



How to be an MVP Employee

Whether you're on a summer job or working in your new career, discover what it takes to be an MVP employee!

There was a time when jobs for high school and college students were plentiful. Today? Not so much. Jobs for teens and young adults have become tougher to come by due to a sluggish economy and tighter employment regulations.

Regrettably, there is one other factor at work: employers are often preferring older applicants to younger ones. Why? Older candidates are generally considered more reliable with a stronger work ethic. Uch! With these barriers in mind, how will you set yourself apart, land the job, and flourish in your career? The answer is to first understand what it takes to be an MVP employee and then to deliver excellence in the eyes of your employer.

You've got what it takes. So, let's get started!

Demonstrating the Qualities Employers Value

Congratulations! You've just been promoted to store manager because of your exceptional performance and earned a 20% pay raise! You are now responsible for the results of your store, and your pay will be directly linked to its financial success. What qualities will you look for in the people you hire and promote? Remember now, your neck is on the line!

Compare your list with these qualities most desired by today's employers:

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Reliable | Adaptable | Team player |
| Enthusiastic | Positive | Excellent |
| Trustworthy | Globally Aware | Communicator |
| Innovative | Motivated | Leader |
| Courteous | Independent | Well mannered |
| Accurate | Dedicated | Good humored |

Did You Know?

In hard times, early colleges in the U.S. were forced to accept payments such as cotton, sheep, pewter, and food rather than hard currency.



Worthy qualities indeed! So, here's your challenge: How would you and the people who know you best rate you on these same qualities? What are your strongest areas and which need strengthening?

Bottom line: would you hire you? Now, be honest! In this highly mobile and professional economy, employers are also paying a premium for teamwork skills. You'll be collaborating with different people on different projects throughout your career,

demanding excellent interpersonal skills with people from all walks of life. **It won't always be easy—some are easier to get along with than others! Here are the hallmarks of a great team player:**

- ◆ Deliver excellent, reliable performance in your areas of responsibility.
- ◆ Demonstrate a positive attitude that inspires and encourages your teammates.
- ◆ Disagree in an agreeable manner and always listen actively and respectfully; focus on "what is right" rather than "who is right."
- ◆ Welcome constructive feedback.



Delivering Excellent Job Performance

Perhaps the most obvious hallmark of an MVP employee is **excellent job performance**. Translated, this means delivering top-quality results with a winning attitude and "can do" spirit. And, it means being easy to manage from the perspective of your supervisor who will evaluate your performance and determine your pay raise!

Here's a secret that will help you immensely. Most supervisors will describe the job responsibilities and share their evaluation form. Often, employees are rated on a scale such as one to five on a number of factors (five being "excellent" and one being "poor"). Interestingly, however, most supervisors will not define what constitutes "excellence!" **Therefore, if your goal is an excellent rating (and you're not a mind reader!), here's what you should do:**

- ◆ Ask your supervisor what he/she considers "excellent" in the different rating categories.
- ◆ Ask what would represent the most significant possible achievement you can make in the next performance review period.
- ◆ Deliver it with all of your might!

If your supervisor defines excellence and you deliver the goods, you will set yourself up for a great performance review! And, you'll also set yourself apart from the crowd.

Contributing to Your Employer's Success

Many employees are highly regarded by their companies, but few earn MVP status. With hard work and the right attitude and methods, you can be one! It involves going above and beyond your job requirements by contributing to the overall success of your employer. **Here are some real-life examples:**

- ◆ Improving company sales and customer satisfaction through excellent service.
- ◆ Offering innovative ideas.
- ◆ Identifying ways to improve efficiency and quality and lower costs.
- ◆ Leading important projects and initiatives.
- ◆ Developing and leading others.
- ◆ Solving challenging problems and being considered a "thought leader".

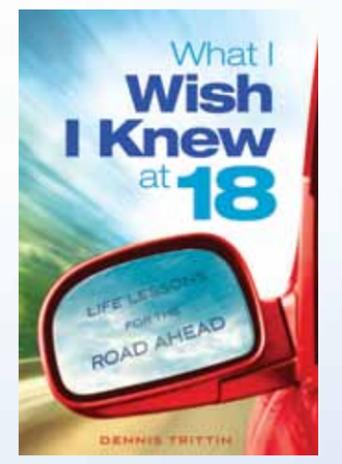
Study

Take a ten minute break after every hour of study. If possible, avoid long blocks of time for studying. Spread out several short study sessions during the day.



Being an MVP employee will serve you well throughout your career. First, you'll develop a reputation for excellence, maximizing your career potential and promotability. Second, you'll strengthen your earning potential as many positions have performance-based pay. Third, you'll gain invaluable references for positions you may seek in the future. Fourth, you'll be less likely to be laid off if your employer reduces its workforce (you'll be too valuable to lose!). **Finally, and most importantly, you'll receive intrinsic personal rewards for a job well done. It's yours for the taking!**

About the Author: Dennis Trittin is the author of What I Wish I Knew at 18 – Life Lessons for the Road Ahead. He holds a B.B.A. degree from the University of Wisconsin and an M.B.A. from the University of Washington. During his 27 year investment career he helped grow his firm's assets from \$1 billion to \$220 billion through his role in portfolio management. After a very successful career as a financial manager he gave up his big salary and prestigious job title to commit his life to helping young people reach their full potential. Check out his book — *What I Wish I Knew at 18 — Life Lessons for the Road Ahead* — you will find more insight on how to have your own successful future!



Parent Note: Look for his new book- *Parenting for the Launch: Raising Teens to Succeed in the Real World!*

"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford