

# The Ten Qualities Of Outstanding Employees



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Back in the day it was easy to be a great employee. You only had to show up at work on time, work hard all day, be nice to everyone and avoid breaking the rules.

The working world has changed dramatically since then. Now we have to bend and flex at work to do our jobs. We have to keep lots of different people happy. We have to juggle priorities, and change our methods and approaches on a dime.

We have to know a lot about the organizations we work for -- not to mention our industries and ourselves. We have to keep an eye on the world outside our cubicle walls and keep asking ourselves the question "What do I want from my career?"

Years ago, great employees were dutiful, loyal and easy to please. They worked hard without complaining — that was one of their principal virtues. Unwavering loyalty is not the hallmark of a great employee anymore. That is a characteristic of a fearful drone whose greatest fear is that they might displease their boss.

There are managers who only want fearful drones working for them — but you cannot afford to spend your career that way!

These days, great employees are proactive. They think for themselves. They don't just work hard without making a fuss. They suggest ways to make the work faster and easier. They have ideas and share them.

Here are ten qualities outstanding employees possess. If your manager doesn't value these qualities, maybe they are not the right manager for you any more — if they ever were.

## Ten Qualities Of Outstanding Employees

1. Outstanding employees know more than just the procedures their job requires. They know the reason their job exists, and that knowledge lets them suggest tweaks and innovations that let them work more effectively.

2. Outstanding employees notice what is going on around them at work, and they integrate their constant learning into the way they do their jobs.
3. Outstanding employees form great relationships with people inside and outside the company. They know which teams they are a member of and they work to strengthen their team relationships so that things don't get tense or stressful in a clinch.
4. Great employees look ahead and anticipate problems that might emerge on the job. They bring up potential problems early and push to get those problems addressed before they can do harm.
5. Terrific employees tell the truth about sticky topics like workload, work/life balance, difficult customers (or vendors, fellow employees or managers) and ineffective procedures. They find their voice and use it even when no one else dares to.
6. Awesome employees have a personal career plan or direction in mind. They don't assume that their employer will manage their career for them. They manage their own careers!
7. Great employees address conflict rather than avoiding it. When they step into a conflict resolution process, they maintain respect for everyone in the mix. They don't place blame on other people, and they don't apologize just to keep the peace.
8. Top-notch employees ask for help when they need it.
9. Outstanding employees don't rest on their educational credentials, job title or honors bestowed on them. They are open to new ideas no matter who suggests them. They share their own thoughts, not the conventional wisdom they've been taught by other people. They don't brag about themselves — that is a sign of fear!
10. Finally, excellent employees are coaches and mentors to people around them. They often hear "You are so generous to share your expertise!" They don't take the view that knowledge is power. They know that knowledge is only power when it is shared with others.

You might be an excellent employee without being recognized for it — that happens to a lot of people.

What does it mean? It means that you are casting your pearls before swine —and that will not help you or the swine who cannot appreciate the gifts you bring.

If you are an outstanding employee stuck in an undeserving organization, your path is clear — it leads up and out of there, and on to your brilliant future!

*Liz Ryan is CEO/founder of Human Workplace and author of [Reinvention Roadmap](#).*