

CHRISTIANS AT WORK



*Biblical Secrets to Achieving Success
in the Workplace*

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Biblical Secrets to Achieving Success in
the Workplace

Winston S. Co

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One of the important ministries of the Church of God International is providing people access to educational materials which elucidate the Word of God and empowering them to apply biblical principles in their lives.

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FOREWORD

This publication hopes to empower you to become the best that you can be in your place of work. It is based on biblical principles which when applied will make you excel in your chosen vocation. No matter what profession you are engaged in, or what position you occupy, you can excel in what you do. Just make the effort to master the principles that are taught in this material and your quest for excellence is well within your reach. The principles being presented will transform an ordinary worker to becoming an excellent one - which will eventually open up opportunities towards greater career responsibilities.

Christianity is not purely an exercise in spiritual enlightenment but it also provides principles for successful living. This book offers a combination of Christian principles and time-tested success precepts governing work for everyone to follow. 3 John 2 says: “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” This passage definitely talks about health and wealth. Yet the practical rules of diligence, industry and creativity cannot be ignored in the process of achieving your goal. The path leading to success in this life is open to all, provided the rules that lead to it are consistently observed. The application of the principles covered in this publication will pave the way towards the fulfillment of your career goals.

CHAPTER I

A VALUABLE EMPLOYEE

The foundation of a successful enterprise relies not only on its liquidity, but more importantly on its employees. Employees who are competent, diligent, reliable and trustworthy exemplify the attributes of a totally Valuable Employee. If you are employed, then strive to become one. If you are seeking employment, prepare to become one. It is your guarantee to achieve whatever career ambitions you have in life.

But first we have to understand what an employee is. An employee is defined as someone who works for another in return for compensation or financial benefit.

In business, employees are referred to as the workforce that supplies the labor. In the early 20th century, labor was considered a commodity that one can easily buy or hire. But in the 21st century, labor is considered as Capital – an Asset. Companies and management have looked upon human capital as the single most important asset of an organization. The financial success of an enterprise is principally hinged upon the contribution of its human capital. Therefore, the entire process of employee recruitment, training and retention, is aimed at building a team of topnotch employees who can deliver positive results.

In today's competitive workplace, being average is not enough to get ahead. In 2006, the Philippine labor force stood at 35.8 million people. In January of 2008, the unemployment rate stood at 7.4%. The job market can be incredibly tough, especially with a continuous stream of new graduates entering the ever-growing pool of job seekers. The National Capital Region, which is the center of economic activity, has the highest unemployment rate in the whole country. This is now estimated at 12.5%, and still growing. The influx of people from the countryside seeking economic

opportunities will undoubtedly keep those figures moving up. Even more alarming is that 39% of the unemployed are college graduates. Success at work is not just about simply having a degree and putting in 8 hours of hard work — it's about adding value to the company you work for. You don't want to be one among a hundred other colleagues. You should strive to attain the position of 'Hallmark' that will distinguish you from your peers – so that your value as a worker will stand out in the midst of a mediocre workforce.

Everyone wants job security and good compensation. To achieve this, the value of the services rendered to the company you work for must be felt and recognized by the management. Every employee wants the management to consider him an asset that is too valuable to ever let go of. Every employee desires to get to the top. This is exactly why you should strive to become a Valuable Employee.

Employers can easily recognize the worth of an employee. Thus, the compensation package is calibrated in proportion to the employee's worth. Employers know that valuable employees have become a rare commodity. They know that good help is hard to find, it is like

finding a needle in a haystack. Hiring is an important and crucial task. If the wrong people are mistakenly hired, the company is bound to suffer. So, it is every Manager's desire to hire effective and productive employees who can propel the business to success. Thus, management and employers are willing to pay a premium and offer extra benefits in order to retain and keep valuable employees.

Put yourself in the shoes of an employer. Suppose you own a small company, what kind of employees would you like to work for you? What basic character traits would you look for in them? Certainly the ones who will have the most positive contribution to your business. This is where a Valuable Employee comes in. And this is where you—reading this publication—need to prepare yourself to become a Valuable Employee.

CHRISTIAN WORK ETHIC

Try to be observant—look around. Today's workforce is largely made up of passive employees who are more concerned with their own self-interests. The employee focuses more on his pay than on the job that

he is supposed to be doing. This prevalent attitude will only result in job dissatisfaction and discontentment. The problem with the workforce today is not the lack of skill and talent. It is the absence of work ethic. Work ethic is attitudinal. Therefore anyone who possesses the necessary skills and attitude can be a valuable employee. There is no magic involved or required. It is as simple as the ABCs of applying Christian principles to your work ethic. Christians should have an advantage over other people in the workplace. Why? They have access to the revelation of God's Truth and His Way of Life. Everyone should know that the Word of God is filled with guidelines on how one can become successful in the workplace.

The Bible has a unique instruction for hiring people. It contains important guidelines that every employee should consider and think about if one aims to rise from the ranks. In this passage there are three simple yet critical qualifications that are needed in order to become a Valuable Employee that any employer would want to hire and retain.

The passage is found in Exodus 18:21 where God gave a specific instruction to Moses on how to choose

people for authority. The verse reads: “Moreover, you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of ten.”

The three qualifications can be summed up as follows:

1. Select capable men and women who possess skills, talents and are responsible.
2. Employ people who fear God possessing righteousness and integrity.
3. Select employees who are people of truth and who hate covetousness.

BUILD COMPETENCY

The first quality of being a valuable employee is to become competent. Capability and competency can be acquired through education and improved through practice. Self-help books on improving competency and effectiveness at work fill the bookstore shelves. Presented here are the top five keys that can help build your competency. They are practical and useful. They

widen your perspective and improve your technical and social skills. These keys are essential in getting ahead in a competitive career environment.

The top five keys to competency are:

1. Keep learning.

Education and learning do not stop after graduation. We live in a knowledge era where skills are tied into technology and information. An employee is expected to keep abreast and in tune with the changing technological landscape. This is because information and technology are developing and increasing at an incredible pace. Therefore one should take the time to learn new skills and stay current with any areas of special expertise. Learning is not limited to academic or formal education. Learning is to gain knowledge. At the work place learning can be from within or from outside the organization. Often in the corporate environment, the most important informal learning are from experience, from problem, from mistake, from criticism, from coaching, from counseling and from

others. Every incident is an occasion and opportunity for learning.

In the 21st century setting, multi-tasking and core specialization have become vogue. Not only is an employee expected to be an expert in a particular field, but he is also expected to handle multiple tasks adequately. So one must not only be an expert in his area of specialization but must also understand the workings of the unit and the business in general. It is important to understand that your work is a part of the whole. Understanding the whole helps you do your part well.

Do not just learn about your job, it is also important to stay informed and learn about the industry and the business you are in. If you have the opportunity and the capability, by all means take an advanced degree. Work at becoming as good as you can be in every function of your job and also learn about the ins and outs of the business. Learning never stops. There is always room for improvement. Learning enhances your proficiency, efficiency and productivity.

To keep learning is a constant striving for improvement and betterment. It is the best way to stay

current and not be obsolete in the workplace. “Anyone who keeps learning stays young.” said Henry Ford.

