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Chautauqua Works

americanjobcenter®

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Executive Director's Message



Chautauqua Works staff have the privilege of helping thousands of people navigate job searches, career changes, and professional growth. Staff work with students, veterans, career switchers, laid-off workers, and first-time job seekers. The tools and technology have changed dramatically over the years, but the core principles of career success remain surprisingly consistent.

Here are a few tips that I hope will help you wherever you are in your career journey.

1. Your career is not a straight line—and that's okay. Many people come into Chautauqua Works feeling anxious because their path doesn't look "perfect" on paper. They worry about gaps, job changes, or starting over. In reality, career growth is rarely linear. Detours often build valuable skills: communication, problem-solving, leadership, and adaptability. Businesses

are increasingly open to nontraditional career paths, especially when you can clearly explain what you've learned along the way.

2. Skills matter more than job titles. Job titles can be misleading. Two people with the same title may have completely different responsibilities. What businesses really care about is what you can do. When updating your résumé or preparing for interviews, focus on your skills and accomplishments rather than just listing duties. Quantify your results whenever possible: "Increased customer satisfaction by 15%" or "Managed a budget of \$50,000." These details tell a much stronger story.

3. Networking is about relationships, not asking for favors. Networking can feel uncomfortable, especially if you think of it as asking someone for a job. Instead, think of it as building professional relationships. Ask questions. Show curiosity. Follow up. Over time, those connections may turn into job leads, mentorships, or references. Some of the best opportunities come from casual conversations, not formal applications.

4. Continuous learning is no longer optional. The workplace is evolving faster than ever. Automation, artificial intelligence, and remote work have reshaped entire industries. The most successful job seekers are those who stay curious and keep learning—whether

through short-term training, certifications, workshops, or online courses. You don't need to master everything at once, but staying current reflects that you are everything at once, but staying current reflects that you are adaptable and motivated.

5. Confidence grows through preparation. Many people struggle with interviews because they feel unsure of themselves. The best remedy is preparation. Practice answering common interview questions. Research the employer. Review your own accomplishments. Confidence doesn't come from pretending—you earn it by knowing your story and being ready to tell it.

6. Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness. One of the biggest misconceptions is that people should be able to figure out their careers alone. That's simply not true. Career Centers such as Chautauqua Works exist because career decisions are complex. Résumés, cover letters, labor market trends, and interview strategies can be overwhelming. Using available resources—career specialists, workshops, mock interviews—can save you time and frustration.

Meaningful work is possible for everyone. It may not happen overnight, and it may not look exactly how you imagined, but with persistence, reflection, and support, progress is always possible.

If you're feeling stuck, uncertain, or overwhelmed, know that you're not alone—and Chautauqua Works is here to help.

Our Resource Rooms Are Available For Job Searching!

Having trouble applying for jobs on your phone? Both of our locations feature a Resource Rooms where job seekers can use our computers to research job openings and apply for these positions.

We also feature printers that you can use to print out information.

To use our Resource Rooms, all customers must be registered with us. You can complete our Career Registration Form here at Chautauqua Works or a form can be emailed to you.

Our friendly Resource Room Assistants can also provide help when you use our computers.

We are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at these locations:

Jamestown—4 East 3rd Street, Suite 102, 716-661-9553

Dunkirk—407 Central Avenue, 716-366-9015

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

Inside this issue:

Getting Used to a New Manager. 2

How Important Are Soft Skills in the Workplace? 3

Activities to Help You Beat The Winter Blues. 4

How To Demonstrate a Positive Attitude at Work. 5

Back Page: Chautauqua/ Western NY Data 6

Getting Used to a New Manager

1. Study your new manager's leadership style. Every manager has specific likes, dislikes, preferences, quirks, and hot buttons. Learn as much as you can about your new boss, either by asking directly, checking out the grapevine, or observing carefully. Modify your behavior accordingly.

2. Recognize that "different" does not mean "wrong". Your new manager will probably do some things (maybe many things) differently from your old boss. Unless there are legal or ethical issues, this change in direction is not "wrong" – just a new approach. And you probably need to adjust to it.

