
BLACK EMPHASIS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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How to Think Like a Successful Person

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Thinking like a successful person isn't as simple as thinking positive. Success is a complicated concept that means different things to different people.

Keep in mind the following wisdom from some of the world's most successful people as you pursue your success.

Please Yourself

"If success is not on your own terms, if it looks good to the world but does not feel good in your heart, it is not success at all." – Anna Quindlen

Instead of measuring yourself by someone else's definition of success, decide what success means to you. This task requires exploring what you value most in several areas of your life.

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Civil Rights Corner

By Attorneys at Passman & Kaplan, P.C.

What is reasonable accommodation? The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defines a qualified individual with a disability as one who can perform the essential functions of the position in question with or without "reasonable accommodation." Though many federal employees have heard the phrase "reasonable accommodation," its meaning is frequently misunderstood and litigated.

A federal employee is only entitled to a reasonable accommodation if he or she has a permanent impairment that is substantially limiting in one or more major life activities. Someone with a temporary impairment, or a moderately limiting impairment (as opposed to a substantially limiting one), may be accommodated by an agency – but the agency does not have a legal obligation to provide such an accommodation under the Rehabilitation Act.

On the other hand, an agency cannot escape the duty to accommodate merely by claiming that an impairment is "not an official disability." While an employee must notify an agency of his or her disability and request an accommodation, both parties have an affirmative duty to engage in an interactive dialogue regarding effective and appropriate reasonable accommodations. This means that once the agency is aware of an employee's substantially limiting impairment, the agency must make inquiries regarding the impairment and what accommodations, if any, are necessary to accommodate it.

A prudent employee will not wait for an agency inquiry to begin discussing a reasonable accommodation. He or she should submit to a supervisor, and/or appropriate personnel official, a letter from a doctor detailing the condition, how it limits the employee in the workplace, and actively suggesting possible accommodations. The agency then

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Have a Vision

“Champions aren’t made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: A desire, a dream, a vision.” – Muhammad Ali

Take your values and turn them into a vision for your life. Describe your vision in detail, then visualize what you want. Be flexible, and adjust your vision as you gain more knowledge and new insights.

Feel Deserving

“It is better to deserve honors and not have them, than to have them and not deserve them.” – Mark Twain

Successful people believe they deserve success because they’re giving something of value to others.

Be Willing to Work Hard

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.” – Colin Powell

Not all the paths of success are filled with fun and excitement. Many are filled with difficult or boring tasks. Be willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve success.

Expect Problems

“The person interested in success has to learn to view failure as a healthy, inevitable part of the process of getting to the top.” – Dr. Joyce Brothers

The road to success is filled with people who will try to block your path, promotions that won’t come through and downturns in the economy that will hurt your business.

Make a Commitment

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” – Woody Allen

Plan your success goals using a calendar. That will give structure to your days, weeks and months. Never give up until your vision becomes reality.

Create a Success Team

“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” – Vince Lombardi

People don’t succeed all by themselves. You’ll need the cooperation of your family, friends and coworkers. You may need to consult with experts, take training classes to learn new skills and enlist others to help.

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has an obligation to provide an accommodation or, at the very least, to continue the discussion regarding possible accommodations in good faith.

Employees must understand that by requesting accommodations, they put their medical condition at issue. The agency may therefore request that an individual submit medical documentation establishing whether the employee has a substantially limiting impairment that requires accommodation, and, if so, what type of accommodation. An employee is not entitled to determine what accommodation he or she will receive, though he or she must be involved in a discussion as to the appropriateness and effectiveness of proposed accommodations. Ultimately, the employer has the discretion to decide what form of accommodation to offer, based on: the essential functions of the particular job involved; the precise, job-related limitations imposed by an individual’s accommodations; consultation with the employee regarding potential accommodations and their effectiveness; and which accommodations will infringe the least upon the employee and the agency. What the agency may not do is ignore an employee’s request.

Types of reasonable accommodation frequently provided include: flexible work schedules, ergonomic or assistive work equipment, the opportunity to work from home, extra time for projects, removal from circumstances which adversely impact the disability, and, as a last resort, reassignment.

Often, an agency claims that offering a particular accommodation will impose an “undue hardship” upon it. If an accommodation imposes an undue hardship, then it is, by definition, not “reasonable.” However, an agency cannot merely assert such a hardship – it must prove that the accommodation would impose significant difficulty and/or expense, considered in light of: 1) the nature and cost of the accommodation; 2) the overall financial resources of the facility; 3) the number of employees at the facility; 4) the type of operations in which the facility is engaged; and 5) the impact of the accommodation upon the operations of the facility. The more unique a person’s position in a particular operation – the more an agency depend on an individual on a day to day basis – the greater the hardship if an accommodation impacts the employee’s work schedule or location. For example, a lone receptionist for an office may not be allowed to work from home or be given a consistently flexible work schedule as a reasonable accommodation because the office depends upon him/her to answer the phones and greet visitors. On the other hand, someone who works on projects independently will be in a better position to work from home and/or request flexible hours.

11th Annual Training Conference of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees

The National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (The Organization) will be hosting its 11th Annual Training Conference at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, December 1-5, 2003. This year's theme is "**Unlocking the Gateway to Natural Resources Through Awareness, Knowledge, Leadership, and Service.**"

The conference will offer an opportunity for learning and sharing ideas. Participants will select the concurrent sessions they wish to attend. Courses range from **Time Management (utilizing XP Outlook); Introduction to ArcGIS I; Civil Rights Program (Title VI and Title VII); Effective Listening; Conservation Nutrient Management Plans; Conservation Information Systems; Leadership Skills Forum; Management Tools for the Future; Mind Mapping: A Tool Critical Thinking; Outreach/Limited Resource/Beginning Farmers; Networking Skills; Protracts; RUSLE2; Employee Relocation; Retirement Systems(CSRS and FERS); Rhythm of Life; Skills Information Management System; Parliamentary Procedure; E-Directive System; Effective Presentations; E-Government; Ethics Pertaining to the Farm Bill; Financial Planning; Federal Grants, Contribution and Cooperative Agreements; Flexible Spending Account; Writing KSAs; Integrated Acquisition System** just to name a few.

The early bird registration of November 1, 2003 is fast approaching. You can find the registration form on the The Organization's home page at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/organ>.

Make a Difference

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

It's your responsibility to define what success means to you, and then to take the steps necessary to turn your vision into reality.

SMILE OF THE WEEK

A dad took his young son to his first football game. Afterward, he asked him how he liked it. "It was pretty good," said the son, "but I couldn't understand why they were killing each other for 25 cents." "What do you mean?" the dad asked. "Well, everyone kept yelling, 'Get the quarter back!'"

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