2. Be responsible.

Know your duties and responsibilities. Be result-oriented. Deliver your expectations and be accountable for your actions. Every employer wants a responsible employee who produces results that are highly valued.

Responsibility means that you accept the accountability for your work. When you accept responsibility you assume control of your action. You are in charge of the task assigned to you and have the obligation to see it's accomplished. Responsibility is simply the commitment and the discipline to achieve a specific set of goal.

A responsible employee does not just do what he is told; he does what is expected of him. Therefore, he must know what is expected of him. He has to consider the job description seriously. The duties outlined in the job description are the goals he set for himself.

Being responsible is beyond reporting for work and turning in reports on time. It means you care for the

end result of your work. It means you know the requirements and importance of your job and you deliver the result to fit that requirement.

As Winston Churchill said, “The price of greatness is responsibility.” Therefore, if we wish to do great things, we must start by accepting responsibilities for the small things we ought to do. Be a responsible worker.

3. Be a team player.

In the modern corporate setting, the words collaboration and support have become standard jargon in the work place. People are expected to work as a group in cell type structures and share information. Functions, tasks, activities and projects revolve around committees and working groups.

We all have read or heard the acronym of the word team; Together Everyone Achieves More. In a nutshell this is the essence of teamwork at the workplace. The sharing of ideas, skills, expertise and goals increase work quality and results.

Many employers want staff to work together towards achieving corporate goals. When hiring new employees, they want to find people with a good attitude and soft skills that reflect the qualities of a good team player.

Having good people skills is an advantage. Good team players are comfortable dealing with other people. They are patient and respectful of the ideas of the team members and are open-minded to other point of views. They share ideas freely and do not hoard information. Good team players prefer to cooperate than to compete with other employees or departments.

Essential to team work is a harmonious relationship among colleagues and superiors. Make every effort to be pleasant and amicable to everyone who you are working with. Always share the spotlight with those who helped you succeed. This will develop friendship and trust. Which in turn enhances morale and cooperation among your fellow employees.

High performance teams are needed in most companies and you want to be its most valued member.

4. Maintain a positive attitude.

The difference between I can and I can't is your attitude. As the adage goes: "what the mind can conceive, man can achieve." Be a Can Do man. A positive attitude leads happiness and success at the workplace. Everyone wants to work with a positive and confidence man. Your thoughts and your attitudes will determine your success. Never allow self-defeating thoughts of negativism limit your capability to excel.

Work is fun. Work is enjoyable. Work is effective when done with optimism and positivism. Work is never going to be a drag but a challenge when done with eagerness. Have an open mind to embrace new task and learn new things. Be an agent of change and not an obstacle to progress. Accept all tasks and assignments objectively, positively and enthusiastically. Challenge your creativity. Be positively cheerful and proactive in your work. Have confidence in your ability and manifest it clearly. Positivism lifts your morale and the people around you. It helps generate positive work results.

5. Learn to communicate properly.

To be an effective employee, you need to communicate well. Effective communication strengthens relationship, prevents misunderstanding and builds self-confidence. Effective communication is first and foremost the keen ability to transfer information clearly. A good communicator is one who first seeks to understand then to be understood.

Poor communication and misunderstanding should be avoided. Every employee needs to develop good listening and reading skills. Do not just hear and read the letters rather try to listen and comprehend the words.

On the other hand you should have the ability to communicate well in every area where it is needed. Therefore one who is proficient in written, oral and multi-lingual communication is a big advantage in any corporate and business setting. Learn to speak well and use it to share information and motivate others. Being a good communicator can help you stand out as an Effective Employee.

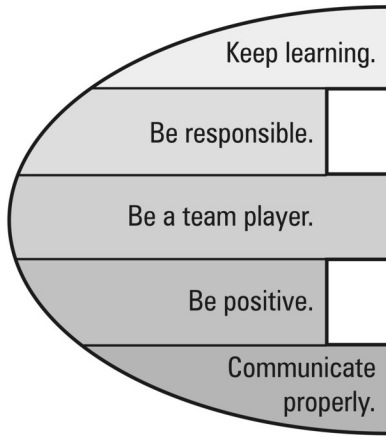


Figure 1.a. Five keys to competence

This first half of the equation in becoming an effective employee is commonly taught and practiced by the majority. The 5 keys to competence is not a new concept. Yet it has been proven helpful to those who follow it, they are the minimum requirements which are demanded today.

BUILD CHRISTIAN VALUES

The five keys to competency go a long way in making an effective employee. A Valuable Employee is beyond effectiveness. He is one who has combined effectiveness with integrity. That brings us to items 2

and 3, being God-fearing and trustworthy. These 2 items go without saying that God fearing Christians who abide by Christian values of righteousness and godly character have a distinct advantage over other people.

In the book of Deuteronomy, we find that the King of Israel is required to strictly adhere to the laws of God in the discharge of his kingship. Notice: "... when he sits in the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book from the one before the priests, the Levites, and it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and this statutes" (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). The laws of God serve as a basic guide for everything in life especially for those who are assigned with the task of governance. Christianity is a way of life—a way of Godliness. God's ways and laws produce wonderful results when they are applied in life and in work.

The laws of the Holy Bible to which we have referred are mostly found in the first 5 books of the Old Testament. The 10 commandments are written twice;

once in Exodus 20 and then again in Deuteronomy 5. So the King has to copy the 10 commandments not once but twice. When one applies the principles laid out in the 10 commandments to his work and profession, wonderful things will begin to happen. Godly principles which mold one's approach in life allow you to have competency and integrity, a key factor in becoming a Valuable Employee.

Let's take a look at the 10 Commandments and consider the principles found in them.

1. There shall be no other God before Me.

The principle in this command refers to our devotion to the Lord. We must put God first in all aspects of our lives. This is especially true when it comes to our work and we should always thank God for the job that we have. Notice what Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:5-8: "Servants (workers) obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, single-mindedly as serving Christ. Do not offer merely the outward show of service, as man pleasers, but as servants of Christ, do wholeheartedly the will of God. Give the cheerful

service of those who serve the Lord, not men. For you know that whatever good each man may do, servant or free, will be repaid him by the Lord.” As Christians we should work as if the Lord is our boss. Then when God sees our good work, He will bless the work of our hands (Deuteronomy 14:29).

When people, employers and colleagues alike, see our dedication and wisdom in performing our work, they will glorify God. When God blesses our hands, our employer is blessed through us. Such is the case of Joseph. His story is recorded in Genesis 39:1-6: “And Joseph was brought down to Egypt. And Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners, an Egyptian man, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. And Jehovah was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him. And he made him overseer over his house, and he put into his hand all he had. And it happened from the time he had made him overseer in his house, and over all he had, that Jehovah

blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of Jehovah was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand. And he did not know anything that he had, except the bread which he ate." Here is a perfect illustration of how this principle works. When you put God first in your life and in your work, what a Valuable Employee you will be! Your team and the company you work for will be blessed through you! Remember, the 1st principle to becoming a Valuable Employee is to put God first in all you do.