3. Maintain a helpful attitude. New managers really appreciate employees who are encouraging and cooperative. Look for ways to be helpful. Share information about your work, provide a heads-up about problems, be a good listener, say nice things (as long as you mean them).

4. Discuss expectations. Have a clear and direct conversation about your job. Give your new boss information about your goals, challenges, contributions, and resource needs. Determine whether this manager's expectations may differ significantly

from the previous one. Agree on goals, objectives, and expected results. Discuss how information will be shared and decisions will be made.

5. Never complain publicly about your boss. Strategizing with colleagues about how to work with your new manager can be helpful – kind of like group therapy. But do not, under any circumstances, get in the habit of griping about your boss to others. Many people have lost their jobs this way.

7. If your new boss used to be your co-worker ... When a peer is made the manager, everyone has to adjust to the change in roles. Your former colleague is now responsible for managing your performance, which can initially be uncomfortable for both of you. Take time to discuss the role change, ask how you can help, and offer your support. If the two of you were sworn enemies, this is an unfortunate development for you, so try to adjust your attitude and make amends. Or polish up your resume.

8. If your new boss came from another organization .. Different organizations have different cultures, so don't expect your new manager to see

everything the way you do. Sharing information about your organization will be helpful, as long as you don't start defining how things "should" be done. The new manager may have different ideas.

9. Address issues with a businesslike, problem-solving approach. If you have real concerns about your new manager's actions or decisions – and it's more than just doing things differently – then you should initiate a discussion. But don't become confrontational, argumentative, or critical. Describe how the issue adversely affects results, then ask for your manager's view of the situation. Listen carefully to the answer..

10. Take concerns to others as a last resort. If something truly destructive is going on – especially if it involves discrimination, harassment, illegal activity, or abuse – then you should definitely talk to human resources or the next level of management. But do not take this step if you are simply unhappy, because the odds are very good that your complaints will get back to your boss, who will not be pleased.

How Important Are Soft Skills in the Workplace?

What do employers look for in new employees? According to business leaders, employers view "soft" skills as even more important to work readiness.

Enthusiasm

Prior to an interview, check out the company's Web site to learn about the business. Think of questions you might want answered, because asking questions is one way to show interest. Other strategies include arriving a few minutes early to the interview, dressing professionally, and staying engaged in the conversation.

Once employed, continue to demonstrate enthusiasm by taking initiative and seeking new and more challenging work. In certain work settings, you can show initiative by volunteering to take on needed work or pitching a new project idea to your supervisor.

Professionalism

Business etiquette and work ethic go hand in hand for employers. Some tips when it comes to making a good impression once employed include: dressing properly for the work setting, arriving on time and staying productive until you leave, turning cell phone ringers off while at work and returning phone calls and text messages while on breaks or after work hours, using computers, if you have access to them, only for work-related tasks, speaking in a respectful manner with supervisors, peers, and customers or clients.

Also remember that even when you are technically "off-duty" in the lunchroom or at a reception, you are representing the organization and are expected to act professionally. Don't contribute to office gossip or banter around too much with your co-workers. Although you are allowed to have fun and

enjoy your job, you are still there to work.

Communication Skills

Communicating ideas in the workplace is different than in an academic setting. In the workplace, the format for interaction varies. Sometimes your supervisors may specifically ask you for your opinion or ask you to express that opinion in writing. More often than not, however, they assume that if they need to know something, you will bring it to their attention. The challenge of communicating in the workplace is learning how and when to share your ideas or concerns.

If you need to tell your supervisor about something that is not going well, it is important to remember that both timing and your attitude are extremely important. For example, if you are a cashier at a carry-out restaurant and the long lines during the lunch rush "stress you out," causing you to give customers incorrect change, it is best to wait to talk to your supervisor about the problem during a slower period. Another proactive strategy would be to talk to your supervisor or another senior employee about how you could do your job more efficiently.

