

# No Job is Safe

COMPANIES COMPETE FOR CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES COMPETE FOR JOBS

**W**hen the economy is bad, competition heats up. Companies do everything they can to keep their customers, and employees do whatever they can to keep their jobs. Downsizing has become a survival tactic for companies, not only throughout the United States, but throughout the world, as well, which means no job is safe from the chopping block.

That doesn't mean however, that your professional destiny is out of your control. Just as companies differentiate themselves from their competitors through customer service, employees can do the same. Employees who go beyond what is expected of them stand out and solidify their places on the company's payroll.

No matter what business you are in, customer service is a critical element of your job. Mastering the skills necessary to provide exceptional service to your customers—both external and internal, will set you apart from your co-workers and make you an invaluable member of your organization's team.

In his book, *I Inherited a Fortune*, the late Paul J. Meyer offered six recommendations for employees who want to get ahead. Those suggestions are timeless and are especially relevant today, as employees wonder from day to day whether or not they will continue to have jobs.

**THESE ARE THE SIX STEPS MEYER RECOMMENDED:**

1. Do more than you get paid to do.

- 2. Overfill your plate. Management will notice you.
- 3. Learn what the company does. And learn what the competition is doing.
- 4. Ask for more to do. When you expand your involvement in the company, your income will increase.
- 5. Ask for more responsibility. Show that you are capable and willing to contribute more.
- 6. Cross train. Learn other job functions and responsibilities in the company.

**HERE ARE SIX MORE OF MY OWN:**

- 1. Feel good about yourself. When you feel good about yourself, you will perform better. You will have a confidence that others will notice.
- 2. Invest in yourself. Set a budget of \$40 a month and use it to purchase books and self-improvement programs, and learn everything you can about customer service—particularly service recovery—and the skills you need to provide it. Every company, no matter how good it is, occasionally will make a mistake. How you handle that mistake will determine whether or not that customer will continue to do business with you—and how your superiors will see you.
- 3. Associate with successful people. Stay away from people who pull you down instead of pushing you

up, you know who they are. They hang around the coffee pot, complaining about the salary freeze or their workloads instead of tackling the work that needs to be done.

- 4. Practice habits of courtesy. It takes no more time or effort to be nice to a customer than it does to be dismissive or rude, call customers by name, thank them for their business, and treat them with respect.
- 5. Make empowered decisions. When a customer has a problem with you or your organization, do whatever is necessary to handle the situation and to make that customer happy.
- 6. Master speed. Do everything faster than your boss, your company, or your customers expect—and do it with accuracy.

While many employees are feeling somewhat helpless in the face of the current economic condition, they do have the power to ensure that they retain their jobs. That means taking responsibility and going above and beyond to perform and produce to their highest levels. 🌱

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