

When a Boss Pushes More Work Your Way

Written by Steve Marr

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Frequently, an employer will ask for more work from an employee, more than what the basic job description may have identified. I have been guilty of this to accomplish an important task but also because I felt some employees were capable of doing more. At times we can push too hard in ways that leave the employee overcommitted. This requires the staff member to make choices about what work to do and what work to delay.

Experience as taught me that when I had additional work thrust in my direction, I would sit down with my boss and explain my current projects and how my committed time was already scheduled. Then, I asked my supervisor how to delay or delete some tasks in order to take on the new assignment. Sometimes I just wanted my manager to realize my dilemma and figure out another way to get the task done without me. However, when an employee finds themselves in an untenable position, it may be time to start looking for another job.

When an extra workload is coming our way, a good strategy is to communicate with the superior and ask them to work with us to create a workable plan. In most situations the employer will look at the reality of our schedule and make decisions with us on priorities in a way that allows us to reschedule our work.

When extra time is required in a job, I prefer to come in earlier rather than later. This may be a subtle point, but early morning is typically more productive. Besides, if we stay late; it tends to signal our willingness to take on more commitments.

Emergencies happen. On one occasion a fire destroyed one of our offices requiring a tremendous amount of additional work from many people. These types of emergencies should be rare but must be embraced. Those reorganizing the office after a fire can't simply walk out the door at 5 o'clock, go home, eat dinner, watch TV and come back the next day at eight.

King Solomon wrote, "It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes." (Ecclesiastes 7:18, NIV) While I'm a strong advocate of committed work, we should not allow our families to suffer. On the other hand, we don't want to be let go

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for insubordination. Both employer and employee must work to hold reasonable boundaries which allows everyone to accomplish the most important work.