GET IT RIGHT FROM DAY ONE

You've landed your first professional job.
Here's how to make the most of the opportunity.

You have entered the professional job market. Chances are your first job after graduation will not be your last. However, your experiences in your first professional job helps you make decisions about your career going forward. Here's how you can make the most of the situation.

More Than A Resumé

As a new professional, learning how to be one is your first task. You want to get noticed for the all the right reasons. You want to differentiate yourself from your peers in the appropriate way. You want to be effective at what you do.

Now is the time for you to show your value and fit to your new employer. You want to be seen as an asset; the new hire they want to keep and mentor. There are things you can do in your first year to ensure your employer knows and values you and your work.

GET IT RIGHT FROM DAY ONE: THE BASICS

- **Soak up everything you can**. When you are new, you will be overwhelmed at first. Information is coming at you fast and from all directions. Spend your first few weeks on the job absorbing, reflecting and learning. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." Ask questions. Learn from everyone. Most of all, be curious.

- **Listen more than you talk to develop good listening skills**. You want to earn a reputation as someone who pays attention and gets things right the first time.

- **Don't expect a lot of hand-holding**. You will need to be proactive in developing relation-ships and seeking out help from peers and colleagues.

- **Relationships really matter**. Take time to build connections with your boss, co-workers and staff. Engage in some social activities. Networking inside the company is vital to getting promoted and growing professionally in any organi-zation.

- **Set out to exceed expectations.** The job market is incredibly competitive so you need to achieve more than ever, and as soon as possible. Show that you are an employee who can deliver results.

- **Pace yourself** or you will burn out quickly. You can't learn it all or do it all in your first year. Focus on a few early wins. Think about a few specific areas to show success. This helps to build your reputation and credibility, and you won't burn out.

- **Know-it-alls never learn**. Knowing everything does not make you incredibly valuable. Most of the time, it makes you annoying. Asking questions, and more importantly not being afraid to do so, is another key element to new job success.

- **Do what's required, from the menial to the extraordi-nary, to get the job done**. Be prepared to do a lot of work early on that may seem beneath your abilities. Keep in mind it's more important to work in a good organization than to start with a good position. Demonstrate your energy, dedication and ability—advancement will follow.

Things you don't get….yet.

> "Roll up your sleeves, build credibility, and be very authentic with everybody so people start to believe you and trust you." *Fred Hassan, chairman of Bausch & Lomb*

- **Show initiative.** Be the first in and the last to leave. Ask colleagues and your boss what you can do. Don't wait for them to come to you instead go to them and show you are willing to do whatever it takes. You have more ground to make up than everyone else around you, and you do have something to prove.

- **Display a positive, can-do attitude**. Even if others are negative or have whiny attitudes, you still need to remain positive. Likewise, show respect to your boss, colleagues, customers and staff. Be polite, calm and professional in your dealings with others.

- **Be open-minded and willing to learn**. Be willing to try something new. Seek feedback from your boss and co-workers and listen to their constructive comments.

- **Continue learning.** Set goals for the knowledge and skills you will need to develop to succeed at your job. Create your learning development plan. Once you have learned as much as you can on your job, learn about other jobs. Knowledge is valued at companies.

- **Work hard to be known for something.** Devel-op strength in some area the organization val-ues. Employers want hardworking, loyal, dependable and conscientious employees who show great initiative.

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- **Get advice** from the best performers and follow what they do. It is okay to ask for help. It's even better if you can get a few volunteers to show you the ropes. Make sure to find out the dos and don'ts of the organization since each company has unique cultural norms.

- **Be the best you can be**. Keep records of your accomplishments, so you will be prepared to share this with your boss when it is time for your review. He or she may not have seen all of the things you have accomplished.

- **Pick up the phone.** You can't hide behind your computer. Business is personal. It gets done on the phone and in person. The phone should be your first instinct, not last, to talk to people and source business opportunities.

