

10 Ways to Meet and Exceed Your Boss's Expectations

Whether you are a recent hire or a tenured employee, it's important to continue to strive for success in the workplace. Distinguishing yourself as a valuable employee can not only assist in providing job security, but also help you take the next step in your career.

In honor of National Boss Day, Kforce Vice President of Finance, Sara Nichols, provides ten ways you can meet and exceed your boss's expectations and stand out as an exceptional employee.

1. Manage expectations

While it is important to focus on ways to meet and exceed your boss's expectations, first and foremost, your boss will likely want you to effectively manage his or her expectations.

Nichols suggests taking the time to understand what your boss expects when it comes to project deadlines and deliverables. By communicating frequently with your boss about his or her expectations around the nature and timing of deliverables, the likelihood of exceeding those expectations can dramatically increase.

2. Communicate

Whether it's verbal or written, communicating ideas, deadlines and other messages to your boss efficiently is a must. Effective communication skills can differentiate you as a professional and help your boss gain confidence in your ability to take on new roles and responsibilities.

When communicating with your boss, both online and in-person, Nichols says it is important to craft well-thought out, concise messages. When crafting your communication, think about the perception you are trying to create and choose your tone and words accordingly.

3. Ask questions

In addition to effective communication, it is also important to know when to ask questions. Nichols suggests asking your boss, and even other team members, about additional details regarding project requirements or possible strategies to implement on a new assignment. Just remember to listen to the feedback provided.

"If your boss notices that you are asking thoughtful questions, they are likely to see you as a crucial contributor to the team who can add value," says Nichols.

4. Display a positive attitude

It's expected that some days at work can be challenging or stressful when meeting deadlines or working on a budget. However, Nichols says a positive attitude is a 'must-have' when it comes to building a successful team and it is important to stay optimistic and encouraging in even the most difficult circumstances.

"From the moment I meet someone, I take notice of their attitude," says Nichols. "A positive attitude is a key quality that can demonstrate strength of character and can win the respect of your co-workers by making you 'easy to do business with'."

5. Be a team player

Just as it is important to display a positive attitude, most employers appreciate those professionals who are good listeners that work well with others and contribute to the team effort.

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Page 2 of 2

"All employees should be working towards the same goal, whether that means generating revenue or promoting a positive image of the company," says Nichols. "Those employees who align their own goals to the team's goals are likely to be noticed by management."

6. Become self-motivated

With little direction, self-motivated employees are the go-getters that take the lead on assignments or research details before important meetings. Nichols says these self-starters can help their bosses save time and allow them to focus on other areas.

"Employees that routinely rise to new challenges and demonstrate a high degree of self-motivation, tend to get recognized when the opportunity for advancement is presented," says Nichols.

7. Keep your skills up-to-date

As technology evolves, so must professionals. Whether it is the latest version of software or regulatory changes, Nichols says most bosses will expect their employees to keep their professional skills up-to-date.

"Staying abreast of the latest developments in your industry can show continuous improvement and help you become a more efficient and effective employee," says Nichols.

8. Be flexible

In addition to changes in technology, changes to your team, goals and project requirements are inevitable. While it may be a challenge for some, Nichols says remaining flexible and adapting to these changes can be a crucial skill. Most importantly, she reminds employees to continue to display a positive attitude when changes occur in the workplace.

9. Pay attention to detail

When it comes to overseeing multiple projects, Nichols admits all bosses may not have the time to manage all the specifics. Employees that can pay attention to details and raise concerns may not only have the opportunity to earn the trust of their boss, but be recognized for their efforts in spotting out errors and correcting any inaccuracies.

10. Differentiate yourself

Last but not least, identify what differentiates you professionally from the rest and make it a characteristic that your boss can depend on. Making small efforts such as routinely showing up to work early each day or consistently finding new, more efficient ways to accomplish everyday tasks can help you position yourself as a valuable resource to your boss and team.

Nichols says, "While many professionals may have the qualifications to do the job, differentiating yourself and what unique elements you can bring to the table will set you apart."

Implement the ten strategies above, and you too can stand out as a star employee.

"You want to demonstrate to your boss that you can continue to add value to the team and its goals," says Nichols. "Ask yourself each day 'how can I make my boss's job easier?' and you can begin to meet and exceed their expectations."

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