break difference in your success as an individual and for the company.

If you make it a habit to implement some of the practices above, you'll quickly become a more effective and respected member of your organization and the your workplace will be much happier as a result.

If you need more information, contact me, Jeff King. I am a [Life Sciences recruiter](#), working with the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries](#).

---

## How-To Tell When an Employee Is About to Leave



Employees at every level are the backbone of any successful company or organization. Without quality people on your team productivity suffers, profits go down and the morale of everyone involved can sink to dangerously low levels. In a day and age where everyone is always on the lookout for a better opportunity and loyalty isn't what it used to be, employee turnover is a real concern. Not only are your best employees a tremendous asset, losing them and onboarding someone new can be prohibitively expensive. That's why now more than ever it's important to recognize the signs when a valuable employee is about leave.

## **Less Active in Meetings**

Employees that are engaged are quick to share ideas and ask questions. If you notice that someone continuously shows up to meetings just to go through the mandatory motions, it might be a sign that they are less engaged and on their way out. Even if there is just something going on at home or with a family member, you should take note of this withdrawn behavior and at the very least ask if there is anything you can do to help.

## **Increased Absences**

When a particular employee first started maybe they never called in sick or took extra time off. Now, all of sudden they either consistently show up late and leave early or simply don't show up at all. This is a red flag that you need to address right away as it's a clear sign that something is going on you aren't aware of.

## **No Longer Willing to Commit to Long-Term Projects**

If you notice an employee is no longer willing to commit to long-term goals or assignments, it's likely a sign that they want to finish what work they have left and jump ship. It might even be the case that these types of assignments interfere with the start date of a new job. In this case, there might not be much you can do.

## **Starts Taking More Personal Calls**

If you notice someone frequently excusing themselves from meetings or stepping into the hall to take personal calls something is definitely off. They could be dealing with a family emergency or talking with a prospective employer. While you can't make any assumptions, it's a good idea to check in with this person to make sure everything is alright.

## **Didn't Receive the Raise or Promotion**

# **They Were Expecting**

When someone expects to move up in a company and it doesn't happen, it's only natural for them to become less enthused with the work they do day in and day out. At this point, there's a high likelihood that they might begin looking for employment elsewhere. If you value this employee enough to keep them around, you'll probably have to provide some incentive for them to stay.

# **Major Life Event**

Major life events like getting married, a sick family member, giving birth or a spouse finding a new job can change someone's reality in a heartbeat. When these sorts of events happen, they may change how an individual feels about their current employment situation. In some cases, there might be not much you can do but if the person is a critical asset you might want to make them an offer they can't refuse. It's up to you to make that call.

# **Friends Are Leaving**

If someone has been at a company for any length of time, they have likely bonded with their colleagues and become friends. Not only do these people enjoy working together, they might even share hobbies outside of the office. If someone experiences a mass exodus of their friends leaving, they might be more inclined to leave too. In some cases, if an employee leaves, they may even recruit their colleagues to follow suit.

# **Difficult Relationships With Other Employees**

Numerous studies have proven that happiness is more important in the workplace than salary. A major key to happiness is an individual's relationship with others. If friction exists between even just two employees, especially employees that work closely together, it may prove too much for them to take and they might quit. In order to prevent this from happening it's a good idea to regularly check in with everyone on your team to make sure everything is on the up-and-up.

# You Just Know

As someone in a position of [leadership](#), you've had to develop the skills of reading people and trusting your intuition. From time to time you might get the sneaking suspicion that all is not well with a certain employee. The majority of the time you're probably right. When this happens, you're best to address the situation up front instead of waiting and continuing to wonder. By being proactive you place yourself in a position to address whatever the problem may be and your chances of retaining the employee are much greater.

It's unfortunate that days of loyal relationships between employees and the organizations they work for have largely diminished, but such is the reality in which we live. While this is a two-way street, employees are always going to look out for themselves first and foremost. If you want to lessen the amount of turnover you experience and save yourself the headache and cost of constantly having to hire new people, take note of some of the signs above. By doing so, you'll quickly find that your employees see you in a favorable light and will have much less of an incentive to look for work elsewhere.

