

GREAT AT WORK

How Top Performers Work Less and Achieve More

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MAIN IDEA

Why exactly are some people so much more productive when at work than others?

The cliché response has usually been: "They have learned to work smarter, not harder." That's okay but it stands to reason others are not deliberately trying to "work dumber".

To try and figure out why some people are so much more productive, an analysis was made of 200 academic papers on the subject. 120 experts in the field of human productivity were interviewed and a pilot study was carried out with 300 participants followed by further testing with another 5,000 people from various industries and backgrounds.

This evidence-based analysis identified 7 specific behaviors which cumulatively make up 66% of the difference in how people perform in the workplace. Those 7 behaviors are:

- #1 → Prioritize – then obsess in chosen areas
- #2 → Focus on creating value, not just targets
- #3 → Replace repetition with a learning loop
- #4 → Seek roles with both passion & purpose
- #5 → Apply influence tactics to gain advocacy
- #6 → Fight waste and unite with coworkers
- #7 → Carefully pick cross-unit projects to join

"You can incorporate these ideas into your daily work and make them a habit, just like you would other routines, like grabbing that morning coffee, checking your mail, and exercising. You can start small and build up these routines bit by bit, until you master them. Being great at work means performing in your job, infusing your work with passion and a strong sense of purpose, and living well, too. How great is that?"

– Morten Hansen



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Behavior #1 – Prioritize – then obsess in chosen areas Page 2
 Identify your most vital priorities and then make a huge effort to excel in those specific areas. Make sure you perform incredibly well in the areas you have chosen.

Behavior #2 – Focus on creating value, not just targets Page 3
 Working longer hours doing more of the same probably won't let you get ahead. Instead, redesign your work to focus on creating more value. Craft a job description that maximizes the value of your work contribution.

Behavior #3 – Replace repetition with a learning loop Page 4
 Repeating the same mistakes over and over won't make you work smarter. Instead, you need to get a good learning loop going where you get better and better.

Behavior #4 – Seek roles with passion & purpose Page 5
 Passion for what you do is great but you've also got to match that passion with purpose – doing something which makes a difference. Infuse your work with passion and purpose.

Behavior #5 – Apply influence tactics to gain advocacy Page 6
 Don't just use rational arguments to get others to sign up for your ideas. Apply "smart grit" instead – inspire others and then tailor your tactics to address concerns and agendas.

Behavior #6 – Fight waste and unite with coworkers Page 7
 Another key way to boost productivity is to learn how to work in team settings. Learn how to run smarter meetings where people debate rigorously but then commit to act on the decisions made.

Behavior #7 – Carefully pick cross-unit projects to join Page 8
 Too much collaboration can be just as damaging as not enough. To do more, you have to apply disciplined collaboration where you collaborate across teams to achieve worthwhile gains.