2. Remember to keep the Sabbath Day Holy.

Six days shall you work and the 7th day Sabbath is a day of rest. This command is two-fold. First, is the command to diligently work for six days. Six days of work and not six days of rest. Within the six working days, we should be an industrious and conscientious worker. Proverbs 10:4 says: "Idle hands make a man poor; busy hands grow rich". Again, "Diligence brings a man to power, but laziness to forced labor" (Proverbs 12:24). These passages encourage us to work diligently.

We should then learn from the diligence of the ant as we can see in Proverbs 6:6-8: “Go to the ant, sluggard; consider her ways and be wise; who, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her food in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest.”

Once we have learned this valuable lesson we should apply what the Apostle Paul exhorts us to do in Colossians 3:22-23: “Servants, give entire obedience to your earthly masters, not merely with an outward show of service, to curry favor with men, but with single-mindedness, out of reverence to the Lord.” Whatever you are doing, put your whole heart into it. A diligent and thoughtful employee who has the best interest of the company at heart is rare to find. Be one and you will stand out as a valuable employee in your organization.

Hard work does not mean you have to work overtime or work on Sabbaths and Holidays. Hard work means you finish all your work on time without having to work overtime. Sometimes, overtime work is unavoidable especially when you work on a special project or in seasonal and service-oriented industries; like consulting, auditing, legal firms, etc. But still this does not give you the license to break the Sabbaths. The

second fold of the command is: “Remember to keep the Sabbath Holy.” The essence of Christian integrity is to keep God’s commandments. Therefore to be God-fearing through keeping the commandments will carry many credentials in your favor. Most reasonable employers want to hire people with strong religious conviction because of their reliability, trustworthiness and integrity. So, by all means let your employer know your religion and the observance of God’s Sabbath Days. The 2nd principle is to work with diligence.

3. Honor your father and mother.

This commandment refers to the giving of respect and loyalty to our parents, elders and those in authority. It is well for an employee to adopt this principle in the workplace. Respect your bosses and be loyal to the company you work for. Notice in 1 Timothy 6:1: “All those who wore the yoke of slavery (employment), must count their own masters worthy of all respect, so that the name of God and Christian teaching are not brought into disrepute.” And the apostle Peter added: “Servants, accept the authority of your masters with all

due submission” (1 Peter 2:18). Respect builds relationships and establishes rapport with your superiors and co-workers.

You’d rather have your superiors as friends rather than enemies. So don’t disrespect them by talking behind their back or harboring a threatening attitude towards them. Having a good relationship with your superiors will certainly be beneficial to your career. Therefore, you should respect and honor your bosses and masters. That way, they will respect you in return.

In addition, you should be loyal to the company you work for.

The 3rd principle is to show respect and fidelity to superiors and the company.

4. Do not commit murder.

Jesus said not to hate people in your heart. There is so much jealousy, envy, rivalry, competition, backstabbing and character assassination in the work place. Office rumors abound, intrigue, and politics are commonplace in any organization. They are disruptive

and promote nothing apart from sowing much discord and unrest.

What if you are able to work harmoniously with your colleagues—thereby promoting cooperation—and esteem others within the workplace? Wouldn't you be of great value? At work, things sometimes go wrong. Problems need to be solved. No one, especially your superior, wants to work with difficult people, but everyone wants to work with a responsive and responsible employee. The 4th principle is to become a pleasant and kind employee - full of optimism and cheerfulness. Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:24 exhorted Christians to be peace-loving and gentle.

5. Do not steal and do not covet.

The 5th principle is - be honest. In the work place honesty is of great value. Remember the slogan 'Honesty is the best policy.' Your superiors want to work with people they can trust - people who will not steal from them or accept a bribe.

A parable was told about a king who wanted to choose a successor among his two sons. So he devised a

test. He called them forward, and told them. “I am getting old. I am giving each of you a flower pot, and a flower seed. After two months, the one who has the better looking flower will be the successor to my throne.” Common logic tells us the one who takes better care of the plant could also take better care of the kingdom.

After two months, both sons stood before him. One was bringing along a flower pot with a very nicely grown and blooming flower. The other was holding an empty pot.

“Why,” the king said to the second son, “What happened?”

“My father,” said the son, “I planted the seed diligently, watered it everyday, and gave it my utmost care and attention. I am really sorry, but the flower just won’t grow!”

“My son,” the king said, “You are the honest one. The truth is that the seeds I gave to you are both defective ones. So there was no way for them to grow into a beautiful plant. I am looking for an heir that is first and foremost going to be an honest king, and you,

in spite of the odds, have chosen to be that, so you will be my next heir to the throne.”

That is just a story. But one may ask, “What if you were the manager in a corporation and you gave an assignment, would you want your people to waste their time working on something that is defective, or would you rather have people with initiative to fix things up, and get things done? Do you think the first son, who felt that something was wrong and took the initiative to replace the defective seed with a good one made the better judgment? Don’t you think he will make a better manager?” What do you think?

The story is not a test on initiative, but of honesty and integrity. We should have initiative but not be dishonest. An employer can easily distinguish the difference between the two, and honesty will always take preference over competence. Competence can be taught and learned. Honesty is a trait of character.

If you were an employer would you hire a crook - even if he was brilliant? Of course not! That would make him a brilliant crook and you would find yourself in trouble. No one wants to hire a dishonest man. Therefore, make every effort to work honestly. Honesty

at work starts with reporting to work on time – giving 8 hours of honest work. Don't take paper clips, bond paper and pencils from the office to be used at home. Dishonesty starts with small items until one ends up embezzling large sums of company funds. Paul warned: "Let him that stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Ephesians 4:28). Again, in Titus 2:9-10 Paul wrote: "Exhort bondservants (employees) to be obedient to their own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering (*thieving*), but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

BECOMING A VALUABLE EMPLOYEE

Everyone can become a Valuable Employee. In fact, Christians have an innate advantage to become one. It's not just being competent; it's a matter of having integrity. The Christian possesses the rare qualities of honesty, trustworthiness and fidelity that every organization needs and values.

The 5 Biblical principles towards work are:

1. Put God first in all you do.
2. Work with diligence.
3. Show respect and fidelity to your superiors and company.
4. Be pleasant and kind.
5. Be honest.

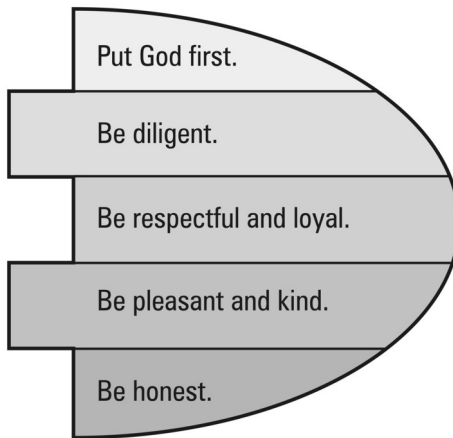


Figure 1.b. Five principles of integrity.

This half of the equation on Christian integrity is drawn from the Word of God. In the corporate world, applying biblical principles to work may be thought of as unusual. However, these principles should be

A Valuable Employee

inherent to Christians. When applied to work, the Bible assures that wonderful things will happen.