If you are at the point of needing to hire a new employee or looking for a new job, contact me, Jeff King, for [recruiting in the Bay Area](#). I work with the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries](#).

---

# Soft Skills that Employers Want in a New Hire



We've all been in the position of looking for a new job for one reason or another. Whatever the reason may be, searching for a job that fits your skillset comes down to more than having the best cover letter and updating your resume. Sure, those things might land you an interview but if you want to set yourself apart from the competition it's crucial that you demonstrate to your potential employer that you have the intangibles, or soft skills that it takes to do the job. Not sure exactly what soft skills are? You're in luck as we define them below and highlight the most important ones that employers are looking for.

## **What's the Difference Between Hard and Soft Skills?**

There's no denying that hard skills are needed in every job. These skills are teachable and quantifiable. Skills like language proficiency and computer programming may be essential for the job and your performance can easily be measured.

On the other hand, the term soft skills references things like your ability to show up on time, meet deadlines, communicate with clients and work in a team. Though they are tougher to measure on a standard review or evaluation, soft skills are noticeable and can make or break your chances of landing the job you covet.

## **Solving Problems**

Let's face it, the vast majority of jobs in the modern workplace entail far more than what is written in a job description. While certain tasks and expectations should be explicitly laid out in front of you, you're going to be expected to think outside the box and handle challenging situations in an effective manner. If you're



headed in for an interview, you best be prepared to discuss situations in which you've had to be resourceful and overcome adversity in the past.

## **Cultural Fit**

Even if you have hard skills that jump off the page to a hiring manager it's equally important that you're a good fit for the company culture. Is the company one where both hard work and fun are valued? Are you expected to wear a tie every day or is denim on casual Fridays the norm? If you take the time to do some preliminary research about the company and its culture, you'll not only be better prepared for the interview but be able to gauge whether the company's core values align with yours or not.

## **Dependability**

One of the top skills that employers look for is dependability. Though they may seem simple, habits like showing up on time, meeting deadlines and being readily available go a long way in determining your value as an employee. If you land an interview be prepared to honestly answer questions about your work ethic and share examples of how you've demonstrated dependability in previous jobs. This is also becoming more important as some employers are allowing employees to work remotely on occasion or on a regular basis. And if you seek a position that allows the flexibility to work from home, or should make sure you have some good examples of when you've done that and met your deadlines.

## **Coachability**

Let's say that you have all the skills and experience necessary to do the job you're applying for. It's easy to think that you'll jump right in be a catalyst for success. Even if such is the case though, it's a virtual certainty that the processes and systems you'll be working with are different from what you're accustomed to. Having an open mind and being willing to listen shows your employer that you're open to learn and can easily adapt. In my years of recruiting, I've seen numerous occasions where the person that was hired was not the one with the strongest technical skills, but the one that showed more enthusiasm and willingness to learn what they didn't know.

# Being Open to Feedback

If you're just starting out in a new job there's going to be a significant learning curve. It's almost a guarantee that you're going to make mistakes, and that's understandable. How you handle feedback however, is what can set you apart. Are you open to suggestions or do you shut down and see constructive criticism as a personal attack? If you take your ego out of play and welcome feedback from others, you'll quickly be seen as a team player that adds value to the organization. Conversely, if you take criticism as a personal attack, you may be viewed as someone who will cause problems within the group.

# Taking Initiative

While it's important to do more listening than talking when you first take a new job, employers value people who aren't afraid of taking initiative. During an interview you'll likely be asked to talk about a time when you came up with a new idea and how it was implemented. If you can demonstrate that you're comfortable with thinking outside the box and putting those thoughts into action your employer will know that you bring a lot more to the table than simply being a task master.

