

The ABCs of Work: Pray

Law Department Management

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's topic acknowledges that it's appropriate to **Pray** that things will work out all right at work.

Last time we explored a process to follow to know when to Obey business decisions. Today we

explore why it’s important to pray for good outcomes.

You’re using another word inappropriately

I want your attention again, true, but I’m convinced the word, “pray,” has meaning for us in the work context. Let me first acknowledge that I mean no disrespect for anyone’s religious beliefs. I don’t mean to trivialize prayer in any way. If anything, I want to elevate the idea to the secular context to reinforce why prayer is so helpful.



We progress the furthest when we set priorities and focus our efforts. Artwork by Luis Line / *Shutterstock.com*

Luck plays a gigantic role in life. We’re exploring ways to help luck find us. Well, thinking about the outcome we desire and then fervently wishing for it to come true is really just prayer, secularly, by another name.

Why does wishing for the outcome we desire help increase the odds that we will achieve that outcome? Several reasons come to mind. For one, it helps to acknowledge what we want. To set a priority, if you will, and say to the world, “This is what I’m working towards. There, I said it.” We

progress the furthest when we set priorities and focus our efforts.

For another, when we give regular attention to an outcome (praying for luck), we are by definition thinking about it more frequently. This means we're more likely to consider additional ways to progress. We are more alert to potential obstacles. We refine and improve our approach.

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Then, if we've made our prayer public, we potentially unlock assistance from others. Someone else may hold the key to advancing your project, but they don't know it. When you make your wishes known, they are suddenly in a position to help. Prayer answered.

When you'll benefit from praying for luck

What situations are more amenable to a healthy dose of praying for luck to find us?

- **When you're seeking a promotion**. Your prayer here includes talking with colleagues, especially your boss, about your desires. It includes taking on new challenges with the hope, but no guarantee, they'll pay off.
- **When you're trying to convince others** of an important point. Prayer here reflects thinking through alternatives, anticipating objections, and honing your arguments and delivery. You pray you've done enough to win the day.
- **Waiting for a jury verdict** to come back in. Whether it's helpful or not I can't say. But I would be surprised at any in-house counsel who didn't do a little secret prayer as they wait.

Praying for luck is no substitute for performance

This is important. If you've neglected to put in the necessary work, praying for divine intervention is too little done too late. Done properly, expressing your sincere wishes is a component of good project planning, not a substitute for planning.

> We progress the furthest when we set priorities and focus our efforts.

Honorable mentions

Leveraging a single tip to drive work success is a heavy lift, even a tip as important as when to pray. 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:

Preparation — The five Ps. I have a senior in-house friend who told me about the importance of the five Ps:

Preparation prevents piss poor performance.

He held himself accountable for bad outcomes, never others, because he assumed with enough

preparation he would always prevail. That’s a great attitude and will take you far in life.

Present — Be in the now. Do not dwell in the past other than to briefly take the lessons learned from your mistakes. Do not daydream of the future other than to set your intention towards the goals you are striving for. Paying attention to what you’re doing at this exact moment brings you clarity and focus. Because so many others are multitasking, you easily beat them just by paying attention to the one thing you’re doing right now.

Be well.

Question, comment? Contact Career Path columnist James Bellerjeau.

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