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An Informational Bulletin Published by the Personnel Commission

Building an Excellent Professional Reputation

One key element of long-term success on the job is a strong professional reputation. People who are well-regarded by their coworkers and supervisors for their competence, reliability, and integrity are rewarded with helping hands, recognition, career growth opportunities, and promotions.



We create reputations from the moment we say hello, and those reputations evolve and follow us far into the future. Much like a garden, a great reputation takes time and effort to cultivate—And like a garden, a reputation left on its own can grow in unexpected directions. This is why it is important to proactively engage in reputation-building, to turn it into a part of everyday work life and integrate it into an overall career plan.

There are several pillars that make up an excellent professional reputation:

- integrity and honesty
- expertise
- dedication to the community
- a passion for quality

To build these pillars, experts offer the following advice:

Be a Beacon of Consistency. Dependability and trustworthiness are the daily bread of professional life. By following the age-old advice of “do what you say you will do, when you say you will do it,” you send a message to coworkers that the high-quality work you’ve done in the past is likely to continue long into the future. As often as possible, aim to under-promise and over-deliver, so that even major delays can result in something timely and polished.

Never Stop Learning. The one thing better than being seen as an expert is knowing without a doubt that you are one. Even in fields that are not heavily affected by changing technology, it never hurts to refresh one’s working knowledge with a workshop or seminar, or to expand one’s knowledge into people skills and management.

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Develop Partnerships. Research has shown that in the medical field, even the greatest surgeons perform better at hospitals where they know the staff very well. The same is true of other workplaces. A great professional network can help us achieve work goals that would otherwise be impossible. Offer help and receive help with grace and gratitude, and those avenues will only get easier to draw upon as a source of strength, both for you and for others.

Own Every Action. Whether dealing with success or a setback, clarity and forthrightness are the best policy. Acknowledging issues and solving them in a proper manner, when they happen on an occasional basis, is as much a net positive for reputation as advertising successes. Rather than an impossible image of the perfect worker, the overall image is of a person with integrity, who always strives for improvement.

Above all, patience is key. A professional reputation is the work of years, and must be practiced in small ways every day to bear fruit. But with time and diligence, you can create a reputation that is valued by networks of other professionals, backed by the confidence of your supervisor, and which can provide strength and confidence under any circumstance.

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