# Flexibility

There's little doubt that rigidity can be the kiss of death in the workplace. Whether you're working in accounting or as an events coordinator you're going to be asked to adapt to change and reprioritize at some point. Do you become flustered or are you able to take everything in stride? Your ability to meet a deadline a day earlier than expected or change the scope of a marketing campaign at a moment's notice goes a long way in the eyes of your employer.

There's no doubting the value of a polished resume and being prepared to highlight your skillset in a job interview. What's going to set you apart however, is your ability to demonstrate the soft skills necessary to be effective in the workplace. Are you willing to listen, learn and adapt? Do you work well with others in a collaborative environment? Are you capable of voicing your opinion and implementing new ideas and methods? If you can answer yes to these types of questions and demonstrate soft skills to your employer, you'll set yourself apart

from the competition and greatly increase your chances of landing the job.

---

## Should You Take that Promotion?



From the moment you finish your formal education, it's ingrained in your mind that you should always be looking to move up in whatever company you go to work for. The idea that if you show up early, stay late and consistently go the extra mile to set yourself apart is the key to getting promoted is what we are taught to believe. While getting promoted is usually equated with higher pay, more responsibility and a clear sign that your hard work has finally been noticed, there are a host of factors to consider before you sign on the dotted line.

Are you 100% ready to take the promotion? The obvious answer for most people is "absolutely". Even though getting the news that you're being promoted is sure to bring about feelings of elation in the immediacy, it's important to look at the opportunity from every angle as accepting could be life-changing. Below are some questions to consider with a clear head before you take the plunge.

### Do You Have the Necessary Experience?

Maybe you've been in your current role for a while and have proven time and again that you have what it takes to do your job. With your pending promotion however, do you have the skills and experience that will be required to meet the demands of the new post? For example, maybe you've been working in a role that doesn't require management skills and now you'll be charged with overseeing an

entire team or department. If you plan on “figuring it out as you go,” you may want to seriously consider the impact taking the promotion might have on you, the organization and your team.

## **Will You Receive the Necessary Training and Support?**

The truth is that not everyone who gives a promotion does so with consideration for what life will be like for the person in the new role. More often than you might think, managers don't have the clearest idea about what it takes to do the job effectively on a daily basis. This can result in a lack of necessary training and support which can not only make your life more stressful, but have devastating effects for the morale and productivity of the organization. So, before you dive in head first, make certain that you'll have access to the training, resources and support you need.

## **Is the Promotion Aligned with Your Goals?**

You have probably given some serious thought to the things you want to accomplish both professionally and personally. Maybe you want to become an influential leader but need more time to sharpen your skills or want to spend more time with your young family but the demands of the new job will have you spending your weekends at the office. While prestige and more money are alluring, your best bet is to carefully consider the implications the promotion will have on life as you know it before you make a decision.

## **Does the Promotion Fit with Your Strengths and Passions?**

Taking inventory of what you are good at and truly enjoy is a crucial step in deciding whether or not to take a promotion. Maybe you love working one-on-one with customers and colleagues and enjoy seeing the tangible difference you make, but your new job all but eliminates the opportunity for you to utilize your skills in a way you enjoy. What if you'll be chained to a desk away from the day-to-day or have to travel more than you'd like? Once again, it's easy to get excited about the

benefits the job could bring in the short-term, but failing to realize the effects it might have on your core values in the long-term is a mistake you don't want to make.

## **Have You Asked the Right Questions?**

Just because you're up for promotion doesn't mean it's always your best option. Before you take on added responsibility, make sure you do some thorough research and ask the right questions. Was the previous person in the role fired? Is your promotion part of a reorganization? Does the new position see excessive turnover? What do your trusted colleagues, family and friends think about the opportunity? If you take the time to examine all the different dynamics of why you're being promoted, you might find some red flags that cause you to think twice.

Getting promoted is exciting, there's no doubt about it. It's a sign that your hard work has paid off and managers feel like you have the skills to take on more responsibility. Not to mention you're going to be compensated accordingly. While it all seems wonderful in the short-term, it's essential that you consider every implication taking a new job will have before you make a commitment. If you take the time to look at the entire picture as objectively as possible, you'll be in a better place to make a decision that is best for you and everyone involved.

