

career  
development manitoba



A GUIDE TO  
**SUCCESS**  
IN THE  
**WORKPLACE**

YOUR FUTURE YOUR WAY

Manitoba 



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# Introduction

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## About This Guide

Whether it's your first day on the job or your 10th year on the job, the tips and activities in this guide will help you to reach your full potential at work.

You've likely put in lots of time and effort in school, training, learning on-the-job and your job search. If you're just starting out, you might be worried about how to keep your job. If you've been working for a while, you might be more interested in learning how to advance at work. Regardless of your work situation, this guide can help you. This guide is full of information, tips, tools and stories to help you be successful at work.

If you are having difficulty with any part of the guide, another helpful resource is your local Employment Manitoba Centre. To find one near you call: 1-866-332-5077 or go to [www.gov.mb.ca/employment/emp\\_centre\\_locations.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/employment/emp_centre_locations.html).

Several symbols are used in this guide to help highlight key points, suggestions, cautions, tips and examples.

 <p>EXAMPLE</p>	<p>indicates an example</p>
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 <p>REMEMBER</p>	<p>outlines items to remember</p>
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 <p>ACTIVITY</p>	<p>introduces an activity to complete</p>
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 <p>AVOID</p>	<p>indicates things to avoid</p>
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# 1

## Succeeding in the Workplace

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### Now That I Have the Job, What Do I Need to Know to Succeed?

This guide will provide you with tips and information to maximize your success at work.

#### Starting a New Job

The first days of any new job can be tough, as you wonder how to fit in and learn your new duties. You want to show your employer they hired the right person. To do this, you'll need to:

- Work hard – show interest, take initiative and commit to doing the work
- Work smart – listen, ask questions and work safely
- Believe in yourself – have confidence in your skills and abilities

You were offered the job for a reason – now it's time to show your stuff!

**Be Punctual/Arrive Early** – It's important to arrive at work early. If your start time is 8:30 a.m., you're expected to be working by then. Depending on where you work, you might have to change your clothes, power up a computer, or do some other preparation before you're ready to work. All of these activities should be completed by the time your workday begins (ex: 8:30 a.m.). It is helpful to arrive 10 - 15 minutes before your actual start time.

**New Hire Orientation** – Lots of companies offer an orientation session to new employees. This orientation usually covers things like:

- company overview (ex: what they do, mission, vision)
- company policies (ex: attendance, business practices, working hours)
- benefits (ex: healthcare, employee rewards/recognition)

Some companies may not have a formal orientation for new employees. In this case, you may need to find other ways to learn about the company:

- review the company's website
- talk to your supervisor or human resources staff about company policies
- meet with your supervisor to review your job description and expectations
- find an experienced staff member to help guide you at work

Make sure that you listen, ask questions and try to make a good impression. You want your new employer to feel good about the decision to hire you.

**Take Initiative** – Taking initiative means doing what's needed without being asked. It's a good idea to make a list of tasks that you can do when you have some downtime in your job. Depending on what you do, this type of list might be found in your job description. For example, if you work in a retail store, there are tasks like restocking or tidying to do when you're not busy. Regardless of the type of work that you do, it's a good idea to ask your supervisor what he or she would like you to do when you're not busy with your regular tasks.

**Learn Policies and Procedures** – Learn workplace policies and procedures as quickly as you can. This will help make your transition to a new workplace easier. It'll also help you to achieve success at work as you quickly become an asset to your employer.

**Be Willing to Learn** – A new job is full of opportunities for learning. Even if it's a job that you've done before, a new employer may have different ways of doing things. It's important to be willing to learn new things as well as new ways of doing things that you have done before.

**Be Respectful** – It's important to respect your employer and new co-workers. This includes simple things like:

- turning off the ringer on your personal cell phone and only answering/making personal calls on breaks
- avoiding the personal use of company email, phone, or fax
- listening
- being on time
- doing the best job that you can do

## What Are the Qualities of Successful Employee?

Successful employees have a combination of skills and attitudes. It is important to continue to develop your skills and show a positive attitude toward work to make a good impression. The following summarizes the qualities valued by employers:

### Employability Skills

Employability skills are skills, attitudes and behaviours identified by employers as necessary for workplace success. They are the "skills you need to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work"<sup>1</sup> and include:

- Communication
  - o the ability to communicate well with others
  - o understanding how cultural differences affect communication styles
- Managing information
  - o the ability to gather and use information
- Using numbers
  - o the ability to work with numbers and data
- Thinking and problem solving, which includes the ability to:
  - o look at different points of view
  - o develop and try out solutions
- Demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours
  - o having confidence
  - o taking care of yourself
  - o being honest and open with other people
- Being responsible
  - o setting goals
  - o managing your time
  - o being accountable for your actions

<sup>1</sup> [www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e)

- Being adaptable
  - being flexible
  - being open to feedback and change
- Learning continuously
  - being willing to keep learning and growing
- Working safely
- Working with others
  - being able to work on a team
  - respecting diversity
- Participating in projects and tasks
  - working to standards
  - adapting to new information and change

If you think about it, you've probably used these skills or needed to use them in every workplace you've been in.



REMEMBER

For more information about employability skills, visit:  
[www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx)



ACTIVITY

To compare your skills to the skills employers are looking for, complete the short assessment available at [www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e). Once you've done these activities, think about ways to develop skills you're missing or need to improve.

## Attitudes

The attitude you have or approach you take will contribute to your success at work. Employers have identified several essential attitudes:

- have a good work ethic
- believe in yourself
- be a team player
- have a “can-do” attitude
- stay positive
- look ahead and anticipate the unexpected
- be willing to learn
- embrace new opportunities
- see the importance in every job or task
- be flexible and open to change<sup>3</sup>

It's really important to believe in yourself and your skills. If you don't have confidence in yourself, it will be harder for other people to be confident in you. Building your skills can help you gain confidence.

You can also gain confidence by reflecting on your accomplishments. Check out **A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio** for help with understanding your strengths and demonstrating your skills.

## Essential Skills

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has developed a list of essential skills for work, learning and life:<sup>4</sup>

- reading text
- document use
- numeracy
- writing
- oral communication
- working with others
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use

Most of these skills are transferable. This means they can be used in lots of different areas of your life and in different types of work. You may have developed skills through volunteering, playing sports, or learning. Try to think about which skills might be most useful at work. Look for ways to use your skills to help you succeed.

<sup>2</sup> Employability Skills 2000+ [www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> [www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx)



REMEMBER

For more information about essential skills, visit:

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)
  - [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential\\_skills/general/home.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml)
- Workplace Education Manitoba (WEM)
  - [www.wem.mb.ca/](http://www.wem.mb.ca/)
- Essential Skills Indicator
  - [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential\\_skills/general/online\\_indicator.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/online_indicator.shtml)
- Show What You Know Guide

## Managing Conflict

Even if we don't want it to, conflict can occur at work. You might find yourself in a conflict with another employee over work schedules or tasks. Or, you might have a personality conflict with someone you work with. Whatever the source of the conflict, what's most important is how you manage it. Successful employees are skilled at managing conflict – their own and others! To manage conflict effectively:

- be respectful
- be willing to listen
- be willing to talk openly if there is a problem
- be open to the opinions and ideas of others
- be willing to work as a member of a team
- be willing to seek the help of a supervisor or manager if you can't resolve the conflict

## Corporate Culture: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?

Corporate culture is a term often used to describe an organization's "personality." Just as you have unique traits and characteristics, so do organizations. An organization's corporate culture can include:

- Values
  - What's important/not important
- Vision
  - Where the company is going
- Unspoken rules
- What types of behaviours get rewarded

If you're starting a new job, learning the job can be tough enough on its own. To be successful, you'll also need to learn about the culture of the organization. Some organizations talk about corporate culture in their new hire orientation sessions. If your employer doesn't do this, you'll need to manage your own learning.

To help you learn about an organization's corporate culture:

- Ask questions; your manager or supervisor can tell you how things are done
- Ask your manager to help you find an experienced employee to mentor you and help you learn about the organization
- Talk to your co-workers
- Make note of any new words or acronyms (ex: SOPs = standard operating procedures)



EXAMPLE

### **Sarah Jones:**

Sarah is going to apply for a job at Amy's Boutique. Amy's Boutique is a women's clothing store that Sarah often shops at. Sarah did a culture review to learn more about the workplace and help her be better prepared in case she gets an interview. When Sarah went into Amy's Boutique to pick up the application form, she paid close attention to the store environment and staff and made notes once she got home.

Sarah learned that she was in a similar age range to other employees and that it looks like a good place to work. She realized that she might have to buy new clothes when she's hired and to freshen up her hairstyle. Sarah also noticed that sales are important and it looks like all employees are supposed to be focused on selling. Here's Sarah's worksheet.

#### **Visible "Items" (clues you observe in people, premises, publications, website)**

- store was really bright and modern looking
- there seemed to be more customers looking around in Amy's Boutique than in some of the other stores

#### **"Insider" Language**

- Sarah noticed the letters "ABC" on a sticky note behind the cash desk; she remembered from her previous retail experience that this stands for "Always Be Closing" a sale
- she also heard one of the sales staff say to the other "Always remember ABC"

#### **Common Employee Traits**

- staff looked happy and were really friendly
- the staff that were working were all women and looked like they were between 25 – 45 years old
- they all appeared to be wearing the current line of clothes that the store is selling
- staff looked well groomed with styled hair and subtle make-up



ACTIVITY

The **Culture Review Worksheet** can help you understand your organization's corporate culture. Corporate cultures, like ethnic or regional cultures, can be complicated to understand. A culture review can help you to learn about "how things are done."

**Visible "Items" (clues you observe in people, premises, publications, website)**

**"Insider" Language**

**Common Employee Traits**

If you know someone who works in the organization or find someone you are comfortable with, ask:

- Could you describe your company in 10 words or less?
- What is important in the workplace?
- What are the company's priorities, mission, vision, or values?
- How could I best fit into this team?

# Workplace Examples – Real World Experiences

Now that you've learned about the skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to be successful at work, it's time to test your skills.



ACTIVITY

Read the following workplace scenarios and choose the best response.

## **Scenario One: Balancing the desire to “fit in” with co-workers and employer expectations**

### **Darel McDonald:**

Darel, age 39, is a general labourer who has worked at several different jobs. He has a wife and three children to support.

It's Darel's first week on the job and a couple of his co-workers invite him to walk to a local fast food restaurant for lunch. The line up at the restaurant was long and when they sat down to eat they only had 25 minutes left before they had to be back at work. Darel was feeling a bit worried about the time, knowing that it would take them almost 15 minutes to get back to work. He shared his worry with the others. One of his co-workers said "Don't worry about it. We always take a few extra minutes and no one ever says anything about it." What should Darel do?

- A. Continue eating and not worry about it.
- B. Tell his co-workers that he's not comfortable about being late, especially during his first week, so he'll eat quickly and then meet them back at work.
- C. Stay with his co-workers this time but, when he returns to work, ask the supervisor what the policy is for being late after lunch.

This is a tough situation. Darel wants to fit in with his co-workers and he wants to please his boss. In his last job, people who took extra break time got in trouble. In this case, Darel's best action would be B. He's better off to return to work on time because his co-workers are not the ones who hired him. He could tell them that, because he's so new and still on probation, he thinks he should follow the rules that his boss had given him. Back at the workplace, he could watch for a good time to ask his boss how to handle something similar in the future. Each workplace culture is different; it takes time to learn what's acceptable and what's not.

**Scenario Two:  
Balancing social  
demands and work  
expectations**

**Jennifer Meyer:**

Jennifer Meyer, 21, is a recent college graduate. During her work practicum, she faced a tough situation that made her feel like she had to choose between work and friends. This is what happened...

Jennifer wanted to go out with friends to celebrate a friend's birthday. She had to be at work the next day at 8:00 a.m. which meant she had to wake up by 6:00 a.m. If she went out with her friends she probably wouldn't get home until 1:00 a.m. This wasn't a problem for any of her friends because they were either unemployed or worked later shifts. What were her options?

- A. Friends come first. Let's party!
- B. Call her boss and ask if she can come in late because she has a dentist appointment.
- C. Accept the invitation but tell her friends that she'll have to leave early (ex: by 10:00 p.m.) so that she can get home in plenty of time to get a good night's rest before work the next day.

In this case, Jennifer had to find a balance between work demands and friendships. Jennifer wanted to celebrate with her friends but also knew that she couldn't be tired and have a productive day at work. Jennifer considered her options and chose C. She went out to her friend's birthday celebration, stayed for a couple of hours, and then returned home. She was able to see her friends and not be exhausted at work the next day.

**Scenario Three:  
Handling real or  
perceived conflict at  
work**

**Susan York:**

Susan is 52 years old and works part-time as a customer service representative in a bank. She's married and has two grown children who are now away at university.

Susan's job at the bank, like most jobs, requires her to work as part of a team. Recently, she noticed that some of the junior staff are getting assigned better shifts than she is (ex: not having to work late shifts ending at 7:00 p.m.). Susan is feeling frustrated because she's been working at the bank far longer than some of the people who are getting better shifts. She's upset but isn't sure how to handle the situation. What should she do?

- A. Express her anger to her boss and threaten to quit if things don't change.
- B. Complain to her supervisor about the situation.
- C. Step back and try to look at the situation from all perspectives.  
Request a meeting with the scheduling clerk to ask about the change.

In this case, Susan considered her options and chose C. When she met with the scheduler, she learned that the schedule had changed to accommodate the family needs of other workers. Because Susan's children are grown and independent, the scheduling clerk thought that Susan would be more flexible about the hours that she works. The schedule changes allowed some of the workers with young children to pick them up from daycare before it closed. After Susan understood the need for the change, she felt much better. As a result of their talk, the scheduling clerk realized that the change could have been communicated better to Susan.

When you find yourself in a conflict at work, it is important to step back and try to find the source of your feelings. Complaining to the boss may be seen as "needy" behaviour; it seems like you can't handle situations on your own. Being frustrated about co-workers' privileges may seem like you're not a team player.

# 2

## Workplace Tips

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There are endless “do’s and don’ts” for workplace behaviour depending on where you work. A few basics are listed here. If you’re not sure about the expectations in your workplace, ask your supervisor.



REMEMBER

- arrive early
- dress appropriately
- have a positive attitude
- get proper sleep
- ask questions, if you’re not sure
- follow Instructions
- be yourself
- ask for help if needed
- pay attention
- show your enthusiasm
- take initiative
- be friendly
- be willing to learn
- learn the policies and procedures
- have good attendance
- ask for feedback
- be respectful
- be honest
- be supportive of co-workers
- stay focused on work
- use work computer for work purposes

# 3

## Managing My Career

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It's easy to think "Jim is so lucky; he always seems to get a break and get promoted to better jobs." What you might not see is that Jim has been actively planning and managing his career. This has allowed him to take advantage of new opportunities.

You're responsible for managing your own career. This includes taking charge of your learning so that you keep up with changing technology or workplace practices.



REMEMBER

Tips for Career Management:

- believe in yourself
- be willing to learn
- welcome new experiences and opportunities
- set goals and follow through with action steps
- develop positive relationships



ACTIVITY

This Career Management Behaviours Checklist shows many strategies that people use to manage their careers. Check (✓) all that you have used within the past year.

*Within the past year, to manage my career, I have:*

	Completed some self-assessments (ex: skills, interests, values, or personal style surveys)
	Seriously reflected on my personal values and needs as they relate to my work
	Compared my skills to those skills currently in demand in my field
	Requested feedback about my work from a supervisor
	Requested feedback about my work from a colleague, customer, or client
	Paid attention to changes within my organization that could affect my work
	Read about or noticed changes within my industry or profession that could affect my work
	Completed courses or seminars to keep my skills up-to-date
	Participate on a project because it would broaden my skills
	Deliberately diversified my work experience to keep my career options open
	Actively searched for, or solicited, new work opportunities (internally or externally)
	Expressed to my employer my willingness to relocate, travel, or otherwise accommodate work changes
	Shared my career accomplishments with colleagues and professional acquaintances
	Networked with others in my field by attending meetings, conferences, or other events
	Informed supervisors or managers of my interest in taking on new challenges at work
	Managed my money so that I could handle a period of unemployment between jobs
	Made financial plans that are flexible enough to allow me to pursue interesting career opportunities as they arise
	Made changes to better balance my work role with my other life roles
	Maintained a level of health and fitness that allows me to work effectively
	Set some specific career goals
	Implemented an action plan to achieve my career goals – learning plan



#### ACTIVITY

After reflecting on your career behaviours, think about what you could do differently. Use the space provided to identify specific actions you could take to manage your career.