- **Don't wait to be told what to do.** You can't have a sense of entitlement without a sense of responsibility. You'll never get ahead by waiting for someone to tell you what to do. Saying "nobody asked me to do this" is a guaranteed recipe for failure. Err on the side of doing too much, not too little.

- **Take responsibilities for your mistakes.** You should be making lots of mistakes when you're early on in your career. But you shouldn't be defensive about errors in judgment or execution. Stop trying to justify your screwups. You're only going to grow by embracing the lessons learned from your mistakes, and committing to learn from those experiences.

- **You should be getting your butt kicked.** Meryl Streep in "The Devil Wears Prada" would be the most valuable boss you could possibly have. This is the most impressionable, malleable and formative stage of your professional career. Working for someone that demands excellence and pushes your limits every day will build the most solid foundation for your ongoing professional success.

- **A new job a year is not a good thing.** One-year stints don't broadcast you're so talented that you keep outgrowing your company. It lets employers know you don't have the discipline to see your own learning curve through to completion. It takes about two to three years to master any new critical skill, so give yourself at least that much time before you jump ship. Otherwise your resume reads as a series of red flags on why not to be hired.

- **Speak up, not out.** Trash-talking an employer is a cancer in the workplace. If you have issues with management, culture, or your role and responsibilities, SPEAK UP where it counts: to your supervisor or other management. Don't take those complaints and trash-talk the company or coworkers on lunch breaks and anonymous chat boards. If you can respectfully and effectively communicate what needs to be improved, you have the ability to shape your surroundings and professional destiny.

- **Map effort to your professional gain.** You're going to be asked to do things you don't like to do. Keep your eye on the prize. Connect what you're doing today with where you want to be tomorrow. That should be all the incentive you need.

- **You need professional mentors.** The most guaranteed path to success is to emulate those who've achieved what you seek. You should always have at least three people you call mentors who are where you want to be. Their free guidance and counsel will be the most priceless gift you can receive.

- **Your reputation is priceless; don't damage it.** Over time, your reputation is the most valuable currency you have in business. It's the invisible key that either opens or closes doors of professional opportunity. Especially in an age where everything is forever recorded and accessible, your reputation has to be guarded like the most sacred treasure. It's the one item that, once lost, you can never get back.

Jane Horowitz champions college students in their job search. She works with recent and soon-to-be graduates from colleges and universities across the country, with majors from engineering to fine arts, from computer design to banking. Jane makes a measurable and lasting difference in college students' lives.

More Than A Resumé motto.

> *If you tell me how I will forget.*
> *If you show me how I may remember.*
> *But if you involve me it will stay with me forever.*

As with all efforts, you must be clear about your direction. You don't take a road trip without knowing where you want to end up. Develop a plan for your first few years and stick to it. Then look to the longer term.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Stay focused on what you are doing now. Your best preparation for moving up is to do what you are doing now really well. But, you should look toward your future.

Step 1: Identify your destination

You don't need to overly complicate this task. The following questions are helpful in thinking out your destination:

- Where do you want your career to be in two years?

- Where do you want your career to be in five years?

Your two-year goal is merely a step in an overall direction; a five-year goal helps to define a career path. Sometimes it's difficult to see that far out in time, as life and opportunities present themselves and can cause you to reset your plans. That's okay, but it's good to be looking two steps ahead.

Don't set goals just for the sake of doing it. You need goals that help to motivate you into action. If you're making a goal based on what someone else wants, it isn't going to be that compelling for you. Being clear on your direction means being clear that this direction is inspiring and motivational, and you know what is driving you to it.

Step 2: Do a gap analysis

You want to figure out the differences in the qualifications between where you are right now, and your two-year goal or next step.

- Reviewing job descriptions for the positions you are aiming at is a good way to get specific information about the skills and experience that are expected.

- Go through the job descriptions to compare your current state of skills, education or experience to what is listed and rate yourself.

As you rate yourself, make notes about your thinking for future reference.

Once you have completed this exercise, identify all of the items where there is anywhere from a fair amount to a substantial amount of development that is needed. Look for commonalities and clump those together as a category. You will discover that there will be themes to your gaps.