If you do decide the promotion is not right for you, let your manager know you really appreciate being offered the new position and explain what you like about the opportunity, and what your concerns are. This discussion will let your manager know you've seriously considered the opportunity and may help determine a training plan moving forward.

---

## **How to Be Taken More Seriously**

# at Work



Maybe you're known as the life of the party, the fun guy or just someone that anyone can come to for some needed levity in the office. You're loved by your colleagues for this reason, but something seems to be lacking. You show up early, do more than is expected and stay late. While you're happy to be the lively one at work, you wish your professional efforts received the recognition they deserve. The good news is that you can still let your shining personality make the office fun for everyone AND be recognized for your merits as a valuable employee.

## Be Assertive

Maybe you're the one that your colleagues come to for advice or help in difficult situations. You always find yourself giving and expect nothing in return. This is a wonderful quality to have but if you're sick of being a pushover, don't be afraid to show your confidence. Doing so doesn't mean being the cocky person that toots their own horn, but giving yourself and your team credit and confidently displaying your expertise is contagious. When you adopt this attitude you'll garner the respect of everyone around you and you'll start to feel valued and appreciated.

## Confide in a Mentor

If you find yourself struggling to ask others for help, you're not alone. If you want to grow, you're going to need help along the way. Coming to this realization and seeking out a mentor that genuinely has your best interests in mind is invaluable. If you make the effort to let someone experienced know that you're passionate about learning more and becoming more skilled in your job, it can help catapult

your career and you'll quickly set yourself apart from other colleagues in your same position.

## **Be Prepared**

There's nothing that lets others know that you care about your work like being prepared ahead of time. Whether it's getting a presentation done in advance or staying an extra hour late to finish up an important project, the smallest of extra efforts and preparedness don't go unnoticed. If you consistently show that you're not just on top of things, but ahead of the game, everyone around you will take notice and your level of respect will go up immediately.

## **Set Professional Boundaries**

While you take pride in the fact that you can be there for anyone at any time, setting boundaries is crucial to your health and that of those around you. It's all too easy for professional and personal lines to become blurred when you're too accessible. Having an open-door policy is great for everyone in your organization but should you find yourself participating in someone's personal affairs, do the professional thing and recommend help outside of the workplace.

## **Look the Part**

As much as we all would like to admit that appearances don't matter at work, they do. There is something to be said for the way you dress as dictated by the environment in which you work. Whether it's a suit and tie or jeans and button-down shirt, people notice the way you dress. Your attire alone isn't going to win you that coveted promotion but making sure your clothes are clean and appropriate for your work environment goes a long way toward earning the respect of those around you.

## **Look for Opportunities to Help**

There is nothing better in a manager's eyes than someone that offers to help. Whenever you have the chance, offer to lend a hand with a difficult project or assignment. Doing so shows not only your willingness to go the extra mile, but

sets you apart as a collaborative leader that is willing to take on challenges to learn more, and are capable of doing more. By performing tasks that don't necessarily benefit you directly, you make it known to everyone around you that you're reliable and care about the greater good of the team or organization.

## **Follow Up**

It's one thing to complete a task on time and to the best of your ability. Following up is an entirely different story. If you complete a project you have only satisfied the initial needs. Making it habit to check in every so often to ensure that all needs are met doesn't go unnoticed and can win you long-term relationships that prove invaluable down the road. If you find yourself scattered, give yourself email reminders or alerts so that you can precisely time all follow up communication.

## **Remember Names**

Think about the times you walk into places where you are a repeat customer. Having someone remember you by name sets your experience off on the right foot. Though it's a difficult task, especially if you have a large number of people or vendors you work with, recognizing people's names is paramount. Even though much communication takes place electronically, there is no substitute for the personal touch of addressing someone by name.