#### EXAMPLE

If you need more information or help setting goals, check out **A Guide to Planning Your Career** or visit: [www.manitoba.ca/careerplanning](http://www.manitoba.ca/careerplanning)

# What Is Continuous Learning and Why Is It Important?

It used to be common to graduate from high school, college, university, or other training and enter the workforce as a trained person. In the past, there wasn't much focus on more training or schooling once you got a job. Now, it's expected that even after you finish formal training and get a job you'll continue to learn. You might do this by taking courses, workshops, or learning on the job. We live in a "knowledge economy" that values learning.

Continuous learning, also called lifelong learning, is an Essential Skill in a knowledge economy. Continuous learning benefits both employers and employees by:

- learning new skills
- keeping skills and knowledge current
- opening up new opportunities
- creating opportunities for promotion
- discovering new interests
- increasing self-confidence
- enhancing job satisfaction
- increasing employability

It's not surprising that many successful people are lifelong learners.

Learning does not always mean formal schooling. There are lots of ways to learn:

- read
- network
- volunteer
- enrol in courses, workshops, or programs
- engage in on the job training
- find or be a mentor



EXAMPLE

Here are examples of how different individuals are continuing to learn:

**Darel McDonald** - Darel worked for a number of employers as a labourer and developed his skills on the job. At one job he learned how to drive a forklift and at another job he learned how to operate a sinter machine.

**Sarah Jones** – Sarah was a homemaker for the past 10 years and focused on raising her children. This has allowed her to volunteer extensively at her children's school. Through her volunteer work she's learned excellent teamwork skills and has become a great fundraiser.

**Jennifer Meyer** – Jennifer is looking for work as an Assistant Network Administrator but has little work experience and few contacts in the field. She decided to join a professional association to help her meet new people and keep up with changes in her field.



REMEMBER

You're responsible for your own learning. Don't wait for someone to offer you an opportunity. Keep your eyes open for new learning opportunities. You might be surprised at how many opportunities are available.

## Developing a Personal Learning Plan

A personal learning plan is just that – your plan for developing more skills and knowledge. To develop a personal learning plan, you need to identify what you want to learn.

First, identify gaps in your knowledge or skills that, if filled, will help you to be more successful at work. Find out if your organization has a learning plan process. If it doesn't, use the learning plan in this guide to get started. Once you've developed your plan, share it with your employer. Your employer might be able to help by:

- giving you more suggestions
- providing opportunities to learn on the job
- enrolling you in courses, workshops, or training sessions
- paying for conferences, professional memberships, or training

The Comparing Your Skills and Personal Learning Plan Worksheet will help you to:

- compare your skills to the skills you need to be successful at work
- highlight gaps in your skills and knowledge
- develop a plan to fill the gaps

Revisit your personal learning plan regularly (ex: every six months) to make sure that you're achieving your goals. Also, keep your eyes open for unexpected learning and career opportunities.



EXAMPLE

### **Frank Peters:**

Frank recently changed occupations because of a workplace accident. He used to be a Heavy Equipment Operator and is now a Quality Assurance Coordinator/Staff Trainer. He's working for the same employer that he used to work for and he has lots of the skills that his new position requires. Frank knows he has a few gaps so he completed the **Comparing Your Skills and Personal Learning Plan Worksheet** to help identify them.



ACTIVITY

Use the **Comparing Your Skills and Personal Learning Plan Worksheet** to help assess your skills and identify gaps. To assess your skills, compare them to others who are successful in the job you're working in (or something very similar). Use Frank's completed activity as an example.

In the first half of this activity Frank identified skills needed in his job and the required competency level (basic, good or exceptional). He then self evaluated and placed a check mark by the skills he has.

In the second half of the activity Frank created a personal learning plan.

Skills	Level			(✓)
	Basic	Good	Exceptional	
Facilitation			✓	
Developing workshops			✓	
Conduct training needs analyses			✓	
Coordination of committee volunteers			✓	✓

What do I want to learn? (ex: goal)	How will I do it? (ex: take a course, self-study, mentor, read journal)	What do I need? (ex: funding, time off work)	When do I hope to achieve my goal?
Develop workshops Conduct training needs analyses	Take a two-week course on workshop and training curriculum development	Need time off work	Within next three months
Develop better facilitation skills	Take two-day workshop on facilitation  Read more on facilitation (e.g. online, print resources)	Funding; the course is offered on weekends, so I won't need time off work	Two weeks from now



## Mentoring – Finding or Becoming a Mentor

Another great way to learn is through a mentor. A mentor is someone with specific experience or expertise. Some organizations have formal mentor programs that partner new staff with senior staff or a manager. People who are new to a role (ex: manager) might be paired with someone who is experienced in that role. If you're new to a job or an organization, consider finding someone to mentor you. When you're looking for a mentor, find someone who is:

- a good communicator
- able to motivate and inspire
- willing to share knowledge and experiences
- interested in helping others
- trustworthy
- familiar with the corporate culture

Having a mentor can help you to:

- become familiar with a new workplace
- adjust to a new corporate culture
- learn from experience
- network
- increase productivity at work

If you have skills that you're willing and able to share with others, mentoring can be a rewarding way to learn. Mentors benefit through:

- sharing experience and knowledge
- developing leadership skills
- helping others
- learning by teaching

## Defining Success

You've read lots about general skills and attitudes required to be successful at work. One essential ingredient is to define what success at work means for you. If you don't take time to define what success means to you, then how will you know if you've achieved it? For many people, their idea of success is closely linked to their work values.



