

The ABCs of Work: Worth

Career Development



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Is there a formula for success at work? Are there simple rules that you can follow to increase your chances of getting what you want? Career Path columnist James Bellerjeau thinks the answer is yes. In this series of articles, *The ABCs of Work*, he shares the formula with you.

Greetings readers and congratulations! Simply by virtue of being here you are already on the path to increasing your odds of success. While luck plays a gigantic role in life, that does not mean you are helpless to control your fate. If you want to think of it this way, the tips we'll explore are ways to increase your odds that luck will find you.

Today we examine how to calculate your **Worth** at work and more broadly, and how this helps you achieve your goals.

Last time we explored the importance of Values to designing a meaningful life and satisfying career. Today we discuss how to think about your Worth in various contexts.

What are you worth to your company?

You might be tempted to answer by slapping down your paycheck. After all, your company pays you a salary, right? That’s what you're worth to them. Measuring yourself in just money terms, however, sells your value short.

Think what it would cost your company to replace you. They must search, find, and successfully hire someone. Your company suffers disruption while your position is unfilled and while your successor is getting trained. Your lost expertise hurts anew each time your successor can’t immediately answer something you knew by heart.



Understand your worth and how much effort it will take for your company to replace someone as valuable as you. FGC / *Shutterstock.com*

Clearly you're worth much more to your company than your current paycheck. Your path to success lies in getting your colleagues to see your nonmonetary worth. You do this by being thoughtful, answering the question your colleague should have asked but didn't, and generally being delightful.

I told my team I wanted the business to cherish in-house counsel. That when budget money came free, they would clamor to hire more of us. Aspirational? No doubt. Achievable? You bet.

What are you worth to others?

In a cold, sometimes uncaring world, at least sometimes we all feel like saying "Not much!" A moment's reflection reveals how wrong we are. What is a child worth to their parents? What is a parent worth to their children? A spouse to their significant other? A best friend to their friend? And on it goes.

If I was greedy in wanting my business colleagues to cherish the in-house team, it was because I saw how much we are cherished by others outside the business. Why should we settle for any less at work?

Question, comment? Contact Career Path columnist James Bellerjeau.

What are you worth to yourself?

This is where we most often see with tinted glasses. Some take themselves far too seriously. These are the people we all agree have a tremendously high self-opinion, usually entirely undeserved. Many err in the other direction, though, and too often doubt themselves when all evidence suggests they should be kinder.

I say be kind to yourself. None of us are perfect. And we need not define ourselves by our worst moments, our fears, or our doubts. We should give ourselves credit for showing up and giving our best on all the days when it's hard and we've dug deep just to be there.



Have a sense of self-worth by displaying self-compassion and kindness to yourself. Appleing / *Shutterstock.com*

When you add up the various ways you're worthy, to your company, to others, and to yourself, you are a valuable person indeed. Take a moment to revel in your worth. And now get back to work earning it.

Honorable mentions

Leveraging a single tip to drive work success is a heavy lift, even a tip as important as understanding your worth. Our formula will necessarily be incomplete. But the formula has impact, and all the more so because we've kept things simple. Here to finish are some honorable mentions to serve as food for thought.

Want — It is important to be honest about what you want. You need not share your wishes broadly. Start by acknowledging your desires to yourself. Then share with your family, friends, and perhaps eventually work colleagues. You might be surprised what happens. For more on this, see Career Path: Share Your Secret Plans.

Well-being — Well-being means managing stress, eating well, exercising, sure. I mean well-being in both a narrower and a broader sense. Do you feel well? Are you happy? Do you find joy and not just enjoyment in your daily pursuits? This is something that no corporate program delivers. You find this kind of well-being within. For more, see Career Path: What Should We Wish For.

Work-Life balance — In-house counsel are busy and we regularly get sucked into crises. As a result, we find ourselves working rather a lot. While this can be helpful in our careers, our work ethic risks us missing out on life outside work. Your family, friends, and hobbies all deserve your attention. You likely won't consider yourself a success in life if all you do is work. For additional perspectives about this, see Career Path: Can You Succeed at Work Without Working Hard? and Career Path: Hard Work Doesn't Make You a Hero.

Be well.

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Bellerjeau served for two decades as group general counsel for Mettler-Toledo International Inc., an S&P 500 company with its worldwide headquarters in Greifensee, Switzerland. He then led Mettler-Toledo's global Sustainability program for several years through June 2021.

Bellerjeau shares thoughts on how to live a good life at Klugne. You can also follow him on LinkedIn.