

Quick Guide: Developing Proactivity

Proactivity means not waiting to be asked, but having an ability to think ahead and anticipate needs, difficulties and different ways of achieving a necessary outcome. Proactivity also means being able to identify and solve problems, by making decisions. To do all this requires knowledge, which needs constant updating plus a conscious effort to seek it out. So here are the **top ten tips** to help you develop proactivity:

1. Seize the opportunity for training. No matter that you think you've been doing your job for years - you can always pick up one new bit of knowledge and so turn it to your advantage.
2. Do something different! Give yourself a challenge and help others in the process, perhaps by offering to share your knowledge with them, or by volunteering to join a project group.
3. Don't sit and whinge when things aren't right, or aren't happening: do something about it.
4. Learn to prioritise routine work and work which has a deadline - without being asked. That way you will be able to make time to take on new challenges and develop your own, proactive, responsibilities.
5. Ask to meet with your manager(s) - - preferably at least weekly - so you are kept up to date about changes, preferences and workloads.
6. Think things through as you work. Forget working on autopilot all the time. Keep questioning why things are being done in this way, and if you can, find a more efficient way to do it.
7. State your case confidently and assertively when you make suggestions or question something. Consider using the PROEP framework (proposal, rationale, objections, evidence and plan) to help you make suggestions or introduce new working practices.
8. Constantly ask yourself "What's the next step?" This way, you will be able to identify what needs to be done - then do it!
9. Make yourself more indispensable by looking around you at what others are doing: could you help? Could you get involved? Could you be doing that too? (Tip: the answer to all three questions is "yes"! The next question is "when will you?".)
10. You will know you are more proactive when you hear yourself saying regularly "I've already done it". It is such a good feeling to be able to do so!

Compiled by Des Whitehorn