EXAMPLE

Frank and Gabriela are two individuals who are not able to do the work that they were doing previously. They need to redefine what success at work looks like for them in their new roles. Both of them used the What Do You Value At Work? activity to help them identify work values.

**Frank Peters:**

Frank had to change the type of work that he does because of an injury from a workplace accident. Because Frank can no longer do the work he loved to do, it was really important for him to redefine what success at work means for him. For Frank, success at work means:

- average to high pay
- enough free time to spend with family
- good relationships with co-workers
- interesting tasks or projects to work on
- enjoying his work

**Gabriela Tomagan:**

Gabriela moved to Winnipeg from the Philippines about a year ago. With no Canadian work experience she hasn't been able to find a job that uses all her skills and abilities. She's taken a position as a Senior Research Assistant that requires less education and experience than she has. Gabriela reflected on what success at work means for her, how that she can't do the same level of work that she could do in the Philippines. For Gabriela, success at work in Canada means:

- taking risks through research
- working under pressure
- having lots of learning opportunities
- problem-solving
- gaining recognition through research
- challenging projects to work on
- working as a member of a research team

Now that Frank and Gabriela know what they value at work, they can try to create opportunities to do things they love.



ACTIVITY

Use the **What Do You Value At Work?** activity to help you understand what you value at work. Knowing what you value most at work can help you define what success at work means for you.

1. Read through each of the values listed in the table and check off the ones that are important to you.
2. Use the space at the bottom of the list to add other values important to you.

Value	✓
activity	
advancement	
adventure	
authority	
autonomy	
benefits	
challenge	
change and variety	
community involvement	
competition	
consistency	
co-operation	
creativity	
economic security	
education	
entrepreneurship	
environment	
excitement	
faith	
family friendly	
fast pace	
friendly co-workers	

Value	✓
good income	
helping others	
honesty	
improving society	
independence	
influence over others	
interpersonal relations	
interesting work	
leadership	
learning opportunities	
leisure	
making decisions	
management	
mediation	
mentoring	
minimal supervision	
personal development	
physical activity	
problem-solving	
public contact	
recognition	
respect	

Value	✓
responsibility	
rewards	
risk	
routine	
safety	
schedule	
self-expression	
social interaction	
stability	
status	
teamwork	
time for flexibility	
time for family	
travel	
work under pressure	
work alone	
work with others	



#### ACTIVITY

Based on the **What Do You Value At Work?** activity and your experiences, reflect on what success at work looks like for you. Use the space provided to describe your vision of success. Once you have your vision written out, think about ways to achieve your vision. What specific steps do you need to take to increase your success?

# 4

## Performance Reviews

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### What do I need to know?

Performance reviews are mainly used by organizations to see how well you're doing your job (ex: accomplishments, successes, shortcomings). They can also be used to:

- highlight professional development and training needs
- see how well organizational goals or targets are being met
- understand the career goals of workers
- develop succession plans (plans to replace people who retire or to fill key roles within an organization)
- help make decisions about pay increases

Good performance reviews are designed to be helpful and not critical. Good feedback is constructive. It helps you see what you are doing well and learn what needs to improve.

Every organization evaluates employees differently. Some use formal reviews. Others give feedback only when needed or requested. This section will help you prepare for an evaluation. It will also show you how to assess your own work performance.

### Who Conducts Performance Reviews?

This is done differently in every organization. Usually, the person who conducts your performance review works closely with you and knows your work. But, this isn't always true. Some reviews are done by human resources staff or new managers who haven't had a chance to watch your work. Some organizations use a 360° approach to evaluation. This type of review collects information from people in different levels of the organization (ex: supervisor, co-worker, customer, self-evaluation).

Some organizations may conduct a review, make decisions, and explain them later, if at all! Others ask you to conduct your own review and then a supervisor signs off on it. You may get a written evaluation, performance summary, or verbal feedback. Other employers will just tell you their feedback. In any case, bring paper and a pen so that you can make notes.

Whatever the approach, be prepared to provide input into your review.

### Tips to Prepare for a Performance Review

The most important thing to remember about a performance review is to prepare! The best place to start is with your job description, if you have one. Review it – compare what it says you're supposed to be doing to what you're actually doing. Think of creative ways to clearly show what you've accomplished. Here are some suggestions:

- be honest – only take credit for your own achievements
- use your portfolio to highlight accomplishments
- keep copies of emails, thank you cards, or other bits of "evidence" of a job well done
- request feedback from co-workers or clients, if appropriate



REMEMBER

For more information about portfolio development, check out **A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio.**

Review copies of your previous performance reviews to identify whether you met assigned targets or goals.



EXAMPLE

**Sarah Jones:**

Sarah has volunteered at her children's school for the past six years. The school does not formally review volunteers so Sarah decided to fill out a **Self-Assessment Performance Review Worksheet.**

Element	Result/Evidence
<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Volunteer</b>
Timeframe (ex: June 20XX – January 20XX)	September 20XX – Present (six years)
What have I accomplished? (ex: goals met, examples of work activities)	Coached primary co-ed soccer to win intramural championships three years in a row Coordinated fundraising activities
What learning and professional development activities have I taken? (list all)	None
What learning or development opportunities do I need to help me do my job / or to advance?	I'd like to develop my supervisory skills so that I could eventually get a job as a manager or assistant manager of a store.  I've got some supervisory skills from volunteering to supervise students on field trips but I'd like to get supervisory experience dealing with other volunteers.
What are my short and long-term career goals? (ex: six months, one year, five years)	My short-term career goal is to return to the workforce. I'd like to get a job working in a retail clothing store.  In the long-term, I'd like to manage a retail store, preferably one that sells women's fashions.
Does my pay match my job responsibilities? If not, why not?	There is no pay because it's a volunteer position.
How has my performance helped the organization to meet its goals/targets?	I've been able to help the classroom teachers by working one-on-one with kids that need math and reading help. The fundraising activities I participated in also helped to buy new supplies for the classrooms.
Overall Assessment (check the most appropriate response)	<input type="checkbox"/> Need to Improve – didn't meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Good – met expectations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outstanding – exceeded expectations



ACTIVITY

Use the following **Self-Assessment Performance Review Worksheet** to help prepare for a performance review or as a check of your own progress at work.