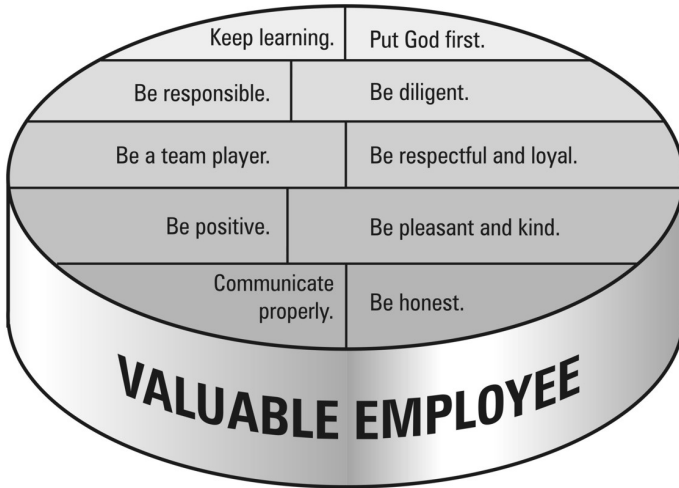


Figure 1.c. Competence + Integrity = Valuable Employee

The illustration in figure 1.c. represents the attributes of a valuable employee. A valuable employee is one who combines competency with integrity. Possession of these attributes will transform an ordinary employee into a valuable employee.

May God bless the work of your hands as you go on your way to becoming a Valuable Employee. Being a Valuable Employee is just the start to a successful career. The next chapter will tell you more.

CHAPTER II

THE EXTRAORDINARY MANAGER

A valuable employee usually gets promoted. When promotion comes and you become a manager, don't just settle for being any manager but become an Extraordinary Manager.

Bookstores are filled with self-help books that instruct you on how to become an effective manager. But this book will help you become an exceptional manager direct from the pages of the Bible.

WHO IS A MANAGER?

A Manager is one who manages a specific unit or operation of a business. The classic definition of a

manager is a person who utilizes all the resources under his control (people, equipment, finance, systems and technology) to effectively and efficiently achieve a set of objectives.

A company has different levels of management. These include top, middle and first-line managers. Top-level Managers are executives such as the Chairman, Directors, President, Vice President, Chief Executive Officer and the General Manager. These personnel are responsible for setting company policy, direction and governance. They are considered the pillars of the establishment. Middle managers are department heads in charge of operational functions. First-line managers are supervisors and team leaders responsible for the day-to-day activities of a unit or group of workers.

A company contains several different types of managers throughout the various departments. These may be sales, operations, production, finance and administration. A Sales Manager is in-charge of the selling function. A Product Manager is in charge of product development and merchandising. A Production Line Manager is in charge of product manufacturing

and productivity. A Project Manager is in charge of a specific project. An Accounting Manager is in charge of bookkeeping and financial reporting.

One can be an Extraordinary Manager at any department and level of the organization. Managers add more value to their company because they assume greater responsibilities than the rank-and-file employees. They are the “brains, organizers and thinkers” of the company whose prime responsibility is to make decisions in the organization. They, as a management team, move the company forward towards a corporate goal. Their collective performance determines the level of corporate success. Therefore, a top-notch business organization has the best managers in its management team.

There are four management functions that a manager must learn in order to effectively discharge his function and achieve corporate goal. These are as follows:

1. Planning.

Planning is the first essential step of the management process. As the adage goes: “Plan your work and work your plan.” Proper and effective planning separates a successful manager from a mediocre one. Planning encompasses strategy definition, setting goals, designing systems and procedures, and setting datelines for task completion. A good plan requires foresight and logical thinking to prepare for the future, to layout a course of action and to anticipate problems before they arise. Planning provides the blueprint to achieve corporate objectives.

2. Organizing.

Organizing is to effectively structure the work of the organization in order to achieve the goals outlined in

the planning process. It is matching people to work processes which will achieve the maximum results. Organizing includes setting up of an organizational structure, outlining job definition and description, staffing positions with qualified people, delegating assignments and responsibilities, and harmonizing people to system and machine technology for best results. This management process provides the resources and the structure to effectively and efficiently accomplish the objective.

3. Leading.

Leadership is the power to influence and inspire people towards achieving a goal. Leadership involves establishing vision, setting direction and building the morale of the work force. This includes developing clear vision and mission, defining and monitoring work values, goals and performances, and guiding the employee to accomplish them. A good leader provides counsel, discipline, training, team building and motivational management. This is the management

function that ensures the plan is properly carried out by all members of the team.

4. Controlling or coordinating.

Controlling is the process that guarantees plans are implemented properly according to control procedures. A good co-ordinator or controller must initiate proper implementation guidelines such as: company policies, performance standards, systems, procedures and structures to monitor and measure corporate effectiveness and efficiency. These skills include monitoring corporate compliance and rules. He or she must set controls in place to avoid risk, smoothen out inter-related operations and empower employees to perform within set parameters.

AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER

Skills on becoming an Effective Manager can be learned. There are leadership seminars and management schools that one can enrol into. Management improvement books and video cassettes

abound with easy access. In all these, you will find that the top five tips to become an Effective Manager are as follows:

1. Build Morale

Managing is the art of getting things done through people. An Effective Manager is able to get the workforce working together as a cohesive unit toward a common objective. Building team unity, even in diversity, and keeping up the morale of the whole workforce is one of the more challenging jobs of a manager. Regularly updating the team with company goals and objectives helps perk up interest and foster loyalty among the workers. Employees should have the confidence that the company they worked for will lead them towards a better future. Keeping the team at peak performance level and well motivated.

2. Setting Realistic Goals

Goal setting provides adequate direction and a good framework for productivity. The establishment of clear and realistic goals will promote efficiency, cooperation,

satisfaction and productivity. Each Manager should set up group and individual goals. Getting every member involved in goal setting whenever possible provides everyone the feeling of importance and encourages extra effort to become a productive member of the team.

Goals must be measurable and quantifiable in terms of output, yield and performance and expressed in calculable units. And the Effective Manager should be able to communicate all these in clear and unmistakable language so that every member will understand the intent and be guided accordingly.

3. Staff development

Adequate staff development is a crucial aspect of management. Having talented people surrounding a manager is crucial to his or her successfulness. Remember a manager is as good as the performance of the entire team.

As a manager, he or she must develop and coach each team member to become the best that they can possibly be. Provide subordinates with training and tools they need to do the job. The team must be

equipped with as much knowledge and technology as possible. When everyone works at peak performance, the entire team, particularly the manager, looks good and gets the credit.

4. Building trust and respect

Building trust and respect from subordinates may not be easy, but it is a task managers should not neglect. Trust and respect are “earned” - and successful managers earn trust and respect by paying attention to people and keeping their commitment.

The key word is “earn.” An Effective Manager does not demand the respect of his co-workers. He earns it. He treats his subordinates well by being sensitive to their needs, trusting in their work and showing genuine concern for their career. This will generate much goodwill and cooperation within the unit. Likewise, getting team members to trust and respect each other is the key to organizational effectiveness.

