# Job Savvy

# How to Be a Success at Work

Sixth Edition

## Chapter 4: Being There . . . On Time!

## Video Transcript

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# Title screen

The *Job Savvy* video series for the sixth edition is brought to you by JIST Career Solutions, a leading provider of materials and technology that help build essential skills for career, academic, and life success.

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# Chapter 4 Being There . . . On Time!

The skill of being at work when scheduled—reliability—has been listed as one of the top worker skills in employer surveys for over a century. A supervisor needs to be able to count on you being at work and doing your job as scheduled every day.

This chapter will help you demonstrate personal accountability, reliability, and punctuality, examine why being on time is important for various job scenarios, and summarize effective self-management.

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# The Cost of Absenteeism

Employee absenteeism can cost organizations money. Problems resulting from absent employees include:

* Reduced productivity. When employees are absent from work, fewer products can be made and fewer customers can be served.
* Financial loss. If a temporary worker must be hired, the employer may have to pay both the temp and the employee benefits.
* Customers may be dissatisfied with the lack of quality service.
* Absenteeism also causes problems for your supervisor and coworkers. Schedules must be changed and everyone must work harder. This could result is tension in the workplace.
* Absenteeism causes problems for employees too. Being absent or tardy can mean “docked” pay, and repeated absenteeism could result in job termination.

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# Schedule, Attendance, and Tardiness

Work hours differ. Some companies have set work hours- such as Monday to Friday from 8 until 5 and some allow employees to choose their work hours as long as they work a certain number of hours each week. Flexible hours are more common in salaried positions.

Work hours are recorded in a variety of ways. Systems to record attendance include manually clocking in with a time card and mechanical clock and automated systems that record an employee’s attendance, arrival, and leaving during the work period using badges encoded with a special chip or cards that are swiped. Over 50% of employers use a computer application or cell phone to record employee attendance. A salaried employee may complete an attendance sheet at the end of each pay period.

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# What’s Your Excuse?

Defining tardiness varies from company to company. Sometimes being late is unavoidable. So normally a grace period, for example 10 minutes after the set hour, applies before an employee is recorded as tardy. Automated systems record the number of times a worker is tardy. Excessive tardiness can result in an individual losing the job.

A CareerBuilder survey involving 2,600 managers and 3,400 employees found the most common reasons employees are late include traffic, oversleeping, bad weather, too tired to get out of bed, and procrastination.

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# Your Lifestyle Affects Your Work

A lifestyle is made up of the habits and activities you develop for day-to-day living. Often people miss work because of their lifestyle, especially when they have habits that they do in excess. You can shape your lifestyle to increase your success at work.

* Get a good night’s sleep and avoid staying out late on a work night. Most people need six to eight hours!
* Try to eat well-balanced meals on a regular schedule and stay hydrated. You are less likely to be ill when you have good eating habits.
* Exercise regularly. Regular exercise keeps you in top physical and mental condition and helps you release job-related stress.
* Don’t smoke. Medical evidence proves smoking is hazardous to both smokers and nonsmokers. Vaping is treated with the same rules as smoking in many workplaces. Often organizations offer incentives to employees to quit smoking.
* Don’t drink too much alcohol. Abuse of alcohol can cause health problems. Drinking during or before work may be cause for dismissal and even drinking too much the night before can hurt your performance on the job the next day.
* Don’t do drugs. If you test positive for certain drugs, some organizations will give you a choice of entering a rehabilitation program or being fired. Other employers will simply fire you immediately.

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# Your Lifestyle Affects Your Work (continued)

Your relationships outside and inside of the workplace affect your work. To increase your success at work, follow this simple advice:

Keep good company. Employers do not appreciate workers who miss work because they prioritized their social life over work. For example, if your friends don’t work, they might want you to go out with them late at night, which can leave you tired and unproductive the next day. You’ll need to prioritize work over social activities. Avoid people who might get you into trouble with the law.

Socialize appropriately with coworkers. Don’t let relationships with coworkers interfere with your work performance and be neutral if a work conflict occurs. Coworkers often become close because they spend so much time together, but while relationships between coworkers can be positive, they can also create problems in the workplace.

Particularly, office romances should be approached cautiously because they can create awkward and unpleasant situations.

Be sure to have friends outside of the workplace. To reduce stress, you need to get away from your job sometimes.

Place your work performance first. Don’t allow office friendships, gossip, or feuds interfere with your work performance.