- Where are your gaps?

- How and where can you gain the experience?

- Do you have to do X before Y?

Step 3: Create your development plan

You now have a two-year plan with all the details of where and what you need to develop to get you where you want to go. Consult with your mentor to help you with ideas of how to get the skills you need to add. If you think it is appropriate, also consult with your boss.

Usually, there are multiple ways of accumulating the needed skills. You may also want to have multiple ways of further developing your current skill set to add depth to it. You may need to research various ways to get the skills you need.

You need to keep yourself accountable to your plan, and the best way to do that is to give yourself a start-by-date. You can't predict how long or how much work you will have to do in order to develop the skill at the level you need, but you do have control over the action you take to get started.

Keep track. This will allow you to stay focused on your progress and remind you of your next steps.

Don't learn the tricks of the trade, learn the trade. There are no shortcuts to becoming excellent. As Colin Powell sid,"A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work." Figure out what it will take to be outstanding and do it.

LEARN TO FIT IN

What is corporate culture?

Corporate culture is the operating work environment that is set and shaped by an owner/founder, president and/or CEO. It's the way:

- People dress
- People act (both on and off the job)
- People present themselves
- People conduct their work
- Supervisors are encouraged to manage departments
- Customers are treated and served
- Workers interact with supervisors
- Workers interact with each other
- People interact across departments
- People interact with the public
- Business is conducted and done

You can't really know a company's culture until you've worked in it. And if you want to be successful at a company, and enjoy where you work, you need to adapt to the company's culture. The company won't adapt to you.

People who succeed and move ahead in the corporate environment are people who are able to fit their individuality and personal style within the boundaries of the culture. They are individuals who:

- Know and respect the company's culture
- Pay attention to expected norms of behavior
- Build and maintain positive working relationships with supervisors, co-workers and customers
- Value constructive criticism as a means to improve and enhance personal performance
- Display interest in the company
- Maintain a positive attitude

Pay attention to the company culture

When you begin your job, spend the first few months studying every aspect of the company and begin adapting your dress, manner, and performance to fit the work environment. During that time, simply observe so you can learn the company.

Meet and ask questions.

You should try to make an effort to meet as many people as you can as quickly as possible. Introducing yourself around the office is certainly a good start, but the Harvard Business Review also suggests you never eat lunch alone.

> One of the best things about a new job is the incredible learning experience it provides. Every single person you'll work with in your new position—from the receptionist to the CEO—can teach you something valuable, and each of them can be a friend and mentor in your career... Your office is full of intelligent, thoughtful, and experienced people. Get to know them. Treat them with respect. Ask them questions. Learn from them. And have fun in the process.

You don't need to literally eat lunch with everyone. The goal is to make a good impression with various people around the company, and to learn as much as you can. Making friends is the easiest way to do that.

When you're constantly seeking a broader knowledge of the company as a whole, it makes you look good. It also helps you figure out what really matters at a company, and you can change your own behavior slightly if needed.

You have a big learning curve ahead of you. People who ask questions and really seek to understand the business and where they fit in, end up being the best employees. The employees who wait for all the information to come to them are going to be average, at best.

Enthusiastically learn all aspects of business

Before you can begin to contribute to an organization, you need to figure out how the company works.

- What are the business objectives?
- What's the organizational makeup of the company?
- How does your company do business?

Taking the time to explore the business will help you understand how your work supports departmental and corporate objectives. That's one of the biggest difference between average and exceptional employees.

The exceptional ones are trying to understand before they make decisions or assumptions about what's going on in the business.

The company, business and where you fit

The most important learning for a new employee is getting an answer to this question:

What are employees expected to do to fulfill the company's mission, values, goals and objectives?

Be prepared to be patient and tenacious to get this question answered. The company's ability to answer it is part of its culture. Some companies can answer the question upfront and do a good job of communicating it at all levels of the organization. Others leave it up to the employee to gain, through experience, an understanding of what it means to work there.