5. Communicate Effectively

An Effective Manager must communicate well. He must be able to provide clear, concise directives, instructions and advice. He has to convey ideas, clearly, concisely and persuasively. He should also be well-versed in the issuing of memos, the composition of letters, the writing of reports and how to make reputable business proposals. He must also possess the ability to make effective presentations to a variety of individuals and groups. No matter how good and brilliant an idea is, unless shared with others it is worthless. Therefore, it is imperative that an effective manager must have sufficient communication skills.

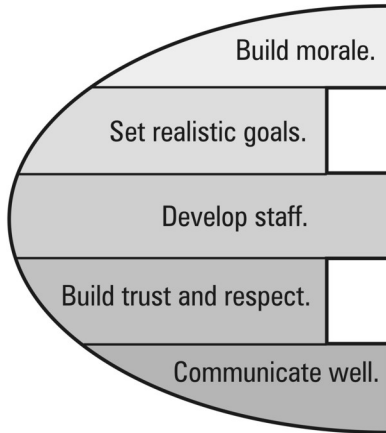


Figure 2.a. Five important managerial skills.

The 5 managerial skills pictured in the chart provide the skills needed to become an Extraordinary manager. Yet, it is only half of the equation to become an Extraordinary Manager. To become an Extraordinary Manager, one has to add to management skills biblical leadership principles.

THE EXTRAORDINARY MANAGER

The five practical tips on management skills will surely make you a better manager. In order for you to become an Extraordinary Manager you need something more than this, and that is where Biblical leadership principles come in. These principles are thousands of years old. They add a new dimension to management. They are beyond skill and proficiency and are behavioural in their approach. They are a new attitude of thinking and outlook on leadership. These Biblical leadership principles combined with practical management skills will provide a totally new dynamic approach to being an Extraordinary Manager.

The five Biblical leadership principles are:

1. Leadership is Service.

The traditional concept of a manager is to boss the workforce. As the boss, he has absolute control and power over the people under him. He gives an order, he tells them what to do, he instructs, he directs, he

reprimands and he hires and fires. He is supposed to be the most knowledgeable person in the team. Thus, he puts this sign on the desk for all to see: “Rule No. 1, the boss is always right. Rule No. 2, when the boss is wrong refer to rule No. 1.” A lot of managers feel this way. They are the boss and what they say is deemed to be final!

Jesus has a different mindset on leadership. To Jesus, the role of a leader is to serve the needs and requirements of the people. When his disciples were wrestling for position in the coming kingdom, He told them: “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45). To Jesus, Leadership is Service.

An Extraordinary Manager must have this mindset. He must see himself as the servant of the workforce. To his team he is the trainer, coach, counsellor, guide and mentor. He cannot be the tormentor or ruler of the

team. He must be the servant, serving the needs of the team. When skill is needed, he provides it. When conflict erupts, he resolves it. When problem arises, he solves it. When people come to his office with a problem, he doesn't send them out with a scream but finds a way so that they leave the office with a solution. It is the job of a manager to find solution to problems.

How wonderful when you have a manager who is more interested in solving a problem than fulfilling his ego! Remember, the first biblical principle of leadership is service.

2. Leadership is Having Sensitivity.

An Extraordinary Manager is one who is sensitive and responsive to the needs and ideas of team members. He is one who manages by consensus and by sharing of information. One of the critical keys to becoming an extraordinary manager is sensitivity to the ideas and needs of the people. A manager does not have the exclusive right to good ideas. An Extraordinary Manager recognizes good advice, warning, counsel, suggestion and ideas irrespective of where and whom

they come from. An Extraordinary Manager is more than a good talker. He has to be foremost a good listener. The proverb says: “In the multitude of counsel, there is wisdom.”

1 Kings 12:1-19 is an account worthy of recall. When King Rehoboam was made king over Israel, his people came to him and said: “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you” (verse 4). However, King Rehoboam was foolish and too proud to listen to the pleas and ideas of the people. He rejected their request and said: “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions” (verse 14). As a result, ten of the twelve tribes in his kingdom rejected him as their king. This story is an example of how costly insensitivity can be. Unfortunately, too many managers have fallen to this trap.

An Extraordinary Manager is one who is sensitive and listens to his people. It is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. The second biblical leadership principle of an Extraordinary Manager is to be sensitive

to the work force. If you practice it, you have added wisdom to leadership.

3. Leadership is Stewardship.

Stewardship is taking charge of, managing and guarding another's finances or affairs. A good steward is responsible for the optimum use of the resources and tasks entrusted under his care. In other words, a steward is a trustee or someone entrusted with a responsibility. The concept of stewardship is ownership. The Extraordinary Manager must see himself as a micro entrepreneur. He has to put ownership into his work. Thus he produces the best results by optimizing all resources entrusted to him.

Jesus gave a parable defining the responsibility of a steward. With obvious reference to Himself He said, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. And it came to pass, that

when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten

pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him” (Luke 19:12-26).

While the first two were able to multiply the amount entrusted to them, the third servant never even made an attempt to use the money productively. Not only was the talent taken from him and given to the most productive servant, but he also incurred the wrath of the king for not being a good steward. This shows that even Jesus did not want us to just ‘hold on’ to what we had been entrusted with, but more importantly to be accountable and be productive with the resources we are privileged to manage.

The same principle works for those who have been entrusted with resources and responsibilities. The Extraordinary Manager will manage wisely as if they were his own. It is only through consideration of ownership that the Extraordinary Manager can produce tenfold productivity. The third biblical leadership principle is - be a good steward.

4. Leadership is Initiative.

What is initiative? It is the readiness to act without being prompted. It starts with a proactive attitude. The Extraordinary manager is willing and able to make things better and quickly resolve problems when needed. This shows that he cares for the welfare of the business. He doesn't simply wait for orders and pass them down the line. Neither does he just report or pass on problems. He takes the first step in solving them. And he will go the extra mile to find the solution. He adds value to the decision chain and faces challenges with confidence. In management meetings, he takes an active participation by sharing his ideas and recommendations.

Genesis 41 records the account of Joseph who was sold into slavery and imprisoned. This was not an ordinary feat for a man whose life was literally 'uphill all the way.' We mentioned earlier of his being instrumental in the prosperity of the household of Potiphar, his master. He did well and was fully entrusted as second in command at Potiphar's house until he was falsely accused of an offense. This

unfortunate incident brought him to Pharaoh's dungeon, but he never ran out of courage. Later he had the opportunity to stand before Pharaoh and reveal to him the events that were about to take place in his kingdom. Before Pharaoh he spoke out with authority. Joseph said to the king as we see in verses 28-32. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. The reason that this dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter had been firmly decided by God, and God would do it soon.

After interpreting the dream of Pharaoh, Joseph on his own initiative made a recommendation even without solicitation from the King. A bold and confident move and it paid handsome dividend. Joseph recommended in verses 33-36, "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over

the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

Pharaoh was impressed, both by Joseph’s confidence and his wisdom. The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph in verses 39-40: “...Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

Then the big promotion came and Pharaoh appointed Joseph in Charge of Egypt, as we see in verses 41-46 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it

on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt." Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh King of Egypt.

To be an Extraordinary Manager, you must have initiative. This means that you must identify a need, take the first step towards its resolution and go the extra mile to see it through. Your initiative must be driven by your desire to help your boss, your company and your peers. This shows that you have the company's best interest at heart. The fourth biblical leadership principle is to have initiative.