Element	Result/Evidence
<b>Job Title</b>	
Timeframe (ex: June 20XX – January 20XX)	
What have I accomplished? (ex: goals met, examples of work activities)	
What learning and professional development activities have I taken? (list all)	
What learning or development opportunities do I need to help me do my job / or to advance?	
What are my short and long-term career goals? (ex: six months, one year, five years)	
Does my pay match my job responsibilities? If not, why not?	
How has my performance helped the organization to meet its goals/targets?	
Overall Assessment (check the most appropriate response)	<input type="checkbox"/> Need to Improve – didn't meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Good – met expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding – exceeded expectations



ACTIVITY

Use the **Post-Performance Review Worksheet** to help you meet goals identified in your performance review.

What do I want to learn? (ex: goal)	How will I do it? (ex: take a course, self-study, mentor, read journal)	What do I need? (ex: funding, time off work)	When do I hope to achieve my goal?

## Receiving and Giving Feedback

If you completed the self-assessment performance review sheet in this guide, you likely won't be surprised by feedback you receive at work. But, that's not always the case. Try to accept all feedback with an open mind and not get defensive or upset by it. If you have questions about feedback, you can ask or request a follow-up meeting. You might need time to think about feedback before questions come to mind.

Sometimes you'll be asked to give feedback to others. Effective feedback is:

- thoughtful
- timely
- descriptive

Think about what you want to say and how to say it well. Avoid using judgmental language or vague statements. Choose your time and place appropriately; do not give feedback when you're upset or angry. Give detailed feedback to help the person know what's been done well or what needs to improve. Support your feedback with facts and examples.

## What If I Work Somewhere Without a Formal Performance Review Process?

Not all employers formally evaluate employees. If your organization doesn't have a formal process and you'd like feedback to help you succeed at work, ask your supervisor if you could set up a time to chat about how things are going at work. Be clear with your employer about what you want to discuss (ex: your performance, goals, training needs, or other specifics). Just as you wouldn't want your employer to spring an evaluation on you without giving you the opportunity to prepare, it's important to give him or her a chance to prepare for your discussion.



REMEMBER

You're responsible for your own success. Set aside time regularly to review your own progress at work on a regular basis. This will help to keep you on track and remind you of goals or targets you are working toward.

# Negotiation Tips

There may be times in your career when you hope to negotiate a raise or promotion. Sometimes performance reviews inform such decisions. When you're preparing for a performance review, think about salary and benefits. Ask yourself:

- Am I being paid fairly for the work I do?
- Does my performance seem to deserve an increase in salary or benefits?
- Have I recently achieved a significant accomplishment (ex: completed a relevant degree, completed a large sale, increased department profits)?
- Has my job description changed (ex: have I taken on more responsibilities)?
- Am I happy with my current work arrangement (ex: quantity, type of work)?

Before asking for a raise or extra benefits, however, be sure to:

- Know what the job is worth
  - Research similar positions to find out what the average salary is for someone with your level of experience and skill
- Look for win-win opportunities that will meet both your needs and your employer's



REMEMBER

Follow the "4 P's" of successful negotiation:

1. Create a **positive** environment by taking a win-win approach.
2. **Prepare** thoroughly by brainstorming compensation possibilities (ex: salary, benefits) making sure to list your reasoning.
3. Identify and **prioritize** possibilities for consideration (ex: you may be willing to take a lesser salary with an extra week's holidays per year or access to professional development funding).
4. Be **patient** – allow enough time for a thoughtful response to what you asked for.

# 5

## Work-Life Balance

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Work-life balance is taken more seriously as employers try to minimize employee absences and maximize employee productivity. Balance is unique for each person. Reflecting on your values, priorities and life circumstances will help you define what work/life balance means for you.

### The Cost of Ignoring Work-Life Balance

Ignoring work-life balance may negatively impact both you and your employer. Costs to you may include:

- poor work performance
- strained relationships (ex: with co-workers, at home, with friends)
- illness
- stress and anxiety
- depression
- conflict

Costs to employers may include:

- increased employee absences
- poor quality work
- employee "burn out"
- tension in the workplace
- increased employee turnover
- low morale or poor employee attitudes
- decreased profitability

It's easy to keep adding more activities to already busy lives. As you've seen from the previous lists, however, there are costs and negative consequences if you lose balance in your life. You might be asked to take on extra responsibility at work, enrol in a course, coach your child's hockey team, volunteer at a community organization, or support your aging parents. However, be realistic about your expectations and commitments. Before taking on any new activities or responsibilities, ask:

- Am I interested?
- Do I have the time or ability to do this?
- Will I have to give up something else to make time for this?
- What will my life look like if I take this on?
- Can I say no? If I do say no, what are the consequences?

Use these five questions to guide your decisions about taking on new activities or responsibilities.



