

Health and well-being

# FACT SHEET

## CONFIDENCE AT WORK:

### Introduction

Self-confidence is definitely a trait worth cultivating at work. Self-confidence helps you to project an aura of confidence that makes others trust in your abilities to complete a job successfully.

However, many people are not fully secure about their abilities around their job. If you're looking for increased self-confidence in performing at work, dealing with co-workers, and handling tough situations, you're not alone. So what can you do to feel more self-assured about your job?

### 1. It's OK To Make Mistakes

Firstly, remember that you are not your job. So if you make a mistake at work, this does not mean that you are stupid, worthless, or that you're in the wrong job. It's easy to take mistakes personally, seeing them as a reflection of your true person rather than for what it is: - just a mistake.

Even the super self-confident people and 'stars' make mistakes from time to time. They know that this is inevitable and just deal with it and move on. An often unrecognised benefit of mistakes is that they give us great learning opportunities.

If you make a mistake, the best way to deal with it is to own up to it right away and present a solution. This shows that you are trustworthy, and by presenting ways to fix the problem, you demonstrate your creativity and others will have confidence in your ability to deal with the issue.

Acting honestly and straightforwardly is always the best policy. You will be pleasantly surprised how willing most people are to help. Engaging with other people and accepting their help will build better working relationships and you'll feel better about yourself. It is also going to create the best outcome for the company, which again will help you feel better.

### 2. Getting On With Co-workers

Another common self-confidence issue is feeling insecure when it comes to co-workers. Many people feel that they do not fit in, are unsure how to handle conflict, or have an overbearing co-worker or boss that they don't know how to communicate with. Any of these feelings can wear at your self-esteem.

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If your self-confidence is low, you may feel you have nothing to offer your work colleagues, socially or on projects. This might mean that in order to avoid conflict, you allow others to step on you.

If socialisation is difficult for you, it does require you to step out of your comfort zone a bit. This does not mean you need to jump straight into being a social star, rather just make a point of opening conversations with one or two co-workers at social gatherings. Chances are you'll find you have something in common to talk about. Asking questions about the other person is always a great way to go. Ask "open" questions that invite the other person to talk. These questions often begin with a phrase like "What do you think about . . ." or "How did you . . ." instead of questions that invite simple yes or no answers.

### 3. Conflict Resolution

It is not pleasant having to deal with conflict and with difficult people, but communication skills certainly make the task easier. There are proven communication techniques you can learn to help with this. If you are in a supervisory or managerial position, it is worthwhile attending a course specifically on conflict resolution and dealing with difficult people.

In general, remember that an overbearing person probably has a lot of insecurities as well, and hides behind their overbearing exterior. In the midst of conflict, do your best to avoid being pulled into argumentative situations. Don't reward the other person's behaviour by getting upset or immediately backing down. If necessary, say you'll continue the conversation when everyone has had a chance to cool down. Dealing with negative co-workers is never fun. Try and remember that your self worth is not dependent on your co-worker's approval, even if that person is your boss.

### 4. Upgrade Your Skills

Learning is a lifelong process and if you're feeling unsure about your skills, it's probably time to consider some learning opportunities .

Many companies offer training options or offer professional development in house, because they know it makes you more valuable and productive for them.

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Whatever your employer offers in the way of education and training, take advantage of it. If your company does not offer training, educate yourself by reading good books on the subject. Ask your colleagues for suggestions, or if you're a member of any type of professional group, seek advice there as well. Many of your peers will have good suggestions on what's worth looking into.

## 5. Take On New Challenges

Finally, regularly give yourself new challenges. One great way to build your self confidence at work is to take on a special project. Especially if you are able to choose something you feel passionate about or something in your specialty area, you will be able to demonstrate to yourself and your colleagues that you are able to produce results.

To take on a new challenge demonstrates initiative and willingness to be part of special projects. What better confidence booster could you ask for, than to know that you put yourself out there and didn't sit on the sidelines.