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# Plan for Success – Step 1

To plan for success, first ensure that you have reliable transportation.

You are responsible for getting to work. If you suspect you might have car trouble, start the car a couple of hours before work. Then you will have time to find another method of transportation.

Become familiar with public transportation schedules and routes. If you need to use them, you will have an alternate method. Or make an agreement with a coworker to share a ride if you have car trouble. Advertise for someone to carpool. Walk or bicycle if you live near your workplace. As a last resort, an expensive cab, Lyft, or Uber may be less costly than a day without pay, and it’s certainly less costly than losing your job.

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# Plan for Success – Step 2

If you are responsible for dependents, you need to arrange reliable care for your dependents.

Often dependents are children, but can also include an elderly parent or a disabled spouse.

Your HR or health service representative may refer you to services to help when choosing a babysitter, home health aide, or a care center. When making your choice, ask for references. Learn about policies for drop-off and pick-up, accepting ill attendees, and late drop-off and pick-up at the center.

Find two or three relatives or friends willing to care for your dependent for one or two days in case of an emergency. Keep this contact list up to date and know their most current availability.

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# Plan for Success – Part 3

Have a calendar and use it! Whether you use a planner or a cell phone calendar, record your work schedule and any personal appointments that might conflict with work. Plan to request time off in advance for doctor and dentist appointments. If possible, schedule personal appointments outside regular work hours. You might want to note other personal business on your calendar as well.

A calendar is one of the best tools for helping plan your workday. Many free calendar apps are available for your cell phone. You can set alarms on your phone using the calendar apps to remind you of scheduled appointments.

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# Plan for Success – Part 4

You can plan for many events in your life, such as vacations, car maintenance, or dental, doctor, and lawyer appointments. Since your supervisor must schedule enough workers for each shift and work day, you need their approval for time off.

Ask your supervisor how much notice is needed to schedule days off. Your supervisor usually can approve and schedule a one-day absence with only a few weeks’ notice. A vacation might require several months’ notice.

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# Plan for Success – Part 5

Even the best planning won’t cover all potential difficulties that can keep you from getting to work. So call your supervisor as soon as you know that you cannot get to work. An employer usually will understand if you miss work once in a while because you’re sick or have an unexpected problem. However, when you are frequently absent or late it may result in poor referrals or even being fired from your job. On the other hand, being a reliable and dependable worker can result in opportunities for a job promotion. To better prepare for these emergencies, ask your supervisor how many days are considered reasonable to be absent from work each year.

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# Plan for Success – Part 5 (continued)

When you notify your supervisor that you can’t be at work, you should identify yourself and say that you can’t come to work. Explain the reason that you can’t be at work and don’t lie. Tell the supervisor how long you will be away from the job. Express your willingness to make up the hours you missed.

If it has been approved, you may use email or a text message to notify your supervisor that you are ill. Many supervisors still want to be contacted by phone so they can quickly communicate about how to adjust the workflow for the day.

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# Getting to Work on Time

Late workers cause problems for employers, so you should plan ahead to be on time. Use an alarm or cell phone clock app. Set your alarm to allow plenty of time to get ready and get to work as scheduled. Plan to arrive 8 to 10 minutes early.

Poor weather conditions usually slow traffic. Get up earlier on such days so you will still arrive on time.

Call your supervisor if you will be more than 15 minutes late. Explain why you will be late and when you expect to arrive. Assure your supervisor that you will make up the time. When you get to work, apologize and make it clear that it won’t happen again.

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# A Useful Skill: Time Management

When employees use time effectively, production within an organization improves. Employers are looking for workers who are not just busy. Employers are looking for workers who get the job done.

As an employee, you will also benefit from efficient time management, because you will be less stressed at work. Your work environment will be more pleasant. Practicing time management involves both small and big actions.

You get 24 hours each day. You can’t increase or decrease this allotted time. But by learning to manage time, you can budget your time to make both your personal and work life more productive.

Try writing a list of how you are spending your time and make a plan to make a few things you do more efficient.

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# Conclusion

Employee absenteeism cost organizations money. A supervisor needs to be able to count on you being at work and doing your job as scheduled every day. That’s why good attendance and punctuality are important to employers. Reliable workers are essential to an effective operation of any organization. Many organizations encourage good attendance and punctuality through raises, bonuses, and promotions. A little planning and self-discipline will help you be a dependable, reliable, and valued employee.