

Bulletin Board: Properly presented, a little humor can go a long way

by Maggie_Reed

Everyone appreciates a chance to smile and laugh at work. Flexing your funny bone appropriately can help move you up the corporate ladder.

According to a survey of executives conducted by Robert Half International, a staffing firm with a global network of more than 300 offices, 91 percent consider a sense of humor important to career advancements.

Not to mention that displaying levity on the job can help you build a rapport with colleagues, facilitate open communication, make the work environment a positive one and relieve tension on even the most stressful of days.

But remember, you must take into consideration the atmosphere of your workplace. Don't go overboard, be inappropriate or mean-spirited at the expense of others.

Here are some tips:

- Say no to sarcasm. Being sarcastic is not the same as being facetious. Sarcasm aims to belittle; facetious remarks are jocular. For instance, saying, "I can't believe you're here on time ... what's the occasion?" is not a good idea.

- Be the butt of your own joke. Poke fun at your own foibles. Doing so can put others at ease. Trip while making a presentation? Simply respond, "I hope you're as head over heels about this idea as I am." Keep your comments light, as you don't want co-workers to think of your attempt at humor as a cry for help.

- Laugh with others. Even if you don't have any clever jokes, you can share in the fun when others do.

- Create a funny file. You have files for everything else. Include workplace cartoons, anecdotes, amusing newspaper articles - anything that tickles your funny bone. When a co-worker is having a bad day, surprise them with a snippet from your file.

- Capture the moment. Keep disposable cameras on hand. Snap away during the good (a birthday party) and the bad (everyone in the office came to work with the same color shirt on). Post these on a community

board. For more information, visit www.rhi.com.

BEHIND EVERY GOOD BOSS ...

While their work is often behind-the-scenes, administrative assistants are clearly valuable to the executives they support.

"Behind every successful business leader is an outstanding assistant," said Diane Domeyer, executive director of OfficeTeam, a staffing service. "Administrative support roles are expanding, and managers now rely on their assistants more than ever for project management, research and budgeting tasks, in addition to their traditional responsibilities."

A survey developed by OfficeTeam asked 150 senior executives at the nation's 1,000 largest companies, "How important is your administrative assistant's role to your success?"

The response?

- Very important (48 percent).

- Somewhat important (37 percent).

- Somewhat unimportant (8 percent).

- Very unimportant (5 percent).

- Don't know/no answer (2 percent).

Managers should take the time to acknowledge these contributions.

OfficeTeam and the International Association of Administrative Professionals conducted a separate survey of more than 300 administrative professionals to determine how they have been recognized for their work.

Some examples:

- "My boss acknowledged my contribution through a company announcement and reimbursed me for a professional development seminar and dinner."

- "There was a huge banner and all kinds of presents in my office."

- "My company provided financial support for my education."

For more information, visit www.officeteam.com.

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