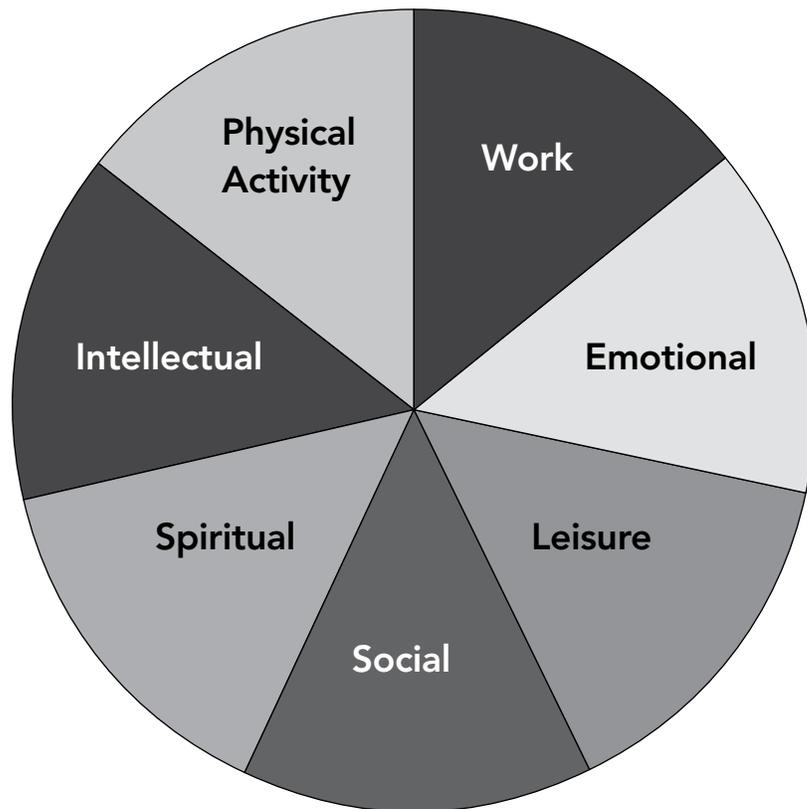
AVOID

Don't overload yourself! It's really easy to keep adding more roles, responsibilities, and activities into our lives without taking anything away. Every time you add something new, think about whether or not you need to graciously say "no" to something else.

<sup>1</sup> <http://thinkexist.com/quotation/the-basic-rule-is-that-there-is-no-rule-about-the/701129.html>

## The Balance Wheel

To help you better understand all the pieces of your life that you're trying to juggle, create a personal balance wheel. Each person's wheel will look different; not everyone will have the same categories or priorities. The amount of time devoted to each component may also be different.

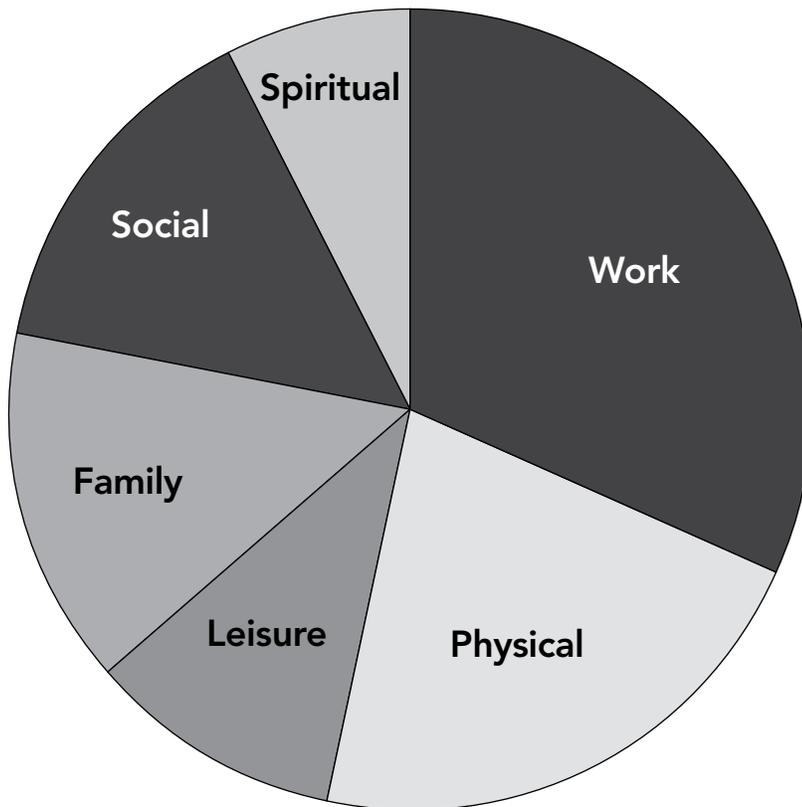




EXAMPLE

**Darel McDonald:**

Darel has a wife and three kids, 12 – 17. Darel likes working, but really enjoys his leisure and family times. In this balance wheel, Darel identified all the elements he needs for his life to be in balance.