Being taken seriously at work is something we all crave. You want your contributions to be noticed and valued. If you find yourself in a position where you feel that your diligence isn't being praised, take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Chances are that if you implement a few new practices and adjust your attitude accordingly, you'll find yourself on the fast track to more success before you know it.

---



# The Do's and Don'ts of E-mail Etiquette



If you're like most people, email plays a major role in your life. Maybe it's the first thing you look at when you wake up in the morning and the last thing you check before you go to bed. While personal emails between you and your buddies might not require much decorum, such is not the case when communicating electronically with colleagues, clients or anyone work-related. Even though you may not like it, how and when you communicate via email for professional purposes can have a tremendous and lasting effect on your reputation. To ensure you send emails that are not only professional, but set you apart from your colleagues, we've compiled our best list of Do's and Don'ts below.

## Introduction

If you're emailing someone for the first time, it's imperative to get your introduction right as it can make or break the entire conversation. Using a proper salutation such as "Good Morning" or even "Hello" is better than "Hey" or "Hi". From here, get right to the point of who you are and why you're reaching out. The tone of introductory emails should always be upbeat and courteous while remaining highly professional.

## Subject Line

You probably receive dozens of emails every day. Chances are you probably skip over the ones that aren't flagged as important or whose subject lines don't catch your eye. The same goes for emails you send as well. Using subject lines like

“FYI,” “Circling Back,” and “Hi” ensures that your emails won’t be read either. Your subject line should be concise and effectively communicate what your email is about. Subject lines like “Board Meeting Minutes” and “Time Off Request” directly communicate to the recipient what your message is about and are more likely to be read.

## **Speaking of Concise**

Professional emails aren’t for sharing your thoughts and feelings in most cases. Instead, they are intended to communicate necessary information in an orderly, easy-to-read fashion. If you have several items to discuss in your note, use headings, short sentences and bullet points. Avoid using too many adjectives and excessive flowery language. Remember, your message is one of many that is going to be read so get to the point.

## **Don’t Hit Reply-All**

Sometimes you’ll get emails from C-Suite Executives or Administrative Assistants addressed to 10 or people asking for your availability to volunteer for a community event or something similar. When responding, make sure you reply ONLY to the original sender. The entire thread doesn’t need to know that you’re committed to your kids’ soccer game and can’t make it.

## **Why Are You Forwarding This to Me?**

The forward option in email is a great way to share ideas and gather input quickly. Whether it’s something you’re passing along to another department, HR or a colleague, take the time to write a sentence or two explaining the reason you’re forwarding the message. Failing to take this simple step will leave your recipient either clueless or guessing at the intent of your forward.

## **The Power of One**

As we’ve discussed, email is a form of communication that is meant to exchange information quickly and efficiently. While being concise is paramount, limiting the subjects you cover to one per message avoids confusion and makes organization

easier for everyone involved. If you find yourself sending a message with multiple topics, make them brief and list them out in bullet point fashion.

## **Emojis**

When you're sending a professional e-mail, you're not telling your boo how much you miss them. At all costs, avoid using emojis. Though you might think you're being funny or playful, all you're really doing is causing people to question your competency.

## **Why are You Sending Me This?**

Make sure that the intended recipients are in the right fields before you hit send. There are plenty of stories of people that sent an email to the wrong person and the consequences can be devastating. Even if you're sure your message is bullet-proof, take the necessary time to give it a second look.

## **Grammar Police**

While you might not care if someone uses "u" instead "you," others might. And even if they don't, you're always better off being safe than sorry on this one. Taking the time to use the right "there" or "their," commas and semicolons goes a long way in avoiding confusion and conveys intelligence to your reader. Though the occasional grammar mistake is forgivable, repeated or blatant offenses can damage your credibility.

## **All Caps**

Writing in ALL CAPS is something you should never do in an email. To your reader, it seems like you're shouting. Can you imagine reading a line in an email that says "NEVER BE LATE AGAIN"? Using all caps communicates unrest and is seen as confrontational. If you need to make a point, do it professionally and avoid language that incites anger or fear.