The following provides guidance on questions to ask and what information to look for:

- According to the company's mission statement (see if it's available in writing), the company's mission is to:

- The company's customers are:

- To fulfill the company's mission, employees are expected to:

- The company's long-range goals are to:

- The company's short-term goals are to:

- For the company to fulfill its goals and objectives, employees are expected to:

- The image the company strives to project to the public includes:

- The company expects employees to incorporate those values into the workplace by:

- Company policies and standards for work behavior include:

- Company policies and standards for work performance include:

- What is the company's business? What are its products/ services? What are the departments and groups?

- How does the job fit into the group and department?

- How do the job, group and department contribute to the company and its business?

- My job description is? I am expected to do:

- How must I change my work or my skills and knowledge to help the group, department and company achieve this goal?

Always do your homework. College graduates understandably are sick of doing homework. But the discipline of being prepared is indispensable. No one wants to waste their time with someone who hasn't done the necessary preparation; it's a sure-fire way to erode confidence and lose respect.

MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE STANDARDS

Management standards

Three key learning questions to ask are:

- How do things work around here?
- How do you (your supervisors) want things done?
- What are managements expectations?

The following will help you get answers to these questions.

- **Quality performance** (exceeds expectations) for evaluation purposes is determined by:

- The department **management expects** employees to demonstrate:

- The department management's **decision-making style** is:

- The management's **style and mode of operation** tends to be:

- The management strives to create a **work environment** that is:

- The **amount of contact** the management desires to have with employees is:

- The management's **interaction with employees** could be described as:

- Regarding general matters and questions, the management prefers employees to **communicate** with them by:

- The management prefers employees **meet** with them by:

- **Conflicts** are resolved by:

- How is **feedback** given and received?

- Management rewards risk taking by?

Employee standards

You may find written policies for certain employee standards, but there are ways of doing things around your office that may not be written down anywhere. Within companies, individual divisions or departments may have their own ways

of doing things, so you'll find different standards depending on the unit where you work.

Do not take one person's word for what is expected of employees. Besides your supervisor, you can seek out co-workers who are natural leaders as resources to double-check what you are seeing and hearing.

The following checklist highlights important employee standards you'll want to carefully observe.

- Employees **work as a team**:

- Employees strive to **make a good impression** by:

- Employees make **effective use of their time** by:

- Employee **work sites** tend to be:

- Employees **meet deadlines** by:

- Employees **vent frustration or anger** by:

- The **work behavior** of employees could be described as:

- Employees **address and solve most problems** by:

Grooming and dress standards

Grooming and dress might seem like a relatively minor aspect of the company culture, but it can be very important, depending on the industry you work in, whether you work with the public or whether the company believes that your personal care reflects your attention to detail in your work. Make sure you understand the grooming and dress codes.

Don't lose yourself trying to be what you think others want you to be. Learn to appreciate the power of authencity, especially your own.

MASTERING SKILLS

Constantly look for opportunities to stretch yourself in ways that may not always feel comfortable at first. Continuous improvement is necessary to get ahead.

These principles will help you in your quest for self-improvement:

▪ Select a skill that is valued by your organization and manager

▪ Divide the skill up into smaller, manageable tasks

▪ Reflect on what you've learned and what you still want to accomplish

Check your readiness

When working on a new skill or competency, you need to ask yourself:

1. Is your goal attainable?
2. How much time and energy can you give to the project?

Self-improvement is hard work. Recognize that learning and mastering skills takes extreme commitment. Unless your goal is attainable and you're prepared to work hard, you won't get very far.

Make sure it's needed

Make sure the skill is relevant to your career, your organization, or both. Unless you absolutely need the skill for your job, or for a future position, it's unlikely you'll get training or support from your manager. Gaining a new skill is an investment and you need to know upfront what the return will be.

Know how you learn best

Some learn best by looking at graphics or reading. Others would rather watch demonstrations or listen to things being explained. Still others need a "hands-on" experience. According to Heidi Grant Halvorson, a motivational psychologist, you can figure out your ideal learning style by looking back. Reflect on some of your past learning experiences, and make a list of good ones and another list of bad ones.