5. Leadership is Intuition.

Intuition is instinctively knowing what the company needs are and how your superiors think. Clearly seeing the company vision, understanding the mission and knowing exactly what the owner wants and how he will act in a given situation. You develop a management style attuned to the culture of the business. This means you have the same motivation as the owner and you think alike to the extent that you see your job through his mind.

Moses was a highly educated man. He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Egypt being the centre of civilization in his time), a powerful speaker and a man of action at the age of forty. That same Moses was tasked to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt which comprised mostly of disobedient, grippers, grumblers and complainers. The account in Numbers 11:11-15 narrated the test of his leadership. Even though he was so strong, he reached breaking point and was ready to give up when he told God, “Why have you brought trouble to your servant? How have I displeased the Lord that I am burdened with the care of this whole

people? Am I their mother? ...This whole people is a burden too heavy for me; I cannot carry it alone. If that is your purpose for me, then kill me outright. But if I have won your favour, let me suffer this trouble at your hands no longer.”

Then God provided a solution to Moses' predicament. The solution was to delegate the responsibility to seventy elders and appoint them as officials among the people as we can see in verses 16-17. The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.”

What God did was to take the Spirit that was in Moses and impart it onto the seventy elders. Now, Moses and the seventy elders had one Spirit. Now, they were able think alike. Through the one Spirit, God made more leaders with the same quality that Moses had.

The same principle may be applied to a business enterprise. The owner's objective must take precedence over anybody else. If you work for somebody, avoid putting your own intuition to work; you must always learn to think like the owner. The question you want to ask is "what would the owner have done under the circumstances?" It is therefore important for you to teach your subordinates to think like you. If your people think like you and you think like your boss, just imagine what you as a group can accomplish together.

The fifth biblical leadership principle is intuition - think like the owner. If you agree with the owner most of the time, his confidence in your ability will increase. He will feel that he can leave matters to your charge because you think alike. The owner/boss will trust you more.

BECOMING AN EXTRAORDINARY MANAGER

You can be an Extraordinary Manager. Add biblical leadership principles to management skills, and you will transform yourself from an effective manager to an Extraordinary Manager. The five biblical leadership

principles are easily recalled through these initials: SSSII which mean;

1. Leadership is Service.
2. Leadership is having Sensitivity.
3. Leadership is Stewardship.
4. Leadership is Initiative.
5. Leadership is Intuition.

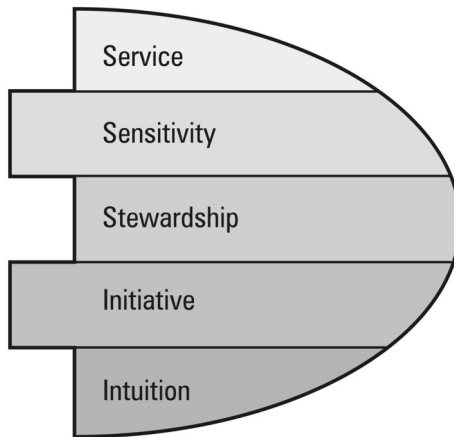


Figure 2. b. Five biblical leadership principles

Figure 2.b. shows the five biblical leadership principles every successful manager must possess. Combined with figure 2.a., you have now an effective formula to become an Extraordinary Manager as illustrated in figure 2.c.

The Extraordinary Manager

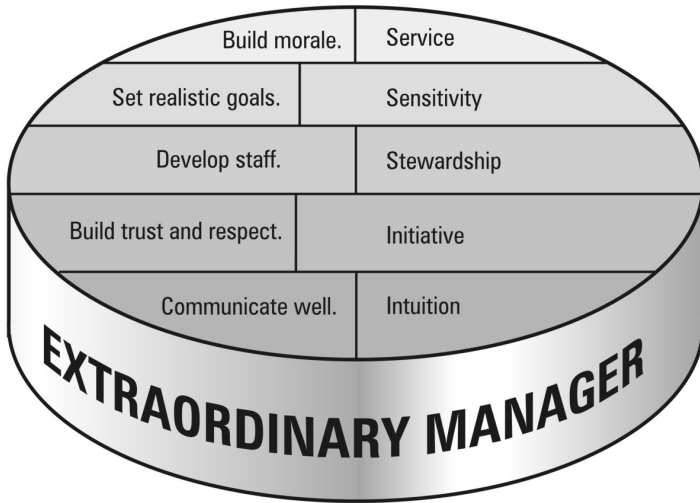


Figure 2.c. Managerial skills + biblical leadership principles = Extraordinary Manager

Apply these biblical leadership principles and you are well on your way in becoming an EXTRAORDINARY MANAGER. May God bless your efforts to become one!

CHAPTER III

EXCELLENCE AT WORK

Anyone can become a Valuable Employee. And, if you are relentlessly pursuing to make improvements in your performance, you are bound to become an Extraordinary Manager. That ANYONE can be You! In fact, Christians have an innate advantage of becoming a better person and better worker than non-believers. The fact is, Christian values and principles are the foundation of good work ethics which are essential for achieving success in your career.

Beyond being valuable and extraordinary, you should strive to be the best that you can be at any level of the corporate hierarchy. When you realize that being good and competent won't make the grade, when working more and trying harder only breaks your back, the only solution is to be excellent. In a competitive

environment, only the best is good enough. In short, only excellence succeeds.

That will bring us now to the third and last chapter, “Excellence at work in the 21st century work place.”

EXCELLENCE

What is excellence? How do you get it? Can it be taught? Excellence is defined as: “the quality or state of being outstanding and superior.”

Excellence is not perfection. Neither is it a matter of ability or competency. Neither can it be taught or imposed, nor is it a rating. Excellence is about doing everyday, ordinary things, extraordinarily well. Excellence is about character – your character!

The word *excel* is oftentimes erroneously defined as, “to do or be better than; to surpass; to show superiority, to surpass others.” The word *excel* does not suggest the concept of competition or outperforming or outdoing others. Excellence is not about comparing yourself with others. It is about you being the best you possibly can.

Excellence is practically the same as success. Success, according to a Stanford University study, is 8% (or less)

APTITUDE and 92% ATTITUDE. In a Harvard University study, it is 15% (or less) APTITUDE and 85% ATTITUDE. Therefore, excellence is an ATTITUDE.

What is attitude? Attitude is the defining attribute of character. It is a settled way of thinking or feeling about something which is typically reflected in ones behavior. In short, attitude is the mental state of a person; his temperament and disposition. As the old saying goes “You are who you think you are.”

Solomon wrote: “What your hands find to do, do it with all your might” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). That is ATTITUDE. Excellence is an attitude we all need to develop.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The Internet, which is now considered as the global repository of knowledge, has yet to come up with practical guides on excellence. So far it hasn't, at least none yet that adds value to what has already been discussed in this literature. So where do we go from here? There is still the one and only source that can

provide us with such an important virtue. He is the One whose ways are Excellent. He is the God who created all things and therefore the only One who can tell us more about excellence.

The Bible provides us five key principles to excellence. They are:

1. Purpose Driven.

To be successful, people always think in terms of competency, proficiency and leadership. Yet, the single most important factor to success is excellence. And excellence is driven by Purpose.

