

5 Tips For Being More Conscious At Work

Are you conscious at work? While most people are not fully asleep at work, neither are they fully awake and putting forth the full potential of their skills and talents. To what degree can each of us heighten our awareness of how and what we contribute to the organization, who we have an effect on, and how our actions help to define the culture and business results?

While not a topic on the agendas of most company meetings, the underlying benefits of this type of consciousness infuse every single action, behavior, interaction and outcome. Consciousness can be related to morale, productivity, effectiveness, ethics, communication or efficiency. The less conscious you or your coworkers are at work (or elsewhere), the greater the likelihood of decreased potential and increased misinterpretations or misunderstandings.

For instance, consider the employee who recognizes that his role requires him to ask probing questions to ensure that he has the information needed to excel. Rather than only doing the bare minimum that is required, this person is doing what it takes to excel for his own benefit as well as for his colleagues and customers.

On the flip side, imagine the person who has performed the same role for 10 years, receiving accolades for her work, but hasn't shifted as the needs of the group have changed. She has a particular way that she prefers to work with the group, which no longer is efficient or effective for other group members or for customers. This person is almost causing her own "extinction" from the group, or is at least significantly decreasing the group's performance potential and reward, rather than being conscious of what evolutionary changes are needed to suit her own growth and the organization's goals.

5 steps to help build awareness and take action

Reflect or think back:

Reflect back on and reconnect with the reasons why you joined the organization, and what you had planned to contribute. Apply these same motivators to today's reality, and identify areas where you may have become complacent or forgotten about these ideas, and list several ways you can put them to work in the present.

Do a reality check:

Your opinion of your role might not be the same as the perspective of your coworkers, supervisor, mentor or advisor. Ask them for an outside perspective on what your role is, how you contribute to the enterprise, what they see your strengths as being, and what improvements you can make to become more skillful and contribute more fully to your group. Their honest comments will definitely help raise your consciousness about your role in the organization.

Allow time to get grounded:

Each day, eliminate, reduce or ignore the distractions that enter your work day. If this requires you to take a walk, do it. If you need to listen to music, do it (in a way that is conscious of others, of course).

Whatever practice helps you to center your thinking on what's most effective and valuable -- for yourself and the organization -- do it. Without a grounded perspective, you'll most likely waste energy with unproductive thinking or activities instead of focusing action on the most rewarding activities.

Perform a personal visioning session:

Consciousness is about being aware, and if there's one thing most of us know, it's our personal goals. Link this consciousness with organizational goals or revisit this exercise if you've done it before. Determine how the organization, and your job in it, can help you refine or expand your skills and reach your personal goals. Likewise, since you're being paid by your employer (or your clients) for an agreed upon contribution, think about ways that your skillful efforts and clear thinking can be of real value to your organization and its customers.

Debrief:

Either on your own or with a group, dissect interactions, results, processes and plans to learn how your performance affected your business environment -- everything from coworkers' schedules and workloads to project outcomes and relationships. It's helpful to debrief with others, rather than solo, so that your own filters and assumptions aren't preventing a clear and accurate perception. Use these learnings to help you understand what you are conscious of, where and when you tend to "do first and regret what you've done or said later," and identify how you might elevate your awareness and skillfulness in future scenarios.

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