

TOP 10 INSIDER TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Tip #1: Dress for the job you want, not the one you have

This advice was given to me early in my career, and it's stuck with me ever since.

Presence is part of your personal brand — and yes, that includes attire. People often notice your outward appearance before they hear a word you say. The way you show up communicates confidence, credibility, and ambition.

This isn't about expensive clothes or chasing trends — it's about being intentional. Ask yourself: What image do I want to project as I grow into my next role?

🔑 **Insider Insight:** Over the years, I've seen how professionals who present themselves with polish and presence are more likely to be considered for bigger opportunities.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Try it out. The next time you have a big meeting or event, dress a step above your norm. You'll instantly feel more confident, calmer, and stand a little taller.

Tip #2: Work smarter, not harder

Hard work alone doesn't always translate into promotions or raises. One of the biggest mistakes I've seen is believing that doing more of the same will eventually get you noticed.

The truth is: to move up, your skills need to evolve. And to grow those skills, you need to free up capacity. Unless you plan to work 24/7 (which isn't sustainable), the only way to create that capacity is through delegation.

The challenge? Many of us resist delegating — especially the tasks we're good at. But that resistance keeps us stuck. Delegation isn't weakness, it's leadership. Done well, it shows you can develop others, elevate your team, and prepare yourself for the next role.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** In investment banking and private equity, I've seen Associates and VPs pigeonholed as “the technical expert.” Because they stayed buried in the details, they weren't viewed as ready for promotion — they hadn't demonstrated the communication and leadership skills needed at the next level.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Start small. Delegate lower-stakes tasks you've already mastered and that no longer serve you in a more elevated role. Over time, you'll build trust with your team and create space for your own growth.



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Tip #3: Set healthy boundaries

When you're feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or out of alignment, it's often because your energy is being pulled in too many directions. Boundaries aren't about saying "no" to everything — they're about strategically creating space for what matters most.

The hard truth: most jobs will take everything you give them. Strong performance is usually rewarded with more work — and more pressure. Without clear boundaries, even the best intentions lead to unhealthy habits, stress, and burnout. With boundaries, you can perform at your best, feel more in control, and show up with energy and focus.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** We can all agree that credibility is a prerequisite for setting boundaries. But this is where many people get stuck — they fear what they're doing isn't enough, so they never set limits. The paradox? They lose momentum, not from a lack of skill, but from failing to protect their time and energy. The most successful professionals I've seen are those who integrate their personal and professional lives seamlessly — aligning their time with what matters most.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Choose one boundary this week — maybe no emails after 8 pm or blocking time on your calendar for deep work — and protect it. Notice how it shifts your sense of control.

Tip #4: Learn to read the room

In Korean, there's a word for this: Nunchi — "eye-measure." It's the ability to quickly sense the mood, dynamics, and unspoken signals in a group. Who's engaged? Who's distracted? Who's stressed? Nunchi is about noticing before acting.

This awareness builds trust, strengthens communication, and accelerates leadership potential. People with strong nunchi know when to speak, when to listen, and how to adapt in the moment.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** The most effective leaders I've observed aren't just great speakers — they're great observers. For example, imagine walking into a meeting ready to present a detailed deck, but you immediately notice your audience looks drained and disengaged. Instead of plowing through the slides, you shift into a dialogue — inviting perspectives and creating energy in the room. That flexibility is what sets you apart.

💡 **Pro Tip:** In your next meeting, take 30 seconds to scan the room. Who's leaning in? Who's checked out? How might that shift how you lead the conversation? Over time, reading the room becomes second nature — and a true leadership superpower.



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Tip #5: Be authentic, but not weird

I once worked for a company whose CEO often said, “We don’t want any creeps or weirdos working here.” While it wasn’t the most eloquent phrasing, the crux of the message was true: in a professional setting, there are norms that matter.

At the same time, we’re often told to “bring our whole selves” to work. So how do you strike the balance?

The key is authenticity - which, especially at leadership levels, really means vulnerability.

Authenticity is about letting people see the real you: your passions and values, your wins and your lessons learned. It’s what makes you relatable and builds connection.

Weirdness, on the other hand, disconnects. It’s oversharing questionable weekend stories, bringing personal drama into the office, or making inappropriate jokes that fall flat. At the end of the day, work is still a professional setting.



The difference:

Authenticity is humanizing. It builds trust.

Weirdness is distracting. It erodes trust.

When done well, authenticity becomes a leadership superpower. It signals confidence, openness, and the courage to connect.



Insider Insight: In every high-performing leader I’ve coached, the ones who stand out aren’t the ones who hide behind a polished facade - they’re the ones who share just enough of themselves to inspire others, without crossing the line.