What is Purpose? It is the underlying goal, reason and aim for a particular set of actions. A clear sense of purpose can inspire and stimulate people to greatness. Individuals who discover purpose in their work and are driven by it are people who excel. To find purpose in your chosen field, you have to find your ultimate life's goal.

If you want to be a doctor, you must ask why you want to be one? If your answer is because it is a lucrative profession, the chances are you will be a mediocre

doctor. Alternatively, if your life's aim is to heal people and to find the cure to diseases and illnesses (cancer, etc), your profession will have purpose and meaning. You will probably become a great doctor. It is through people with purpose that we find great advances in medicine, technology and in all other walks of life.

Purpose is the driving force behind an endeavor. We should aim to excel because we want to fulfill a purpose. Money has never been a purpose, it is a reward. In any profession there is money to be earned, but only if one excels in what he does.

When you report for work just because of the pay you receive, your goal is clearly not to excel. As a result, you cannot give an outstanding performance. An excellent worker wants to make a difference in the work place irrespective of compensation or position. To accomplish and fulfill a goal, visualize your purpose in life and in work.

The Bible says in Proverbs 29:18, "Without vision (or purpose) the people perish." Without purpose people languish in 'averageness'. If you want to excel, discover purpose in your personal life and in your approach to business and work.

God is the Great Creator who has always been ‘The Excellent Worker’. Do you think there is a purpose to creation or is it a random mindless act of God? Do you think there is a purpose to the creation of the universe, the solar system, planet earth, ecology and life? Everything God does is driven by a purpose. That purpose is YOU. God’s plan is to make you his very own children. “In love He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves” (Ephesians 1:4). You are the object of God’s love and the reason for the entire creation. In Hebrews 2:10, we find that God’s Purpose is to bring many Sons unto Glory.

The first principle of excellence is to be PURPOSE DRIVEN.

2. Discover Passion.

Excellence needs passion. Work can either be a chore or a delight. It is like housekeeping. Some people really enjoy fixing the house while most consider it to

be an unpleasant task. Similarly, a lawyer, an accountant, an economist, a salesman and an IT professional can do the same thing. But, in order to be successful the work must be done with energy, enthusiasm and delight. If not it just becomes drudgery. One of them might have his heart in it, but the others may just muddle through. This means that the quality of their work will definitely vary as well. The one who is passionate about his work will excel. There is no excellence without passion.

Be passionate in everything you do. When this happens, you will have the eagerness to do your work and to see it through. And you will most certainly excel. Martin Luther King Jr. once said “If a man is called to be a street-sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, “Here lived a great street-sweeper who did his job well.” To excel you must love what you do – irrespective of the task at hand.

What then is passion? Passion is the energy to do the things you love. When you dislike your job nothing

excellent will be achieved. It can only come through loving what you do. It is like loving someone and devoting your life in pursuing that love. When you find your task delightful and pursue it with intensity until its completion, you have discovered passion.

Purpose gives rise to passion. With purpose people find fulfillment, satisfaction and joy in their work. Purpose is forged in a person's mind while passion arises from his heart. Passion is the energy and will that fuels our drive to achieve a purpose.

Do you love your job? Do you like what you are doing? So much so that you find your work interesting enough to spend eight hours a day, five days a week, fifty weeks a year doing it? Are you a Thank God It's Friday person or a Thank God It's Monday person? Are you looking forward to the weekend or the start of the work week? Being passionate about your job is to do what you love and truly enjoying what you do. Can you remember the slogan for the NBA? Yes, I Love This Game. That is passion. When you are passionate about what you do, you will excel in it because you are more committed to its success and the end result is excellence.

Our God is a passionate God. He enjoys what He does. What drives God's passion? One thing and one thing only, 'His purpose for mankind.' Consider Romans 8:19, 21; 28-29: "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God...not only that , but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body...and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...for whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..."

Yes, the entire creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God, in order that we might share in His Glory and nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God. That, my friend, is the passion of our God to bring everything to fruition.

The second key to excellence is DISCOVER PASSION.

3. Unwavering Commitment.

Excellence requires commitment. Commitment is the state of being bound to a course of action with sincerity. It is being steadfast to a purpose.

Research shows that the 80:20 rule applies to the workplace. Meaning that 20% of a company's top employees yield 80% of the positive results. In their view, employers need to give exceptional treatment to the strongest executives. People who have the ability to drive and deliver superior results on a consistent basis.

Thus, most corporate CEOs claim companies need to pay "retention bonuses" to senior and important managers to keep their loyalty. Mercenary loyalty is motivated fundamentally on a "what's in it for me" basis, and is easily pirated when another organization offers more. This kind of mercenary loyalty does not produce the passion, commitment, and excellence that companies need from their executives.

Excellence, dedication and high performance are borne out of a deep commitment and fervor of purpose. Economic rewards are important, but they cannot buy commitment. It is commitment in one's work, not pay,

that makes one excel and become successful. For us to excel, we must have a purpose. And we should feel passionate about it. Only then can we commit to achieving that purpose.

The Biblical term for commitment is faithfulness. God is faithful. He is faithful to His plan of bringing many sons unto glory. We have failed Him, but He will not fail to fulfill His plan. God most certainly will accomplish all that He purposed (Isaiah 46:11; 55:11). Though we languish in our sins, God has a commitment to save the world even at the cost of His Son Jesus Christ. We read in John 3:16-17: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” That is the faithfulness of God. He further said, “He will never leave us or forsake us.” (Hebrews 13:5; John 10:27-29). God is committed to His overall master plan and will see it to fruition.

We too should have that same commitment in our Christian walk with Christ and also in our work.

The third key to excellence is to have Unwavering Commitment.

4. Consistency and Focus

Excellence calls for consistency and focus. Consistency is the reliability and uniformity of results. It is coherence of action and firmness of resolve. In short, consistency is staying in focus. Consistency and focus are vital keys to excellence. When one possesses consistency and focus in work, he or she has the ability to start an activity and follow it through completion. Any one who excels finishes the job!

Most people have trouble maintaining consistency and focus at work. We all have Attention Deficiency Syndrome to one degree or another. The challenge for us is to channel our mind to focus and concentrate on producing results and accomplishing objectives.

In the multi-tasking environment, one might find oneself working on numerous projects at one time. The key to consistency and focus is to have good organization, set right priorities and have sound time management. Being busy does not mean you have to

compromise consistency and focus. In fact, the reverse is true; you need consistency and focus to perform multiple tasks.

Excellence comes from consistency of action and purpose. Being consistent and staying in focus let you channel your creativity and effort to the task at hand producing only the best results.

God, above all, is consistent. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). God does not change, said the Prophet Malachi (Malachi 3:6). His purpose for His creation stands irrevocable especially when it comes to that of man. Can you imagine God changing His mind? If God's purpose changes from time to time, then what is it that we can hope for from Him? God is consistent in His desire to bring us into His kingdom (Luke 12:32). In like manner, He expects us to stick it out in our commitment to seek first the Kingdom of God above anything else (Luke 12:31). His consistency and determination to accomplish His Master Plan for mankind is the greatest privilege one can ever imagine. We should emulate God in His consistency if we want to develop the virtue of excellence.

