

New Year, New Work Habits: Tips for Being More Effective on the Job in 2010

By Robert Half/Accountemps

Among your career-related New Year's resolutions, why not consider enhancing your efficiency on the job? If your firm is like many others that are working with reduced staff, you can stand out in the eyes of your managers by maximizing the quality and quantity of your contributions. Start 2010 off right by adopting the smart work habits below.

Create a Plan of Attack

Take the time to develop a project strategy before diving headfirst into an assignment of any size. By thinking tactically and constructing a road map at the outset, you can identify potential hurdles before they have the chance to slow you down. Moreover, a well-thought-out plan will help you stay clear-headed and focused throughout the duration of a project — whether it takes four hours or four months.

Break Down Big Assignments

Question: How do you eat an elephant?

Answer: One bite at a time.

When you're facing a particularly large and complicated project, remember the maxim above. Then break the intimidating assignment into smaller, more manageable tasks. Incremental successes will keep you motivated. You'll feel a sense of accomplishment each time you reach a milestone and move closer to reaching your ultimate objective.

Minimize Distractions

In general, it's important to be accessible to your colleagues. But when you are facing a tight deadline or working on a crucial assignment, curtail interruptions by closing your door or hanging a "Do Not Disturb" sign in your work area.

It's also OK to take technology timeouts. Trying to keep up with an ever-expanding email inbox steals hours from your day. Don't feel compelled to respond to every message immediately. Replying only to top-priority emails will save time and prevent you from losing momentum.

Be Flexible

No matter how organized or systematic you are, keep in mind that some things are beyond your control. That's why adaptability is so essential in today's workplace. If priorities change and your manager needs you to move quickly from one project to another, roll with the punches and embrace the new challenge. Remember: If you're always flexible, you'll never get bent out of shape.

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