

Secrets to Building Your Confidence at Work

Training and talent can help you do your job well and keep you moving forward in your career. But your performance can take a nosedive when your self-confidence is on the skids.

Do your homework

Learn as much as you can about the subject at hand—whether you're giving a speech, asking for a promotion or making a sales call. You can't be overprepared when your performance is on the line.

Analyze your mistakes

Knowing what went wrong and what you can do to keep from making the same mistake again can help you turn a negative situation into one that boosts your confidence in your problem-solving abilities.

Don't take the easy way out

One reward of taking risks is an increased potential for higher achievement. Ask for added responsibility when given a choice between maintaining the status quo or doing something more.

Always act confident

Do your best to dismiss your fears if you're worried a speech, meeting or sales presentation will bomb. Force yourself to smile and shake hands firmly. Walk with your head up and your shoulders back.

Prioritize your tasks each day

Daily to-do lists are a must, but to really take control of your day, you should complete tasks in order of priority. Completing one high-priority assignment will boost your confidence more than doing four or five low-priority ones.

Make change a positive

Welcoming instead of fearing change makes it easier to identify the advantages and opportunities presented by new responsibilities and directions.

Keep a list of accomplishments

Refer to the list when your confidence needs a lift. Items to include: a major project you completed on time and under budget, a successful meeting you conducted, a reorganization of your filing system or mastery of a new computer program.



Post your goals where you can see them

Keeping them in front of you increases your chances of internalizing and achieving them. Setting goals and meeting them creates a pattern of success you can build on.

Stay calm when speaking with others

Rehearse difficult negotiations ahead of time. Excuse yourself if you are unable to control your emotions during a discussion.

Be responsible for your actions

Making yourself accountable for your failures also makes you responsible for your successes. If you take responsibility for your actions, you will believe that your hard work and intelligence-not luck-led to your achievements.

Avoid negative self-talk

Pay attention to your inner dialogue and replace negative comments with positive ones. For example: When your inner voice says, "I've got so much to do, I'll never get this assignment done on time," replace that thought with "I'm capable of focusing my energy on the task at hand and completing it in a timely fashion."

Don't be afraid of nervous energy

Butterflies in your stomach and a racing heart are your body's way of preparing for a challenge; they're confirmation that what you're about to do matters.

Compete against yourself

Assess your workplace performance for the past year. Then establish some specific goals for the year ahead. For example: increasing sales by 10 percent, getting to work on time every day, returning all your phone calls within 24 hours or completing routine administrative tasks 20% faster.

Keep your life in perspective

Maintaining a healthful balance between your personal and professional lives can help you weather a workplace crisis because you're less likely to define your self-worth by how well you do your job.

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