



Timely Information for Personal Success

Remaining Indispensable at Work

By Michele Wierzgac, MSEd

The economy is booming—great! But wait—organizations continue to focus on cutting labor costs. Why? Labor costs comprise **80 percent** or more of an organization's operating costs. This fact clearly creates another problem among the workforce—*protecting your job*.

How then can you remain indispensable at work? By bringing attention to the value of what you do. How do you do that? By focusing on where the organization is going rather than on the procedural or day-to-day maintenance issues of your position. Begin thinking of how you contribute to the success of the organization. Do you know what the top business issues are within your organization?

See Their Point of View

Enhance your role as a team player by demonstrating a sincere interest in your company and looking at issues from the employer's viewpoint. If it is the cost of labor that is forcing companies to cut back within a given department, get together with your boss and figure out ways to merge systems, cut costs, negotiate spending, or merge tasks between departments. Often in companies where there are several departments duplicating efforts, redundancies can be eliminated.

Talk in Sound Bites

Concentrate on improving communication with the employer. Think about how your listener will

receive the message. Put yourself in the listener's shoes and anticipate how he or she might react. Learn to talk in sound bites—quick and fast. Bosses want the summary, not all the details.

Find a Mentor

To be the most indispensable employee possible, *get a coach*. Surround yourself with mentors and coaches from inside and outside your industry. How do you obtain a coach? Look around your informal and formal networks and determine who you would like to emulate.

Whose skills and career path do you admire? Then just ask if he or she will mentor you.

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CLIP-N-SAVE!

Theda Care: Your Lifestyle Guide to a Healthy Heart

Healthy Recipe: Simple Tomatoes and Beans

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 (15oz) cans, no salt added, white beans
- 1-1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved and seeded
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- Black pepper to taste

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

Daily recommendations

- Saturated fat: 13 g.
- Cholesterol: 300 mg.
- Sodium: 1,500-2,400 mg.
- Carbohydrates: 310 g.
- Fiber: 25-35 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Cook garlic in the hot oil until golden, about 5 minutes. (Be careful not to burn!)
- ➋ Stir beans into oil. Cook and stir beans until hot, about 5 minutes. Stir tomatoes into the beans; cook and stir until tomatoes soften; about 5 minutes more.
- ➌ Pour broth over beans mixture; stir. Cook mixture at a simmer until liquid is reduced in volume by about half; about 15 minutes. Season with pepper.

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Most of the time, people are flattered that they have been asked. It does not take much time, perhaps just a 45-minute phone call once every three months. Explain what is going on, and they offer some simple advice to get back on track.

Recruit Brand Champions

You are a brand! Who supports you? Who are the people that are always spreading the good news about you? *These are your brand champions.* It is critical to update your friends, family, colleagues, parents at PTA meetings, and anyone else you know about what you are doing or what you want to do. Why? Because your networks are filled with the power and credibility to spread the word about you and your abilities.

To begin with you need to understand the difference between *formal networks* (professional organizations that you pay dues to, with regulations, meetings and guidelines) and *informal networks* (people you meet in the lobby of a hotel or on an airplane or through hobbies). *Social networks* are a hybrid of the two.

Next, you need to communicate to your brand champions about your work, your talents, and changes you are thinking about. If you need a favor, ask, and reciprocate by asking what you can do *for them* in return. Send out regular alerts through your grapevine and share your success

stories. Start a buzz and you will be amazed at what happens.

Safeguard Your Reputation

A brand creates an image of trust and loyalty over time. It takes years to build a name, reputation, and networks—but it only takes a minute to lose it all. Always protect your name. See what others are saying about you. The key to leadership is listening to criticism and self-correcting. When a mentor presents criticism about something you are perhaps not thinking about, it takes courage to change. You must earn credibility, not expect it. Be prepared to spend years on earning credibility.

Summary

Every workplace has that one employee that everyone goes to for answers to their problems. They know everyone, and they know how to get things done. Strive to be that one shining employee by following these steps. Remember, being a key member of a team has the biggest benefit—job security. ■

Michele Wierzgac is a leadership expert, keynote speaker, and author of the book, "Ass Kicking Women: How They Leverage Their Informal Networks for Success." For more information visit <https://micheleandco.com>.