



Get recognised, rewarded, and get a raise at work

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There is a lot written about what you need to do to be a standout employee. That is, one that stands out in a good way. And most people want that because your salary, bonuses, and promotions to a large extent depend on how good you are at your job. The list of what to do includes: always being punctual; meeting deadlines; being a team player and supportive of others; being flexible and adaptable; taking responsibility; being reliable; and following through on what you say you will do. And these are all good things you want to do, because if you don't, you will stand out in a bad way. However, if you really want to get noticed, if you really want to get promoted, if you really want a salary raise, then you must do at least this and more.

What you need to do if you really want to be a significant employee in your organisation, is you need to contribute directly to the strategic objectives of the company. This is what matters most to the leaders in the organisation. This is what gets measured, spoken about, and gets reported on. So, irrespective of the job you are in, you want to get an idea of what, for the current year, are the strategic objectives of the business. And if you want to be rated as a top employee, you need to be seen to be contributing to them.

In most for-profit companies the strategic objectives include: increasing profit; reducing costs; obtaining more customers; retaining existing customers; developing new and innovative products that consumers will want; and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the business. In a non-profit it is likely that your objectives revolve a lot around delivering services, and also managing costs and being efficient with resources. In the public service, they should be similar to a non-profit. Whatever company you are working in, go and find out what the strategic objectives are for the company. It would be good if they were communicated to all employees in a way that

everyone can understand, but sometimes they are not. There is, however, nothing stopping you from asking your direct line manager what the company objectives or goals are for the year.

And then you need to think like a business owner. To be that really great employee, you need to act as if this was your business and you had a stake in how well it was doing. Thinking, “I just need to do my job”, or even thinking, “I just need to do my job well”, is not going to get you to the top. You must add real value to your employer. In order to do that you must know what matters to the employer (the strategic objectives for the year) and you must help them achieve those.

Now you might be thinking to yourself, how on earth do I do that? I am just an admin person. Or I am just a customer service consultant answering the telephones. Actually, you are not just that. If you work in the private sector, your job is important. Nobody who is focused on profit is going to create a job and pay a salary for a job if it is not necessary. You have a job because the company needs someone doing what you do. The truth is that everyone can add value to a company beyond just doing their job. Sometimes adding value may mean doing your job extra well, for example providing an exceptional experience for the customer. Sometimes, your job may allow you to innovate and so you can put in place new technology or new systems that streamline processes and allow for faster output of products or services. Sometimes you may be a salesperson and be directly responsible for bringing in new business and so contributing to revenue.

Here are some steps to follow to be recognised for your positive contribution to the company:

1. Make sure you are doing your job. No one will be pleased with you if you fail to do that. So, make sure you at least do what is expected of you.
2. Find out what the strategic objectives of the company are. What is your employer focused on for the year? If you can, get them in a document.
3. Then think about which objectives you could add to.
 - a. Can you add to the revenue? Are there new customers you could bring on board. Even if you are not in sales, people know people. Perhaps you know someone who could benefit from the products and services of the company you work for.
 - b. Can you help to retain customers? Keeping a customer, especially one who is thinking of leaving, helps the business. You keep customers by showing great service and demonstrating to them that you care about their needs. Perhaps you are someone who is really good at turning around a situation with an unhappy customer and turning them into a

customer for life. Can you perhaps step in when you see that a customer is not happy and thinking about leaving.

- c. Can you save costs, or at least control your expenditure? Don't waste money. Don't purchase the most expensive item. Look after your work items.
- d. Can you deliver your job treating everyone to a smile? Respect is a big thing for everyone. It is not always easy for us to be in a good mood. The experience a customer, a colleague, a supplier has with you is going to determine how much they engage with you and how long they want to stay involved with your company.
- e. Can you find a more efficient way to do a task that perhaps results in fewer errors or less time? When you are doing your work, and if you often do the same things over and over again, it becomes clear when there is a better way to do it. So, think about your work as you do it, and think if there is a better way to do it. Especially one that improves efficiency.

And then, once you are doing this, don't assume people will know how you are proactively and deliberately working to add value. Most people are quite absorbed in their own work and their own world. You need to tell people what you are doing. Tell your direct line manager, and even mention it to other people in the company. Mention it to senior people if you can, because these are the people you want to know that you are the one going that extra mile. You are the one acting as if this was your own company and helping them realise their objectives for the year and into the future. When core senior people in the company know this, you will be seen a significant contributor to the business with great potential for the future.