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THE EDGE



The Importance of Becoming Indispensable

Why is becoming indispensable so important?

Leaders today need an edge to keep them in front of the competition. With the volatility of the economy, they also need to make sure they are last in line when it comes to company layoffs. One way a leader can improve their chances and visibility is by becoming indispensable. Don't mistake indispensable for irreplaceable, they are not remotely the same. Being indispensable means that you are both good and efficient at your job that no one could fathom the idea of replacing you. Irreplaceable means that without you in that role, the organization would cease to function. Bottom line, rarely is anyone irreplaceable, but they can be indispensable.

There are benefits to being indispensable like having a feeling of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is when the leader knows that they did the job well and that they made an impact on the organization. Having better morale is another benefit. The leader enjoys the job and knows that they are valued. A third benefit is lowered stress. The leader experiences lower stress as they reduce the worry that they could lose their job due to downsizing or cuts. Finally, the leader is more likely to get a raise or promotion and is more likely to be sought out for advice, special projects, opinions and direction.

Of course, there is a down side to being indispensable. According to Andy Teach, author of *From Graduation to Corporation*, "The down side of being indispensable is that you have to constantly live up to high expectations."



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Strategy, Structure, Leadership.....Sustainable Success

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Be a Thought Leader!

“By finding ways to make yourself indispensable, you increase your value to the organization exponentially.” –

Kimberly Ramsey, CEO, The Executive Edge, Inc.

How do you make yourself indispensable?

Keep in mind, that a leader’s job is to make their manager’s job easier. By becoming an indispensable team member, the leader is building trust between themselves and their manager. The following are a list of things a leader can do to make themselves more indispensable:

Go the extra mile. Going the extra mile does not mean giving up evenings, weekends and vacations. Going the extra mile just means giving a little more than what is expected of you in your current role. Instead of execution all the time, it can be as simple as coming up with new ideas, taking on new or more responsibilities, or simply being flexible. Being able to get the job done when there are unforeseen hurdles in the way.

Be a thought leader. It is easy to go along with the crowd or be a “yes” man. But a thought leader is the one

that stands out and goes against the grain. They see the whole picture. They understand how world events can impact their organizations bottom line. Thought leaders will learn to anticipate what is needed and will bring new and valuable thinking to the table that will benefit the organization. They glean this information by reading up on the industry, talking to other experts, and by research. They take the new knowledge and apply it. They then share this information with others by writing articles, adding it to presentations and serving on panels. The processing of sharing the information helps peers and managers have confidence in them. They feel the leader knows what they are doing. Thought leaders will be the ones that initiate the change, not get swept up by it.

Do work that matters, not just the easy work. If a leader wants to be indispensable, then they need to step up and do the work that matters. These are the things that take a little extra time or can pull

you out of your comfort zone, but they really matter to the organization. For example, it is easy to let the controller call your client and try to collect on a past due account. It becomes work that matters if you go out of your way to contact and work with the client before it gets to that point. Managers notice when your receivables are under 30 days and you colleagues run 60 days and over.

Build your contacts. Building your contacts is like networking. The difference is that you are building them during work hours. Get to know peers who need your expertise. Get to know others whom you can learn valuable information from or can help you, like the IT guy and the CEO’s administrative assistant. Become the main contact for your organization’s biggest customer. Build relationships that are important to your company. The relationship may be with a supplier, government agency or the community to name a few. Become the point person and get things done. The bottom line, connect with people and be the go to in your organization.

Become an Expert



Become an expert. Learn everything you can about some field that is relatable if not vital to your organization. Read up on the topic and speak on the subject whenever you can. Publish internal reports on the subject matter if it will help colleagues. Just make sure you are widely accepted as the expert.

Keep learning. Stay current with technology and industry trends. Learn how to apply that technology or trend to your organization. You could master a language that is not required for your position such as French or Korean, or computer language like web coding. Work on improving both your written and verbal communication skills. With everything being texted or tweeted, good communication skills are becoming rare. A leader that is a good writer will have an advantage when competing in the workplace.

Be Positive. Be the leader who can always put a positive spin on things. Have a good attitude. Share your knowledge and be there for other team members. Everyone loves working with people who like their jobs and want to be there.

Summary

Keep in mind that no one is truly irreplaceable. If you happen to leave an organization don't live under the false pretense that it can't get along without you. If the company is even marginally functional, it will survive.

If your worried about your company downsizing you can help yourself out by becoming indispensable. If your manager must choose between you and another leader you will have the distinct advantage.



Key Takeaways

- Indispensable and irreplaceable are not interchangeable. Rarely is any one person irreplaceable.
- There are benefits to being indispensable, job satisfaction, better morale and lower stress due to worrying about job loss.
- There are many things you can do to make yourself indispensable, such as going the extra mile to make sure the job gets done. By continuous learning, having a good attitude, becoming a thought leader and being an expert to name a few.

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