

TEN (MAKE THAT 15) COMMANDMENTS OF KEEPING YOUR JOB

(This first appeared in *Texas Business Today*, 2nd/3rd Quarters 1998 issue. Since then, it has appeared on a lot of company bulletin boards and employee break room walls. The last five are new for 2010.)

1. Be on time, whether it is with showing up for work, returning from breaks, going to meetings, or turning in assignments.
2. Call in if you know you will be tardy or absent. Most companies treat absences or tardiness without notice much more seriously than simple absence or tardiness.
3. Try your best; always finish an assignment, no matter how much you would rather be doing something else. It is always good to have something to show for the time you have spent.
4. Anticipate problems and needs of management - your bosses will be grateful, even if they do not show it.
5. Show a positive attitude - no one wants to be around someone who is a "downer".
6. Avoid backstabbing, office gossip, and spreading rumors - remember, what goes around comes around - joining in the office gossip may seem like the easy thing to do, but almost everyone has much more respect - and *trust* - for people who do not spread stories around.
7. Follow the rules. The rules are there to give the greatest number of people the best chance of working together well and getting the job done.
8. Look for opportunities to serve customers and help coworkers. Those who would be leaders must learn how to serve.
9. Avoid the impulse to criticize your boss or the company. It is easy to find things wrong with others - it is much harder, but more rewarding, to find constructive ways to deal with problems. Employees who are known for their good attitude and helpful suggestions are the ones most often remembered at performance evaluation and raise review time.
10. Volunteer for training and new assignments. Take a close look at people in your organization who are "moving up" - chances are, they are the ones who have shown themselves in the past to be willing to do undesirable assignments or take on new duties.

11. Avoid the temptation to criticize your company, coworkers, or customers on the Internet. Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and blogs offer many opportunities to spout off—remember that anyone in the world can find what you put online and that employers can take action against any employee whose online actions hurt the company or its business in some way.
12. Be a good team member. Constantly focusing on what makes you different from others, instead of how you fit into the company team, makes you look like someone who puts themselves first, instead of the customer, the team, or the company.
13. Try to avoid ever saying "that's not my job". Many, if not most, managers earned their positions by doing work turned down by coworkers who were in the habit of saying that, and they appreciate employees who help get the job done, whatever it is.
14. Show pride in yourself and respect toward others. Never let yourself be heard uttering minority-related slurs or other derogatory terms in reference to yourself or to others. Use of such terms perpetuates undesirable stereotypes and inevitably disturbs others. It also tends to make others doubt your maturity and competence. The best way to get respect is to show respect toward yourself and others.
15. Distinguish yourself. Pick out one or more things in your job to do better than anyone else. Become known as the "go-to" person for such things. That will help managers remember you favorably at times when you really need to be remembered.