

Ten old-school tips for keeping a job, even in hard times

by Louise Armstrong

When I started my very first job more than 20 years ago, my father gave me one piece of advice – be the first one in the office in the morning and the last one to leave at night. Although he had spent most of his life working in factories, he knew this to be true and in all of my jobs since then, including managing my own business, I've never gone wrong with this mantra.

In addition, here are ten more tips for impressing your bosses:

- 1. Listen more than you talk** – You may know some stuff but you don't know everything. If you're starting out in your career, you have a lot to learn from others who have been doing it longer. If you don't understand a particular decision or strategy, ask for the rationale so you can learn.
- 2. Don't worry about your co-workers** – Unless they are jeopardizing a project, don't spend a lot of time complaining about your co-workers. You may think you work harder than they do but you don't know if they take work home at night or come in on the weekend.
- 3. Learn how to manage your time** – Most offices open at a set time and everyone should be there by then with no excuses. If you find it hard to arrive at the office on time, you will miss out on opportunities and it is unlikely that you will be promoted. Similarly, arrive at meetings on time and ready to contribute.
- 4. Don't be afraid to ask for a raise** – but be prepared to explain what you have done to deserve it in documented detail.
- 5. Don't forget where you came from** – Promotions usually mean more work, not less. Yes, you can now delegate tasks to more junior employees but you are still responsible for the final product.
- 6. Become an expert** – although you should have a working knowledge of all the facets of your business, become the 'go-to' person on at least one thing. Devote yourself to becoming the most knowledgeable person in the office in this area and you will always be in demand.
- 7. Get organized** – Keep your office space neat and tidy. If your boss asks you for something, she will not be impressed by watching you rifle through unruly stacks of paper.
- 8. Be informed** – Read at least one source of news before you arrive at the office but preferably more. You should never find out important news from a client.
- 9. You are not above anything** – No matter what your qualifications, experience or intelligence, you are there to simplify the lives of your managers. Perform every task with enthusiasm and impeccability.
- 10. Don't be a troublemaker** – Nothing is more toxic to a workplace than a person who is trying to stir up dissent. If you are truly unhappy, take your case to your manager or find another environment that better suits your needs.