# Read Receipts

When you send important emails, you want to make sure they are read. Utilizing the read receipt option lets you know that your message has not only been seen, but read as well. This eliminates any potential breakdown in communication.

## Before You Hit Send...

Once you hit send whatever you've typed is gone forever. There are no do-overs. Before you hit send, take the time to thoroughly read what you've written to make sure that you are communicating the right message. Did you answer all the questions the original sender asked you? Were your directions clear?

Whether you hate e-mail or love it, it's not going away anytime soon. Being unprofessional or lazy in your electronic communication can prove costly. On the other hand, taking time to make sure your messages are professionally written, intended for the right recipient and communicate necessary information in a concise manner will set you apart from those that fail to make the effort.

---

# 5 Signs that It Is Time to Fire an Employee



Hiring is challenging but firing can be even harder. Your employee's job could be

the only income for the employee's family. Make sure to have a good reason for letting your employee go.

This article outlines signs to fire an employee and how to properly conduct the termination. If you find yourself in a position where you need to let an employee go, I can help find you high-quality and productive candidates after the termination occurs.

## **Reasons to Fire an Employee**

### **Bad Behavior is Not Corrected**

Every employee has occasional bad behavior. This could be checking Facebook or excessive bathroom or smoking breaks. As a business owner, small infractions can be overlooked. But what happens when small infractions become big problems or a consistent behavior?

#### Examples of Bad Behavior at Work

- Sleeping on the Job
- Consistently Late
- Gossiping
- Lied to the Boss
- Socialize Excessively
- Left Early without Permission

You should not be paying employees to gossip, socialize, or sleep. If they are a negative influence to other team members and have decreased productivity, it may be time to fire your employee before this behavior has an impact on other employees.

### **They Have a Bad Attitude**

Everyone has bad days. In this situation, a bad attitude can be excused. However, if your employee's negative attitude is frequent and impacting the team, it may be time to let the employee go.

Speak to the employee about their bad attitude first. Maybe they have too much

responsibility, problems at home, or a co-worker is spreading rumors. Try to solve the issue before firing your employee.

### **They Violate Policies**

Policy violations should not be tolerated. To ensure that your employees understand the policies, have them sign an official Policies document upon being hired.

Depending on the severity, policy violations are often a “three strikes and you are out” clause. Have the employee read and sign the policy document if they violate the conditions. This ensures that your company has thorough paperwork if you need to terminate your employee.

### **You Receive Customer or Client Complaints**

Happy customers and clients keep your company afloat, even if your employee’s interactions are only with internal customers in other departments. If your employee is causing complaints then you evaluate their position.

The first step is to address the complaints. The solution could be as simple as further training in customer service or conflict resolution. However, if your employee does not enjoy their job or has a bad attitude, you may want to reassign them or let them go. A reputation in bad customer service can be extremely harmful to your reputation or cause problems when working with other departments.

### **Job Quality or Quantity is Lacking**

If your employee is making a lot of mistakes or is consistently missing deadlines, it could be putting a strain on your other employees. If that is the case it may be time to let the offending employee go to allow you to upgrade to a more productive employee. This may sound a little heartless, but if others in the department are left to pick up the slack or continually correct their errors, you may end up losing your better performers out of frustration and only making matters worse.

If it is time to let your employee go, it is important to proceed legally and courteously. Job loss is usually life changing. CNN Business explains five steps to professionally fire your employee:

1. Don't Surprise Them - Hold performance reviews so your employees know where they can improve.
2. Do It Face-To-Face -The phone, email, and twitter are not appropriate platforms to fire an employee.
3. Be Clear and Concise - Know exactly what you are going to say before you fire your employee and have the proper documentation.
4. Be Prepared for Emotions, but Keep Yours in Check - Show empathy and avoid using harsh words.
5. Give Them a Soft Landing - Have a prepared severance package, or offer consulting work, to allow them time to find a new job.