▪ What did the good, effective experiences have in common?

▪ How about the bad ones?

Identifying common threads can help you determine the learning environment that works best for you.

Get the right help

Eliciting support from others can greatly increase learning. Find someone you trust who has mastered the skill you're trying to attain. And look beyond your immediate manager who has to evaluate you.

▪ Who in the company, other than your boss, would notice changes and give honest feedback?

▪ If not in the company, where/who else can help you?

Start small

Self-improvement can feel overwhelming. Choose one or two skills to focus on at a time, and break that skill down into manageable goals.
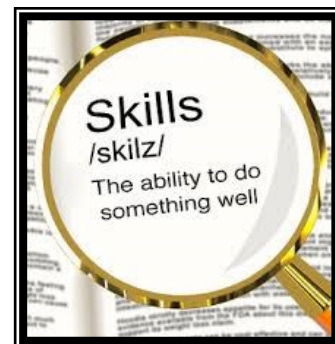
Reflect along the way

To move from experimentation to mastery, you need to reflect on what you are learning. Otherwise the new skill won't stick. Always share your goals with those individuals who can provide informational or emotional support along the way. Talking about your progress helps you get valuable feedback, keeps you accountable, and cements the change.

Challenge yourself to teach it to others

One of the quickest ways to learn something new, and to practice it, is to teach others how to do it. So share what you learn with your team, your manager, or your co-workers.

Be patient. Recognize that mastering skills takes time and a lot of trial and error.

The harder and smarter you work, the luckier you'll get. In the long run, good work discipline matters as much or more than talent. If you can't prioritize, focus, and produce on a consistent basis, you're not going to go far. If you don't already have a strong work ethic and good work habits, either strive to develop them, or prepare yourself for mediocrity.

Feedback is an essential tool for your growth. It is a way to let you know how effective you are in what you are trying to accomplish, or how you affect your co-workers and peers. When you know how other people see you, you can overcome problems in how you communicate and interact with them. Of course, there are two sides to feedback: giving it, and receiving it.

FEEDBACK

Companies that practice continuous learning and foster high performing teams very often train employees in how to give effective feedback. Managers that do it well promote learning, behavior that aligns with the culture of the organization and trust. Not all do it well.

Regardless, feedback provides important learning for your first year at a professional job. How you hear and respond to feedback from Day One can help you demonstrate qualities your employer values.

Receiving feedback

Here's the first bit of learning about receiving feedback:

- **Hear what is actually being said**. We focus on the 10% of our lives that isn't working instead of the 90% that is, and we respond to bad experiences first and seek to resolve them.

- **Write down everything you heard**. Allow yourself a few days to process the information; paying attention to how you feel about it. Then go back to your notes, take out the emotional bits and look for the basic message of the feedback. That's where the behavior change steps are found.

- **Practice all the skills of an effective listener.** Ask questions, use body language (e.g. look directly at the person) and facial expressions that encourage the other person to talk. Ask for examples. Don't interrupt. Show interest in what is being said to you. Listening skills are highly valued by employers.

Responding to feedback

How you respond to feedback is essential to having a great first year. Your personality traits, are genetics, but you have a lot of control over your behavior. When feedback is given correctly, it addresses behavior not personality. Be open-minded and adaptable.

- **Learn about your behavior**. Suspend judgment. It's never fun to learn about behaviors you're demonstrating that are perceived as negative. However, learning about yourself at work and how your actions are interpreted in the company's culture is part of your job.

- Show you accept what is being said to you, and show respect to the person giving the feedback.

- **Avoid being argumentative and defensive**. Unfortunately, "do better or differently" feedback is often given when the person is angry. Don't respond in kind. By all means you should ask questions to understand the feedback. But being argumentative is perceived as being unapproachable and resistant to change. If, however, the feedback starts to get too emotional, ask to stop the discussion and continue it when both of you have had a chance to cool off.

- **Ask for specific advice**. Be sincere. Receiving feedback should be a learning experience. Ask what to do differently and what to keep doing.

