



Timely Information for Personal Success

Tips for Getting Ahead at Work

By Laszlo Bock

Work consumes at least one-third of your life, and half your waking hours. It can and ought to be more than a means to an end. If you're a chef, you're feeding people. If you're a substance abuse counselor, you're helping people overcome an addiction. Whatever you're doing, it matters to someone. And it should matter to you. The following are some additional tips for getting ahead at work.

❖ **Make sure employees are heard.**

Employees need a voice in how things are done. A suggestion box where ideas are actually read might feel revolutionary at a large firm where there is little individual contact. If it's a small company, regularly ask employees what they would change to make things better. Whether your corporate client's firm is well run, run poorly, or somewhere in between, employees need to behave as if it's their company.

❖ **Be frugal and generous.** Most things Google does for its people costs nothing, and that's an important message to relay to your corporate clients. Have their vendors bring services in-house or negotiate lunch delivery. Guest speakers require only a room and a microphone. Save bigger efforts for the times when employees are most in need. Your generosity will have the most impact when there's a workplace crisis,

and employees are made to feel at ease... or when your clients are training new hires. My father ran an engineering firm, and he cared deeply for each of his workers. In addition to truly welcoming new employees... when any of his team reached five years in tenure, he took them aside and told them that the company had a pension plan, and at five years they were fully vested in it. It's an attitude your clients will never regret.

❖ **Focus on not only the worst, but also the best employees.** As EA professionals you receive referrals for low performers, but what about those who are excelling? Put the best

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Healthy Recipe: Chipotle & Orange Chicken

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsps orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 tbsps finely chopped chipotle peppers
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons unsulfured molasses
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 150
- Carbohydrates: 7 g.
- Protein: 23 g.
- Sodium: 227 mg.
- Fat: 3 g.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Preheat grill or broiler.
- ➋ Whisk together orange juice concentrate, chipotle pepper, vinegar, molasses and mustard in small bowl.
- ➌ Lightly oil grill or broiler rack. Season chicken with salt and grill or broil for 2 minutes. Turn, brush with the glaze and cook for 4 minutes, brushing occasionally with the glaze. Turn again, brush with glaze, and cook until center is no longer pink, 1 to 2 minutes longer.

LifestyleTIPS®
 2015© Impact Publications, Inc.
 PO Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981
 Phone: 715-258-2448
 Fax: 715-258-9048
 Website: www.impact-publications.com
 Email: info@impacttrainingcenter.net

Publisher: Scott Kolpien
Health Consultant: Aaron Allie
Managing Editor: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Working from Home can WORK

Q: *I have a long commute to the office and would love to work from home at least part time, but my boss is against the idea. What can I do?*

A: Try to see things from your boss's point of view. Do any colleagues work from home? Is there a policy that spells out how such an arrangement would work? If not, maybe HR needs to create one. Basically, your boss needs to make sure he is treating everyone fairly in an arrangement like this, or he'll look like he's playing favorites.

Second, consider how much work you can realistically do from home. How many meetings do you typically attend each week? How much interaction do you require with your co-workers? Ask your boss to let you try telecommuting one day a week for several weeks, and you'll know whether the arrangement will succeed – or if it just needs tweaking. Good luck.

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people under a microscope. Through a combination of circumstance, skill and grit, they have figured out how to succeed. Identify not just the best all-round employees, but the best specialists. Don't find the best salesperson; find the person who sells best to new accounts of a certain size. Observe them closely, pepper them with questions, and use the opportunity to suck every bit of knowledge out of them. At the same time, have compassion for the worst performers. If your client is hiring people correctly, most of those who struggle do so because they've been placed in the wrong role, not because they are inept. Help them learn or to find new roles. But if that fails, a discharge may be necessary. It's actually not merciful to keep these employees around –



they'll be happier in an environment where they aren't the worst performers. ■

Laszlo Bock is the head of people operations (i.e. HR) at Google. This is an edited excerpt from "Work Rules! Insights From Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead." For more information, visit <http://bookshop.theguardian.com/work-rules.html>.