The fourth key to excellence is to be consistent and stay focused.

5. Quality Execution.

Excellence demands quality execution. What is quality? Quality means inherent characteristics of superiority and a degree of excellence in worth. It is found in the execution and attention to detail. Quality is doing things extraordinarily well, starting from conception to execution. Excellent work begins with careful study, detailed planning and precise execution.

Excellence is the result of quality execution; doing your best each day, in each and everything you do. Therefore excellence is when you feel good every night knowing you have given your best.

God is a God of quality. His concept, plan and execution are always excellent.

Let us take God's example of quality execution from the creation account in Genesis. Consider these three things:

The first is careful study.

God planned to make man in His own image and likeness and put him on planet earth. The earth was void, empty and inhospitable to life. So He chose to refashion the earth in order to make it habitable for mankind. As a God of quality, He set out to survey the whole earth and give it viable design. God was able to sustain life and make a perfect home for man. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2). The first thing He did was to make a careful and diligent study of planet earth before starting the creation process. Quality execution starts from the planning stage.

The second is a detailed action plan.

Genesis chapter one talks about God’s detailed plan in transforming the hostile earth to a paradise able to sustain human life. The earth was designed for

mankind. Light, atmosphere, land and sea, trees and vegetation, sea and flying creatures, animals were all created for the benefit of mankind. The environment was made perfect first before man was fashioned. When Adam came he had a perfect home. That is because God is a perfect God. He is excellent in every detail.

The third is the precise execution of the master plan.

At every stage of the creation process, God was extremely pleased with His quality of work. Let's read Genesis chapter one. Every day after work God looked back at the work of His hands and was pleased and said: "It was good" (verses 4,9,12,18,21,25). As God looked back to the week of creation He knew it was extremely good, that is excellence. "And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good," verse 31. So He was happy everyday of the creation week for it gave Him much pleasure. He enjoyed it tremendously. His quality is always top notch, the best of the best. We too must love quality, so that we are able to finish our day's work and say to ourselves, it was a good and profitable day

which was extremely enjoyable and I accomplished everything above and beyond the call of duty. The fifth key to excellence is **QUALITY EXECUTION**.

YOUR DECISION

Excellence is an attitude that must be desired. Whether you are an employee, or one who rose from the ranks to become a manager, you must be driven to excel. Your journey towards excellence starts today. As a Christian, you have the advantage to become an excellent worker if you put into practice all the biblical principles covered in this book.

To recall, the five Biblical keys to excellence at work are:

1. Be purpose driven.
2. Discover passion.
3. Have unwavering commitment.
4. Show consistency and focus.
5. Have quality in execution.



Figure 3.a. Biblical keys to excellence

The five keys to excellence at work must be in harmony with one another. One cannot operate without the other because they are five parts of a whole and therefore must work together as a complete package. In order to excel, you need purpose as a compass for direction. Then you need passion to fuel the purpose. With passion comes commitment. Commitment needs consistency and focus to stay on course. Finally, everything must be executed with style and quality.

Our Creator is a God of excellence. He is perfect in all His ways and We need to imitate Him. As sons and daughters, we too must excel in the work place.

Excellence is not an accident. It is an attitude that has to be developed. And that development must start now.

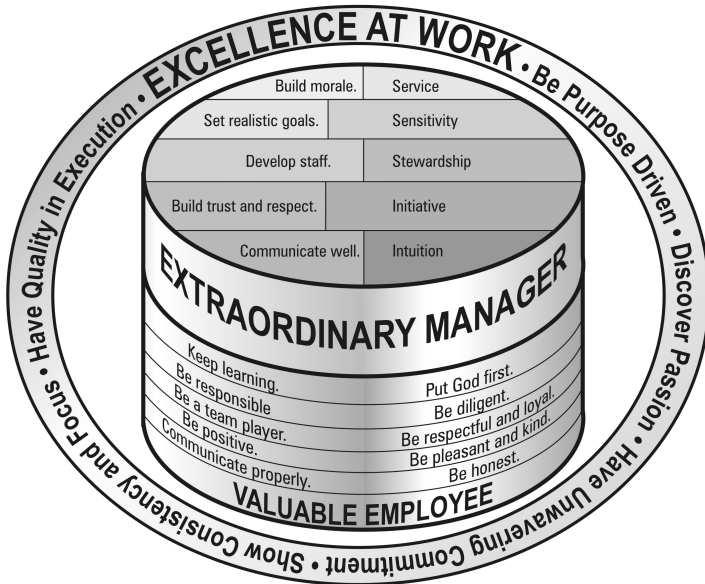


Figure 3b. The embodiment of an excellent worker.

To become an excellent worker at the workplace, you have to hone your skills and combine it with biblical principles. It is our hope that you apply the biblical secrets revealed in this book in your work to maximize your potential. And see yourself being transformed into the excellent Christian worker you want to be.

CONCLUSION

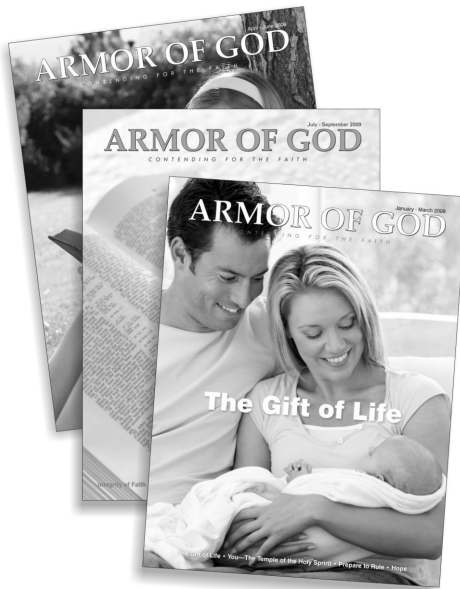
God is good. His blessings are upon His people. He made a promise saying: "...if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments ...all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 28:1-2). Then in the following passages the blessings are listed for a fuller explanation.

The blessings of God are open to everyone, but there are regulations to comply before one can have them. These are: to be completely obedient to the voice of the Lord, to be diligent, industrious and fully active in every part of your work, (Proverbs 10:4; Ephesians 4:28 Thessalonians 3:10-12) in no other way will God's blessings come except through the 'WORK OF YOUR HANDS' (Deuteronomy 14:29; 15:10). True success is within your reach because the Creator who pronounced the blessings made a commitment to work on your side.

"Finally, Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper and enjoy good health and that all may go well with you" (3 John 2).

FOR FURTHER STUDY

One of the ministries of the Church of God International is its quarterly publication *The Armor of God*. It is a magazine of understanding. Plainly revealing the Word of God and making life work for you. It contains interesting articles which you will find both inspiring and informative to read. It is yours for the asking, simply text your request to: +63917 811-6365. Kindly include your name, address and contact number.



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1. Personal and local church evangelism.
2. Television and radio broadcasting.
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If you would like to visit a CGI congregation, or if you would like to speak with a CGI minister or representative with any questions you may have, feel free to write or call us. We will be delighted to serve you in any way possible.

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