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How to Be Proactive and Take Initiative

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Are you self-confident, able to multi-task and have high expectations of yourself like many of us Millennials? While these are all great qualities, there might be one thing getting in the way of you truly getting the most out of your new post university role: failing to be proactive to seek out new challenges that foster your growth and development.

Throughout my past co-ops and role at Deloitte, I've learned that opportunities will occasionally come to you by chance and searching for them online will only get you so far in the workplace. Seeking out challenges in your day-to-day activities is the key to defining your attitude at work, creating new opportunities for growth, and helping you develop into a more confident and capable professional.

Here are some personal tips on how to be proactive and take initiative in the workplace.

Try to take on different roles

Don't assume they already hired someone else for that new project or task that interests you. Chances are you don't need a Masters and a PHD for tasks outside your assigned work. If you ask for additional responsibility there's a good chance you will receive it.

Ask for feedback and act on it

Not only will you improve yourself, but your managers and coworkers will have a new standard to benchmark your growth and progress against.

Make an effort to listen to discussions around you

Do this even if they are irrelevant to your work. This is a great way to learn about new opportunities you could capitalize on.



Don't underestimate the power of small-talk

There are many interesting and motivated people around you and there is always a lot to learn from them. Take advantage of this and watch your skills build.

Foresee potential obstacles and bring them up to your teammates

This will help you and your team prevent problems, and it will help you build your team work skills.

Don't be shy to ask questions

If you want to take initiative, the only option is to ask questions and understand how things work. It's more effective to learn from others who have been in your shoes before than to try and go it alone.

Don't take comments and suggestions personally

Your manager or co-worker isn't questioning your capabilities, they're providing you with constructive feedback that help you reach your potential. Learn to love feedback as it's the key to improving.

Have a positive outlook

Complaining is far from constructive if you believe a process or method needs to change. With a positive attitude you can work towards the change, and make an impact.

Taking initiative may make you feel uncomfortable since you'll often be forced to step outside your comfort zone, but, why not get comfortable with being uncomfortable and be one step ahead? Challenge yourself to take initiative and be proactive today.

Leyla graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She is currently a Business Technology Analyst in our Consulting practice.

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