What to do with feedback

Just because your boss or another person in the company gives you feedback, doesn't mean their feedback is right. They interpret your behavior through their own lens. And, receiving feedback doesn't mean you have to act on it. It's up to you to decide what to do with the feedback you received. How you decide to handle feedback can show your employer your skill at building relationships.

As hard as it might be say "thank you." Let people know how their feedback was helpful. And be sure to check-in with the person to learn if your actions have improved your performance.

When you find yourself in a feedback discussion, go into it assuming good intentions, and that the person values and wants to improve your relationship or your work performance, even if the feedback expresses temporary dissatisfaction.

Embrace your weaknesses. Of course, it's important that you leverage your strengths. But also strive to recognize and compensate for your weaknesses. Because it's certain that you will be called upon, at many points in your career, to do things that don't naturally play to your strengths. Get on the path to self-awareness early, take advantage of every opportunity you get to engage in self-assessment, and embrace good coaching wherever you find it.

You are on a year-long job interview. Everything you do and say is being evaluated by others in the organization. One of the biggest mistakes you can make in your career is not understanding that there are certain codes and rules to abide by in the workplace. If you're not careful, you may even lose opportunities because others are put off by your lack of professionalism.

OFFICE ETIQUETTE

1. **Don't interrupt your colleagues.** Not only is it disrespectful, but it's a sign of poor social skills.

2. **Don't be loud.** It's not just rude, it's intrusive. Keep your voice down and you won't invade other people's personal space.

3. **Don't eat smelly food.** It can be very offensive to a co-worker, so save the smelly tuna or bag of buttery popcorn for your down time at home.

4. **Don't use slang or text-speak in communication.** An email should be handled as a formal letter. And don't forget, emails can be kept on a company's record for years.

5. **Be a giver not a taker.** Not acknowledging a colleague's work can ruin your reputation. You won't come across as a team player. Instead you will be seen as a self-indulgent individual who cares only about his or her promotion.

6. **Hold back on the perfume/cologne.** Too many people overdo it. It's disruptive and many people are allergic to it.

7. **Keep your ring tone under control.** The music can be distracting, so it's best to keep your phone on vibrate.

8. **Keep the office clean.** If you have a cup of coffee, wash the cup or throw the cup out if it's disposable. Always clean up after yourself in the kitchen, a meeting room and other common areas. If you have food in the refrigerator that you don't take home, it should get thrown out. Be clean.

9. **Don't get too personal at work.** When you disclose too much, you become vulnerable and that's not a good thing in the business environment.

10. **Be on time.** Being punctual says a lot about your personal values. When you're constantly late, you are basically giving a silent message that you don't care.

11. **Limit personal calls at your desk.** It's fine to take a personal call at your desk sometimes, but end it quickly so that you don't disturb those around you.

12. **Don't be the source of gossip in the office.**

13. **Avoid leaving the 3-minute voicemail.** Keep your messages short and concise.

14. **Don't come to work if you're too sick.** The rule of thumb is if you're contagious you should stay home. But if you just have sniffles, you should be at the office.

15. **Think before you cc.** We all get a lot of emails in a day. If someone REALLY needs to know something, send it directly to them. Beware of "Reply All." It can be a career ender.

16. **Send the meeting agenda.** If you have asked others to participate in a meeting, always give the attendees the agenda 24 hours in advance. Just because you know what you want to talk about does not mean that you should be the only one prepared.

17. **Do not check emails or texts during a meeting.** If you are having a conversation with someone, pull yourself away from your computer or smartphone, and devote your time to that person.

18. **Office gatherings are not frat parties.** Don't get drunk at office gatherings, client dinners and other events. Know that everything you do is being evaluated. Don't be fodder for the next day's office gossip. If you do drink too much, you have to show up at work the next day on time. Be the person who is a good partier and the person who shows up just fine the next day.

