

Assertiveness 101: Getting What You Want Without Stepping on Toes

By Robert Half on December 8, 2014 at 8:00am



We live in a world where you have to be willing to leave your comfort zone and go after what you want in life. It's up to you to make that happen. Are you ready? Learn tips to communicate with confidence to achieve your desired results.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how assertive are you at work? Do you speak up and share new ideas freely, or keep your thoughts to yourself and coast along? If you want to be a top contributor in today's world, [assertiveness](#) is essential to make your voice heard.

There are many moments within the workday where we have the ability to make choices about what to say and what to do. One of the challenges faced in today's workplace is that people can become too passive or too aggressive. Those who demonstrate a balance between the two tend to get better results.

Employers today need you to stand tall, keep your head high and have the courage to speak up with confidence. Sometimes it requires taking the initiative without being called upon or asked. Assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem are closely connected to one another and allow you to meet this need. People tend to become more assertive as they develop their self-confidence.

Over the course of my career as an executive assistant, I've learned a few things about being assertive. Here are some tips that can help you, too, get what you want in the workplace:

Decide Today To Assert Yourself

Make the decision right now and start practicing being assertive. Volunteer to take on new work assignments. Ask to attend meetings with your boss. Make comments and ask questions during meetings or any time new information is presented to you. By asking questions and offering feedback, you are showing that you care and are interested in achieving the best results. Chances are that you will feel more fulfilled at work when you make quality contributions and show a genuine interest in being a part of the team.

Make the choice to be less passive and avoid being overly aggressive. The happy medium is to communicate and act more assertively in the workplace.

Communicate Openly and Honestly

Engage in open and honest communication. Be respectful of other people's wants, feelings, needs and opinions, and [listen attentively](#). Ask follow-up questions to gather additional information and clarify what you heard. Always restate what you heard to avoid misunderstandings. Be willing to share your thoughts, needs and concerns. Having truthful conversations in the workplace can increase overall work performance. This has served me well over the years and allowed me to form [positive working relationships with my supervisors](#).

Believe In Yourself

During the course of your career, there are bound to be days when you feel [discouraged](#), dumped on and unappreciated. When these times come -- and they

will -- remember that you are strong and capable with a mind and spirit that can overcome obstacles. Believe in the value you are adding to the workday and continue to build confidence. Being assertive is easier when you believe in yourself.

Demonstrate Caring for Others

Be sincere and demonstrate caring for others in the workplace. If you want people to support your efforts, you will want to support *their* efforts. Care enough for those that you work with to help them meet deadlines, complete projects and achieve career success.

Agree to Disagree

Not everyone in the workplace will share or needs to share the same point of view. It's okay to have a difference of opinions. Be respectful of one another and continue to support others during disagreements. You may need to be the mediator and remind others that disagreements are okay and that you can agree to disagree.

Control Emotions

Those who use assertiveness appropriately at work are in charge of their emotions. Use self-control to not become frustrated, angry, rude or show hurt feelings. Keep your emotions in check and don't react emotionally. If you feel yourself at a breaking point, take a moment to gather yourself by taking a deep breath and pausing to collect your thoughts.

Do you consider yourself to be assertive? What strategies do you use to get your point across without crossing the line into aggression?