

The Essential Employee – The Adventures of Carmen Senz



Discussion Questions

Use in small groups or as a guide for independent review.

Chapter 1 – Getting Started

1. Describe three actions a new employee can take to create a great first impression. If you are not new to your job, what actions should you take that you haven't yet taken?

Chapter 2 – Getting Results

1. Identify three specific things you can do to get results that are important to your company. (Relate to a current or previous job.)
2. What is a significant obstacle to an employee getting results? How would you overcome that obstacle?

Chapter 3 – Showing Enthusiasm

1. Describe two scenarios that demonstrate how an employee can show enthusiasm for their work; their employer; their position.
2. Name three things you admire about your company or organization.

Chapter 4 – Attitude is Everything

1. Define a situation that may challenge your attitude at work. Identify three strategies for maintaining the right attitude in this situation.
2. How have you reacted to making mistakes in the past? What might you do differently in the future?

Chapter 5 – Being Cooperative

1. Describe the connection between being cooperative and the previous three elements of being an essential employee (getting results, showing enthusiasm, and having the right attitude).
2. What challenging team situation are you dealing with (or have you dealt with in the past)? How might you effectively address the situation?

Chapter 6 – Having Honor

1. Identify two situations where it would be difficult to maintain honor. What result would you want in each situation? Describe productive and honorable actions you could use in these situations.
2. How do you actively support your company or organization? What choices have you made in the past and what choices should you make in the future?

Chapter 7 – The 6-Month Review

1. What are the responsibilities of the employee and the boss during performance reviews?
2. What behaviors are most important when receiving feedback from a superior? What behaviors should you avoid during feedback sessions?

Chapter 8 – The Merger

1. If an employee develops a back up plan or an exit strategy for their job, does that show a lack of enthusiasm or honor? Why or why not?
2. What is the impact to an individual who reacts inappropriately to changes in their organization? How does the individual's reaction affect the rest of the workforce?
3. What is your most significant take-away from this chapter? How will you adapt it to your life/situation?

Chapter 9 – Review and Assessment

1. Discuss each element of becoming an essential employee. Describe each one and identify ways you can create and maintain it in the workplace.

Results

- Be motivated
- Accept increasing responsibility
- Look for opportunities to contribute
- Wear many hats
- Prioritize and juggle tasks
- Give your best effort

Enthusiasm

- Show passion for what you do
- Commit to making the company succeed
- Know how your job and actions contribute to company success
- Learn about the entire company and what each department or component does
- Do what it takes to get the job done

Attitude

- Stay positive
- Wear a smile that says you like working and have pride in your organization
- Be contagious with your confidence and energy
- Be open to feedback and avoid defensiveness
- Learn from your mistakes and try not to repeat them
- Learn to laugh at yourself while staying professional

Cooperation

- Work well with others. This may take planning!
- Be polite, compassionate, respectful, and non-competitive
- Pitch in when needed. Make sure you contribute your fair share.
- Appreciate diversity. Try to learn something new from each person you work with.
- Ask questions and be open about your concerns and issues
- Give credit where credit is due—even if others don't

Honor

- Act and speak with unquestionable integrity
- Trust others and be trustworthy
- Be authentic and honest

What NOT to do

1. Refer to the three types of behaviors that reflect a poor attitude. Which of these do you feel would be most damaging to the organization; the individual? Why?
2. Refer to the three types of behaviors that reflect a lack of teamwork. Which of these do you feel would be most damaging to the organization; the individual? Why?
3. Refer to the three types of behaviors that reflect dishonesty, untrustworthiness, or game-playing. Which of these do you feel would be most damaging to the organization; the individual? Why?
4. Complete the assessment and discuss each question and why one action represents a greater level of “essential-ness.”