19. **Bad things happen.** How you handle them tells your boss a lot about your character. Let your supervisor know what is going on. If you are in danger of missing a deadline, say so in time that something can be done about it. If you don't understand the assignment, ask for clarification before you are too deep into the project and heading in the wrong direction. If you've made a mistake, say so in time that it can be corrected.

20. **Leave your personal problems at the front door.** There will be times when something tragic happens that needs your attention or distracts you from work. Don't hide it. Tell your boss or Human Resource and give them an expectation of the time you need. Before you leave, draft an email detailing what you are working on, what needs to get done to meet deadlines and other information relevant to your work. Be sure to check in with your boss during the time away from the office.

A new generation has joined the workforce, and organizations can't seem to figure out what they want. Some observers believe Millennials—Gen Y—display "a notable urgency to make social change" ([Washington Post),](#) and their "commitment to altruism signifies a fundamental change" ([Forbes](#)). Others call Millennials "narcissistic praise hounds" ([CBS News](#)), "cocky about their place in the world" ([Time](#)), with a goal of "wealth and fame" ([USA Today](#)).

Who's right?

Perhaps the issue is Millennials are the first to work with all four generations in the workplace. This is not insignificant.

Regardless, there's a lot of talk among managers that it's necessary to sacrifice standards in order to manage Gen Y employees. But most of it is bunk.

As a group, you are misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Here are ten of the biggest Gen Y workplace myths, busted by Mark Murphy, founder & CEO of Leadership IQ a top-rated research and by consulting firm and John Becker, chief marketing officer at SAP.

It's important you know what you are up against as you enter the workplace.

BUSTED MYTH #1: Gen Y wants undeserved praise.

It's true that praise is the number one predictor of Gen Y job satisfaction. Raised in a praise-filled world, Gen Y is different from older-generation workers who typically assume "if the boss isn't saying anything (good or bad), I must be doing OK." But Gen Y does agree with the older generations that low performers shouldn't enjoy the same praise and rewards as everyone else. The only employees who enjoy empty or undeserved praise are low performers, regardless of the generation to which they belong. Every generation of employee wants real feedback that helps them grow and develop on the job.

BUSTED MYTH #2: Gen Y is lazy and unwilling to put in the time to rise to the top.

Gen Y grew up in a technologically advanced world that offered lots of immediate gratification. Knowledge has always been at their fingertips and services like overnight delivery are the norm, and not a luxury. But this doesn't mean that high and middle performing Gen Y employees expect something for nothing. They have the same desire to earn their promotion as do their older-generation peers. They just have a different take on what that looks like.

For years, employees stayed silent as they worked hard and did their time, hoping it would lead them higher up the organizational ladder. But Gen Y believes that talent and results should drive their successes, and not some seemingly arbitrary rule about time served. They want to do the work and master the skills, competencies and achievements required to move ahead, but they don't want to be told to be patient and wait for it.

BUSTED MYTH #3: Gen Y is a bunch of spoiled brats who ask "why" just to drive managers nuts.

Gen Y's early messaging was full of validation that said: "You're something special, and everything you do has special meaning, too." They were taught that rules and instructions are important and good only if they make sense and that, as individuals, they could make a difference in the world. That's why they want to know there's a purpose behind everything they do. Gen Y employees don't ask "why?" to drive management nuts or to judge. They just want to learn. They want a better view of the big picture, and to know there is significance and meaning to their work. Most people want to know why for pretty much the same reasons but, older generations were taught it's a rude question to ask. Gen Y's not afraid to ask.

BUSTED MYTH #4: Gen Y makes all kinds of outrageous demands.

Gen Y hasn't been asked to make a lot of either/or choices in their life. Whether it was sports, hobbies or music lessons, they've always been able to do it all. Like most employees of every generation, Gen Y enjoys being on a lifelong learning path. But they don't make the same learning/doing distinctions as do older generations. Everything is a constant process for Gen Y, and they look at job opportunities in terms of what they can learn or what they can get out of the experience.

BUSTED MYTH #5: Gen Y has no respect for formal authority.

