

How not to get fired (and maybe get promoted)

Caveats:

- You are not justified by your work but Christ's.
- Don't chase promotion, chase the Kingdom and the glory of Christ.
- Practice [self-care](#) in relation to stress and burnout.
- As far as possible ensure you seek work/employment in line with your passions or at least that you can work at willingly and wholeheartedly.
- As far as possible ensure that you are not going into a work environment that is abusive (e.g. ridiculous hours, extremely low pay, aggression, conflict).
- Consider self-employment / [starting a business](#) rather than panicking and joining a bad company.

But... millennials often have a reputation for being work shy, incompetent and of not lasting long in their jobs. That may well be an unfair stereotype and not all true of you but the following may be helpful nonetheless:¹

1. Have an internal motivation for quality and hard work (Eph. 6:7)
 - This is key to all of it. If have this you can do very well in any company or organisation – even a bad one. This is what keeps you going when things are tough. Can't just be the money.
 - No one is going to be pushing you like a parent or a school teacher any more. You may not get much encouragement. Your work might not be noticed or given credit and you might start to get sloppy or lazy. Remember: working for the Lord.
2. Be passionate about the mission of the company, loyal and committed
 - Hopefully you have got a job with an organisation you believe in.
 - Communicate that passion to boss; talk about what doing and why excited about it.
 - Be loyal is speaking to others within company and outside, especially customers; own decisions you don't like.
 - Be committed. Millennials known for jumping at a better offer. Stick at the job for 3 years if possible. Be willing to pay an opportunity cost.
 - Be willing to pay a social capital cost – especially in sales and ministry.
3. Don't have high expectations of training, mentoring, incentives, bonuses or fun²
 - You are moving from a training organisation and apprenticeship to a job. Your employer (esp. small to mid-sized company) will not have much time, money or vision for investing in you. You will have to be responsible for your own development – look online, read your field, be willing to pay; be pro-active in looking for a mentor.
 - Don't expect lots of perks – Christmas parties, Christmas bonus.
 - Don't expect to have a load of fun or to be best friends with everyone at the office. Don't expect people to care about you very much. It is a work place. People will expect you to work. If it's not the most exciting, fun, loving place that's ok.

¹ Much of the below and the quotations are taken from two articles by J.T. O'Donnell - <http://www.inc.com/jt-odonnell/5-office-mistakes-costing-millennials-the-promotion.html> and <http://www.inc.com/jt-odonnell/3-reasons-millennials-are-getting-fired.html>.

² As a Christian employer we should take seriously investing in and motivating and encouraging and serving our employees but this is looking from the perspective of us as an employee.

- Don't expect lots of congratulations or credit or expression of thanks. We are servants – “we have only done our duty”.
4. Don't be a clock watcher or just do the bare minimum
 - “When you're so focused on leaving the office not a minute later than you need to stay, you send the message you couldn't care less about the work you're doing. In the mind of management, it's just a job to you. Perhaps that's the case, but managers have no desire to promote people who aren't focused on and interested in the work they do.”
 - “Millennials tend to ... push for flexibility and a reduced work schedule to create more time for other pursuits. Being demanding about when and how they want to do their job can be viewed as disrespectful.”
 - Be consistently on time (early) for the first 6 months and earn respect and flexibility.
 - Once or twice a week stay 15 or 30 minutes late and finish a task.
 5. Take initiative to serve, be proactive
 - Don't wait to be asked. ‘Manage up.’
 - Use your skills, even if not part of JD. Show what you can do.
 6. Find solutions not just problems, be optimistic, positive
 7. Be organised, productive and deliver on deadlines early
 - An employer's bottom line is they want you to produce. Make yourself a net asset and then make yourself indispensable.
 - List tasks and prioritise; estimate time needed; get done the things that really need to get done early
 - [Personal Organisation](#)
 - [What's Best Next](#)
 8. Be a nice person to work with, develop your soft skills (e.g. emotional awareness, anger management, listening and tact)
 - [Be a decent person](#)
 - Learn the organisational culture
 - Be self-aware – how do other people see you – what do I need to work on? Do you talk too much or too little?
 - And get very good at customer service – seek to serve – L.A.T.T.E. (Listen, Acknowledge, Take action, Thank, Explain)³
 9. Pay attention to detail
 - Millennials have a reputation for sloppiness⁴
 - Watch grammar, spelling, numbers, references; proof-read
 10. Learn to make decisions
 - Millennials have often grown up with a lot of choices and can be paralysed by that choice and hang back from making decisions.
 - In management a bad decision is better than no decision. Don't be impulsive (if you are an impulsive person) but don't take too long to decide (if you are someone who likes to sit on the fence). “Sleep over it but when it is time to start, start.”⁵
 - Pray; write a list of pros and cons; get advice from one or two wise people; go for it.⁶

³ This is the Starbucks coffee chain customer service strategy to deal with complaints.

⁴ <https://www.smartrecruiters.com/blog/28700-bosses-share-views-on-millennials/>

⁵ David Maina.

⁶ See <https://conversationmagazine.wordpress.com/2014/04/26/guidance-and-the-will-of-god/>.