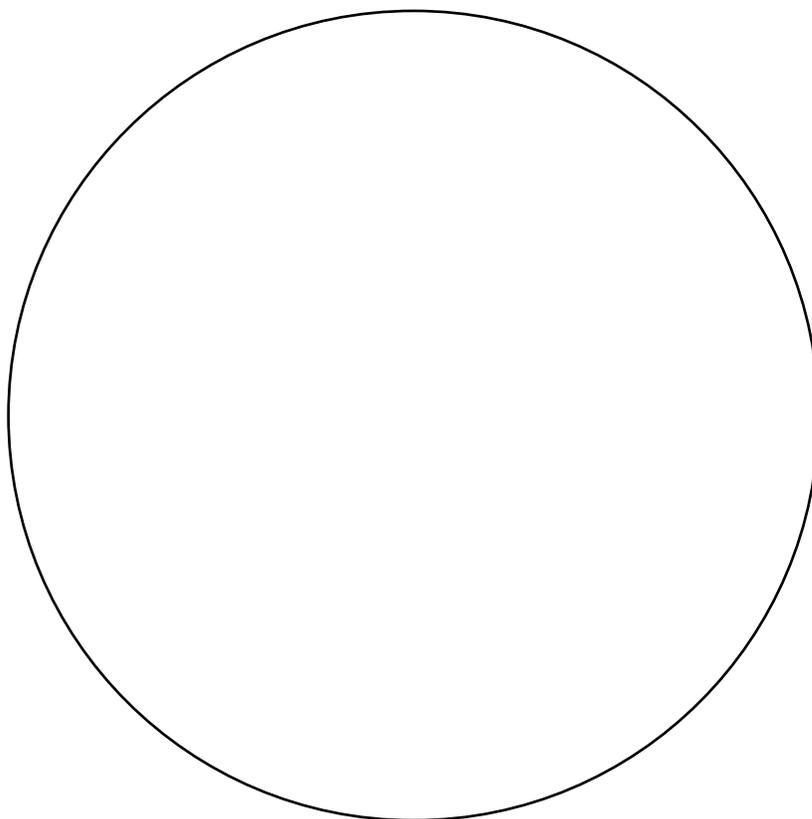
ACTIVITY

### My Balance Wheel

Identify elements that you need for your life to be in balance. On the blank wheel, draw lines to indicate the relative size of each of those elements and label each part.

On your wheel, consider including:

- Work \_\_\_\_%
- Physical \_\_\_\_%
- Emotional \_\_\_\_%
- Spiritual \_\_\_\_%
- Intellectual \_\_\_\_%
- Social \_\_\_\_%
- Leisure \_\_\_\_%
- Family \_\_\_\_%



## Tips for Managing or Restoring Balance

This section may help if you find yourself out of balance. Balance is unique to each person; what feels balanced for you might not feel balanced to others. Everybody has different needs, priorities and wants.

In an ideal world, you wouldn't need to worry about regaining balance because you wouldn't have lost balance in the first place. Unfortunately, for many people, this isn't the reality. If you're feeling out of balance, take some time to identify options before the feeling becomes worse:

- reflect on what's working and what's not
- talk with your employer
- find people who can help you to restore balance
  - ex: family, friends, coaches, counsellors
- eat properly
- exercise
- get enough rest

Recognizing what's working well lets you build on strengths and positive supports. When you're a bit out of balance, its these strengths that will likely give you the resilience to cope.

Acknowledging what's not working is also important. It can be the first step in restoring work-life balance as you set specific goals for change.

Sometimes you feel off balance because of too many demands on your time. If this is the case, carefully consider which activities to keep and which you're willing or able to drop. Use the five questions introduced in the **Work-Life Balance** section to help with your decisions.

Saying no to new activities or pulling back from old ones can be tough. Realistically, you may not be able to completely drop any of your current activities. In that case, consider how you could spend less time in some of them or organize them differently (ex: bringing a healthy lunch to work and going for a walk at lunch instead of going to the gym after work and picking up fast food for dinner afterwards).

The **What's Working? What's Not?** activity can help you identify your strengths and coping resources; it can also help you identify priorities for change. Use it as a tool to manage or restore your balance.



ACTIVITY

Complete the **What's Working? What's Not?** activity to get an idea of how balanced your life is and identify areas that might need some attention.

See **Appendix A** for an extra worksheet.

What's Working?	What's Not?
At Work...	At Work...
At Home...	At Home...
In Relationships...	In Relationships...
With my Health and Fitness...	With my Health and Fitness...
Mentally and Emotionally...	Mentally and Emotionally...
Spiritually...	Spiritually...



ACTIVITY

Once you've completed the **What's Working? What's Not?** activity, think about how you can build on your strengths and begin to change some of the things that are out of balance.

**What's Working:  
Things to Strengthen**

**Things to Change**

# Summary

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This guide has provided examples, activities, and tips for success in your job and life. Here are some key points to remember.

- take time to learn about workplace expectations
- find out what skills and attitudes you need to be successful at work
- engage in continuous learning: on the job, at home, in school
- review your own performance regularly (ex: every three to six months)
- learn from feedback you receive from others
- take an active role in managing your career
- know what success at work means to you
- try to work toward work/life balance
- be careful about accepting too many responsibilities
- ask for help at work, at home, or from others if you are feeling overwhelmed

This is one of several guides in a series to support your career planning and job search. For more information, visit [www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment](http://www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment).

# Appendix A: What's Working? What's Not?

What's Working?	What's Not?
At Work...	At Work...
At Home...	At Home...
In Relationships...	In Relationships...
With my Health and Fitness...	With my Health and Fitness...
Mentally and Emotionally...	Mentally and Emotionally...
Spiritually...	Spiritually...

# Appendix B: Guide Links

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## External Weblinks

- Employability Skills 2000+ [www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/checklists/employability.jsp?lang=e)
- Essential Skills Indicator  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential\\_skills/general/online\\_indicator.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/online_indicator.shtml)
- For more information about career planning, tips for success in the workplace and other related topics, please visit [www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment](http://www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment)
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential\\_skills/general/home.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml)
- Workplace Education Manitoba (WEM) [www.wem.mb.ca/](http://www.wem.mb.ca/)

## Links In This Guide

- **Appendix A**
- **Work-Life Balance**

## Links to Other Guides

- A Guide to Completing Applications
- A Guide to Planning Your Career
- A Guide to Writing Resumes
- A Guide to Writing Cover Letters
- A Guide to Outstanding Interviews
- A Guide to Conducting an Effective Job Search
- A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio
- A Guide to Recognizing Your Prior Learning