

Prove You're Worth Your Paycheck

Your paycheck represents payment for your time and abilities on the job. Your value to an employer grows, and your paycheck increases, when you demonstrate outstanding people skills, and other essential soft skills, in every work situation.

With a supervisor's laser-focus on essential skills, factors such as productivity, professional accomplishments, and certifications may not receive the attention you think they should during your annual employee evaluation. Combine soft skills with excellent technical skills, and you will see faster promotions and paycheck increases.

The American Management Association suggests ways to show your value at work.



- 1. Be able to interact with people.** If you lack the ability to solve problems with and through coworkers and your boss, you don't bring much value to a company. Look at your personality honestly. If you have a tendency to be defensive or negative, are quick to anger, or are shy and lack confidence, ask for help from a counselor or someone you trust.
- 2. Learn the difference between e-communication and real communication.** You build relationships by dealing with people face-to-face. In today's electronic environment, this may mean communicating by FaceTime, GoToMeeting, Skype, or some other service. Avoid relying only on email, as messages can be misunderstood or misinterpreted because of lack of body language.
- 3. Add sales to your skill set.** Whether you're pitching a new idea to your supervisor, convincing a customer to trust your recommendation, or persuading a team member of the value of your suggestion, being able to influence others is powerful. Train yourself to promote your ideas with enthusiasm, so you will be able to convert people to your way of thinking.
- 4. Be quiet and listen.** As difficult as it may be, admit that you may not know as much as you think. If you don't know something you need to know, seek out a person with experience who does. Then listen to what the person says. Don't discount their advice.

Action: Start to build your sales skills by thinking of an idea to sell to your instructor—an idea that you believe will be beneficial to the entire class. Practice your pitch with a classmate until you feel comfortable selling your idea.

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Note to Instructors: If class time allows, let students present their ideas to you in front of the class. In addition to your own evaluation of the sales approach, let classmates evaluate the effectiveness of each sales presentation. The Workplace Effectiveness lessons from *Job Ready Career Skills* provide in-depth attention to characteristics that improve employee value.

Job Ready Career Skills Workplace Effectiveness Lessons

Customer Service

Gaining Customer Trust
Interacting with Customers
Learning What Customers Want
Giving Customers What They Want
Keeping Customers Coming Back
Seeing the Customer's Point
Selling Yourself and the Company
Handling Customer Complaints

Problem Solving

Becoming a Problem Solver
Identifying a Problem
Becoming a Critical Thinker
Thinking Creatively
Effective Risk Taking
Holding Yourself Accountable
Managing Change
Removing Barriers to Change

Teamwork

Teamwork Skills
Reasons Companies Use Teams
Decisions Teams Make
Team Responsibilities
Problems That Affect Teams
Building Team Communication
Expressing Yourself on a Team
Giving Constructive Criticism