



## Take Initiative at Work, Take Success Home

What does it mean to take initiative? Why does initiative matter in the workplace?

**Simply put, to take initiative is to do what needs to be done without having to be told.**

Yet, on the job, there is more to it.

Individuals with initiative:

### **Are Motivated**

These people, like you, want to make something out of themselves. They want more than a job, they want a career. As a result, they are willing and ready to work. Smart or hard, depending on what is needed.

### **Act without being told**

This is part of the simple definition of initiative above. Let's expand on it a little bit.

If you are at work and see trash on the floor, do you stop to pick it up and throw it away? If not, you should. While small tasks like this may not be in your job description, taking the time to notice and do them makes a difference. Employers notice small things, whether they acknowledge them or not.

The next time you are at work and see a job that needs doing, if you can, step up and do it. It may be helping the next customer in line or updating your boss's calendar with new information. The point is to act without having to be told to do the work.

### **Do a job well and right**

If you are going to step up and take initiative, make sure you do each job well. Even picking up trash. If you pick it up, but toss it toward the trashcan and miss, that doesn't count. It is up to you to make sure the trash ends up where it belongs.

This applies to every other aspect of your job. Even the tasks you are told to perform.

### **Ask necessary questions**

Whether you are new to the job or have been working for a while, it's likely you will have to do tasks you've never done before. Now what? Don't assume that you have to do it all by yourself. Instead, take initiative and ask questions. The right questions.

You can do this by taking a good look at the task you have been assigned and figure out what you need to know more about. Then, write down your questions and present them to your supervisor. Make sure you get adequate answers to allow you to do a good, even a great, job.

### **Finish a task, then ask for more**

I know, you think I'm crazy. But I'm not. Think about it, what would impress your employer more than to ask for more work to do. Not only do you look responsible, but you also show that you care about the job and don't intend to play on company time.

This brings us to...

### **Doing a job right vs. Doing it perfectly**

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that doing a job right means getting it perfect. No one is perfect. If you do the best you are capable of, that is what matters. Trying to be perfect puts you under a tremendous amount of stress. Unnecessary stress. So, remember, right does not mean perfect. It means right.

**Not idle or wasting time on the job**

There is nothing wrong with taking five minutes at the beginning of the day or part of your lunch break to socialize with your co-workers.

However, when you get down to work, you should work, not play online or socialize. Simply tend to the task at hand and finish it, then move on to the next task. By doing this, you will show your employer that you value company time. As an additional bonus, you will get more accomplished, leaving you free to enjoy your time away from work.

**Do not become workaholics**

Some of the above may sound like workaholism, but it isn't. A workaholic uses work to fill a void in his or her life, giving more of their time and energy to the job than to family or community. If you find yourself using work to avoid spending time with loved ones or to not have to deal with a personal issue, please seek professional help. That is not initiative. It's a destructive pattern that is best broken.

Taking initiative is a surefire way to excel in your job, get a raise or be promoted. It takes time and is a habit you have to build one block at a time, but the payoff is worth it.

**Where can you take initiative right now?**

[www.career-tools-hq.com](http://www.career-tools-hq.com)