Many managers think that Gen Y employees don't value management. The fact is, Gen Y desperately wants the guidance and insight managers have to offer, but they don't want to have to screw it up 20 times before they get it right in order to get the lesson. They want to learn how to do it right the first time. But that's hard for managers whose most powerful learning experiences came from being allowed to learn from their mistakes.

All employees appreciate a deeper understanding of how their roles contribute to the big picture. And they'll deliver better performance when given clear end points, clear directives on why they're doing the work, who will benefit, what impact the employee should expect, available resources, expected obstacles, levels of freedom and information about the expected end product and how it will be used.

BUSTED MYTH #6: Gen Y lacks organizational loyalty.

Unlike past generations, Gen Y doesn't show up on Day One with extreme loyalty for the company. The days of company men/women have come to an end. If they believe they have a manager who has their best interests in mind personally and professionally, they aren't going anywhere. The number one reason Gen Y leaves an organization is due to frustration with an immediate boss. And, young people of every generation change jobs more frequently than older people.

BUSTED MYTH #7: Gen Y is motivated by perks and high pay.

Research shows no relationship between a person's generation and whether he or she is motivated by perks and high pay.

BUSTED MYTH #8 Gen Y wants more work-life balance.

Unlike past generations, Gen Y is not going to put all of their effort into going up the corporate ladder as fast as possible with no regard for what sacrifices must be made personally. Gen Y members have a large concern for their personal well-being and they want a professional opportunity that allows them to enjoy the personal activities that they desire.

Gen Y and Gen Xers agree at about the same level that the demands of their work interfere with their personal lives.

BUSTED MYTH #9: Gen Y thinks they're smarter than you were at their age.

Millennials *can be* smarter because they have easier access to information to make better decisions.

BUSTED MYTH #10: Gen Y is tech savvy and wants to learn from computers.

There is an assumption that because Gen Y has all of the latest technology gadgets that they are tech-savvy and love to learn new information from computers. Neither of these is actually true. There is a huge difference between tech-savvy (which many in Gen Y are not) and tech-dependent (which virtually all Gen Y are). Gen Y isn't filled with computer programmers, just a vast majority that depend on technology to talk to friends, get around town and consume information.

QUALITIES THAT MILLENNIALS ARE LIKELY TO BRING WITH THEM INTO THEIR LEADERSHIP ROLES

Dan Schawbel is the founder of Millennial Branding, a Gen-Y research and management consulting firm. The following is excerpted from a recent interview appearing in Forbes, Inc.

Q: What is the profile of a millennial leader? Can you name the top attributes?

1. **Active attention.** Just as Millennials value attention from their employers, they see the need to provide active attention as a central metric for leadership.
2. **Transparency.** Millennials are more engaged when they are able to learn and understand as much as possible about their employer and their assignments, and Millennial leaders will strive for transparency to keep their team aware and engaged in business decisions.
3. **Relevancy for others.** Because they seek meaning in their work, as leaders Millennials can be expected to impart the relevance of their goals to their employees.
4. **Relevancy for oneself.** Millennials are likely, as leaders, to be sensitive to those they lead who are also analyzing their own path.
5. **Passion.** Millennials look to be passionate about their work, and can be expected to infuse that passion into the workplace and their communities.
6. **Accountable leadership.** Millennials are more likely to reject hierarchical leadership, and will lead by team motivation, collegiality, and accountability.
7. **Autonomy through flexibility.** Millennials view flexibility in when and where one works as a sign that they are respected in the workplace. As leaders, Millennials are expected to be open to non-traditional behaviors and to provide opportunities for autonomy and flexibility.
8. **Self-care as a reflection of organizational health.** Millennials see the connection between their own health and the health of their workplace. As leaders, they are likely to be more sensitive to ways to develop healthier work-life integration.

Whether we're Boomers, Gen Xers, or Millennials, we're searching for interesting, meaningful jobs that challenge and stretch us. At the end of the day, we all want the same basic things out of work. Jobs that allow us to support our lives and families, the opportunity to earn respect, form significant relationships, and make a difference in the lives of others.