Pro Tip: The next time you want to “bring your whole self” to work, ask yourself: Will this connect me to others or make them uncomfortable? If it’s the former, go for it. If it’s the latter, save it for outside the office.



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Tip #6: Be kind, not “nice”

My third-grade teacher, Mrs. McCarthy, used to say: “Nice is not a word.” At the time, I didn’t get it — but I do now.

In the workplace, there’s a big difference between being nice and being kind. Niceness is about being liked. It’s smiling through frustration, saying “yes” when you mean “no,” or avoiding hard conversations to keep things comfortable. It can even mask unkind behavior — like pretending to support someone publicly but undermining them privately or offering polite words with hidden resentment. It’s surface-level and people feel that disconnect.

Kindness, on the other hand, runs deep. It’s grounded in respect, integrity, and genuine care. It shows up as recognizing others’ efforts, giving real feedback, or standing up for what’s right even when it’s uncomfortable. It builds trust because it values the relationship, not just the optics.

True kindness strengthens teams and cultures; “nice” behavior keeps things polite on the surface.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** Kindness doesn’t mean you’re a pushover. It means you communicate clearly and compassionately. The best leaders know how to show up for others and say hard things in a way that makes people want to listen.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Practice intentional kindness. Support a colleague, give direct feedback with empathy, or simply check in with someone who seems off. Kindness creates connection — niceness only creates appearances.

Tip #7: Lead better than you were led

It’s no secret — people don’t leave companies; they leave managers.

Too many leaders become the kind of boss they once hated. They mistake fear for respect, wear toughness like a badge of honor, and think intimidation drives performance. It doesn’t.

Fear doesn’t build teams. Trust does. And leadership isn’t about survival, it’s about stewardship.

The best leaders don’t replicate the mistakes they survived — they break the cycle. They hold people accountable and lift them up. They give feedback that builds, not breaks.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** If you want to transform culture, stop waiting for HR or senior leadership to fix it. You are the culture. Model the leadership you wish you had.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Ask yourself — Would you want to work for you?



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Tip #8: The invisible worker doesn't get promoted

Doing great work matters — but being seen doing great work matters just as much.

The people who advance don't just meet expectations — they expand them. They take on visible, high-impact assignments: leading initiatives, mentoring others, and becoming the go-to person others rely on. They also speak about their contributions and build connections.

The invisible worker keeps their head down, executes flawlessly, and waits to be noticed. But visibility isn't luck — it's strategy.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** If you're waiting for your work to speak for itself, you may be waiting a long time. Your results need a storyteller — and that storyteller is you. It's also not enough to be dependable — you need to be distinguishable. Seek opportunities that stretch your skills and showcase your leadership potential.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Raise your hand for projects that put you in front of decision-makers. Lead a committee, represent your team, or volunteer to run a new initiative. Don't just do the job. Talk about the impact. Visibility builds credibility — and credibility drives advancement.

Tip #9: Fortune favors the bold

Confidence and humility can coexist — and boldness is where they meet.

As a Hogan-certified practitioner, I've taken the assessment multiple times, and each time, Bold comes up as one of my derailers. For those unfamiliar, a derailer is a strength that can turn into a liability when overused.

At its best, being bold means confident, decisive, and assertive. At its worst, it can be mistaken for arrogance or aggression — *especially* when demonstrated by women.

And that's the problem. Because boldness is not a flaw — it's a career accelerator.

Boldness helped me earn respect when I stood up to a bully as a first-year analyst. It propelled my career when I pivoted roles. And it continues to earn me credibility when I speak up — not for attention, but because experience has earned me a voice.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** The most successful leaders I've encountered are self-assured, confident in their convictions, and willing to take calculated risks. They use boldness as a superpower — aware enough to keep it from crossing into ego.

💡 **Pro Tip:** The next time you're hesitating to speak up in a meeting because you're afraid it might not land — *do it anyway*. You might just shift the entire conversation.



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Tip #10: Know your value

Here's the truth:

Companies can restructure, roles can change, and careers can pivot overnight. That's why your loyalty should always be to yourself — not your employer.

The best investment you can make is in your own development.

Keep sharpening your toolkit, expanding your network, and understanding your value in the market.

Take courses, earn certifications, attend industry events, and stay close to market trends.

And when the time comes to negotiate your worth — you'll have the data, confidence, and clarity to back it up.

🔑 **Insider Insight:** When I hear someone has been at the same company for 15 or 20 years, I always wonder — do they love it, or have they just gotten comfortable? Moving to a new company, team, or even industry can often reignite growth and lead to the compensation and opportunity you truly deserve. Loyalty is admirable, but complacency can quietly cap your potential.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Once or twice a year, do a career audit. Check job boards, talk to recruiters, and assess your skills and market value. It keeps you sharp — and reminds you that your career is yours to manage.

