

## How to be Successful Without Working Hard or Accomplishing Anything

We all know them – employees who are incompetent, lazy and a burden to everyone around them -- yet some of them always seem to get away with it. How do they do it? It doesn't just happen by accident. The successful ones all have a certain amount of guile and, of course, a plan. If you're one of these people and you want to fine-tune your skills or if you are not one and are trying to thwart someone who is, here are at least some of the guidelines that the Sergeant Bilko's of the business world seem to follow.

1. **Avoid being measured at all costs.** Never allow yourself to get in the position where your boss or fellow employees know what results you are (or are not) producing. Here are some of the more common arguments you can make to support your position. "Your work is too complex to be measured." "The computer system can't produce reliable reports." "There are too many variables to produce accurate results." "You don't have time to report on things. You have too much work to do."

A mentor of mine said something to me years ago that applies here. He said – "If you shine a bright light on a situation, healthy things will grow and evil things will skitter off into the darkness." Avoid bright lights.

2. **If you have to be measured, rig the system.** Here are some tried and true things you can do. First, try your best to keep your measures subjective. Stay away from measures with specific, quantified goals. Instead, try to get goals that require judgmental evaluations or that are, at least, easier to manipulate. Try to get goals that focus on making things better or turning around a bad situation. One of the best goals is attending a class or learning a new skill. These are much easier to manage than goals with specific, quantified standards where everyone will know if you made them or not.

Another approach is to focus on doing tasks instead of attaining results. For example, it's easier to attain a goal of making 30 conservation phone calls a day (a task) than to improve policy retention or persistency by 10% (a result). Overwhelm everyone with activity. Avoid being measured on results at all costs.

A third successful approach in avoiding accountability is to convince everyone that measuring improvement is a better than measuring actual performance and results. If you do this right, a clever person can show incremental improvement every month and still not work very hard. Measuring the actual results you create always means more work.

3. **When all else fails and you know you're going to be measured . . . argue for as many measures as can get.** Having less than ten measures is deadly. They're too easy to track and understand. You want to avoid this level of clarity. By increasing the number of measures to thirty, for example, you'll always be able to point to a few that you made and then use some excuse for not talking about the others. Confusion is your ally. Make sure you have enough goals and measures so you'll be able to hide any negative problems behind a flurry of activity.

4. **Always look busy.** Walk fast. Carry stuff wherever you go. Keep a lot of paper and files on your desk. Requisition more desk or credenza space. Copy everyone on your Emails. Always keep at

least 100 unread Emails in your mailbox. Create a lot of activity. The dust you create will hide the fact that you're not really doing anything meaningful.

Also, learn how to multi-task – but not really. Instead, learn how to appear to be multi-tasking. Work unusual hours. Never let anyone know when you actually leave the office. Manage your day so others will assume you work longer hours than you actually do.

**5. Attend as many meetings as possible.** They are great ways to spend time. Little is usually accomplished or decided but they are great ways to socialize and maintain political connections. Maintaining strong peer and political relationships is essential to your continued success, especially in an environment where everyone else is focused on producing meaningful results.

If you're forced into a decision-making situation ignore the issue and focus on the politics. Having political allies is much more important than being right. Avoid task forces and other problem solving teams. They are too high profile and usually filled with no nonsense, results oriented "A players" who may have little tolerance for an "F player" like you.

**6. Emphasize experience and seniority over performance and results.** Try to create the image of being invaluable because you know things that others do not. Discuss obsolete products and policies in a way that indicates you have knowledge that may be needed sometime in the future. To maintain this mystique, never document. Keep what you do a secret. Knowledge is power. Don't share. And most importantly, create the image of being invaluable without actually doing anything.

**7. Avoid blaming others for problems and shortcomings. Blame the process, system or situation, instead.** When you're backsliding you need all the friends and allies you can get. Don't do anything to get them in trouble. Remember, survival with the least amount of effort is your goal. Instead, blame something that can't fight back and that everyone agrees is always a problem, like the computer system.

When all else fails, blame the fact that no one trained you on how to do whatever the current problem or situation is. Remember the most powerful position to be in is one where you are powerless. "I don't know how to do that" is usually a conversation stopper. It also has the added benefit of frequently getting you signed up for a class or conference – another great way to spend time without having to actually do anything.

**8. Become a supervisor or manager.** Expand your power to create mischief exponentially. Get others to do all your work. If you can sell the idea of being a pure manager, you might be able to sell the idea that you don't need to know anything about the work your unit does. This can be a real opportunity for someone truly creative.

**9. Make sure you have access to the internet on your computer.** If you're successful at following the suggestions in this letter, you'll have a lot of extra time on your hands and little effective supervision. The internet is a great way to spend this extra time. And it has the added advantage of looking like you're working while you do your Christmas shopping, chat with friends, check the stock market and make plans for the weekend.

I hope you have enjoyed this tongue in cheek discussion of accountability. If you would like to discuss any of these concepts and how to put in the infrastructure that ensure things will go well, please call me or send an Email. Also please visit our web sight at [McDonaldConsultingGroup.com](http://McDonaldConsultingGroup.com). You'll find further explanations of these ideas in our Concepts and Ideas section.