Listening is also an important communication skill. Employers report that the average entry-level candidate struggles with knowing how to listen carefully. They may not immediately process essential instructions or be able to understand how their tasks relate to the overall goals of the organization. One way to improve your listening comprehension skills is to ask questions. Other tactics include restating what you thought you heard to confirm you understood correctly, and taking notes.

Teamwork

Successful businesses rely on team players. This skill is so important that an article in a Society for Hu-

performance appraisal process if collaboration is essential to the job.

In the workplace, knowing how and when to lead and follow takes practice, as does knowing how to avoid unnecessary conflict. Working on a team also allows you to build closer relationships with your co-workers, which can make any job more fun and interesting. When working on a team, make sure that the workload is shared and that everyone is communicating.

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

Problem solving and critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve workplace problems. Employers are usually appreciative when new employees are able to offer insight and fresh perspective into better and more efficient ways of doing things.

It is important to remember, however, that as someone new to the organization, you may not always have the full picture, and thus there may be factors you are unaware of that dictate that things be done a particular way.

Another important thing to remember is that when you are tasked with solving a problem, you don't always need to answer immediately. The ability to develop a well thought out solution within a reasonable time frame, however, is a skill employers value greatly.

From the United States Department of Labor, Website Office of Disability Employment Policy, "Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge"

Activities to Help You Beat the Winter Blues.

Experts at the National Institutes of Health say the so-called winter blues are fairly common and are usually marked by feeling more down than usual, sad, less energized, or less interested in activities one usually enjoys. Estimates suggest anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of American adults experience such seasonal mood changes at some level.

A small percentage of people who experience a change of mood with the season do have seasonal depression, a more severe condition that is a medical disorder, also known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD affects between 1 and 9 percent of Americans. SAD is a recurrent form of major depression, characterized by feelings of hopelessness and despair, fatigue, problems sleeping and concentrating, and changes in appetite.

Here are suggestions to help you beat the winter blues.

Lace Up Your Running Shoes and Get Moving.

Getting at least 20 minutes of vigorous activity four times a week has been shown to reduce depressive mood.

Get a gym membership if that's what it takes to keep you warm and working out, or running up and down the stairs.

Set Your Alarm Clock and Stick to a Sleep Routine.

It's best to stick with a regular sleep schedule — which means waking up at the same times on weekdays and weekends. Establish a routine wake-up time and a soothing bedtime ritual, and if you aren't already in this habit, allow three or four weeks to get used to it.

It's important to get at least seven hours of sleep every night for your overall health, according to guidelines from the National Sleep Foundation. Also, make sure that your sleeping area is comfortable, slightly cool, and free of noisy distractions.

Queue Up a Stream of Laugh-Out-Loud Films.

Experts believe that laughter stimulates processes in your brain that counter depressive symptoms. And since chuckling is downright contagious, you can invite a few pals over to share the popcorn.

Host a Festive Party — But Don't Stress.

Any excuse to host a gathering of friends will do — try a dinner party, cheese tasting, or board game night. Planning an event will give you something to look forward to.

Give Yourself a Manageable Task to Accomplish.

It's important to build activities into your day — even chores, like cleaning the floor — that will give you a sense of competence and accomplishment. Balance the hard work with little things that bring you pleasure, like treating yourself with fresh flowers or a homemade cup of hot cocoa.

But Don't Let Your To-Do List Get Too Out of Hand.

Don't overwhelm yourself with lists of projects and chores. Complete the business you need to take care of and do it on time. Decide to stop procrastinating and get the tools you need to get organized.

Book a Staycation — Even if It's a Mini One.

Most people get a lift when they have something to look forward to. You may not have the budget or

time off of work but it's much easier to make time for and plan a local staycation treat, such as an afternoon ice skating with friends, trying out a new restaurant in a nearby town, or going to a concert.

Consider Light Therapy if You Can't Get the Sunshine You Need.

A decrease in sunlight can disrupt your body's circadian rhythms, and cause a drop in serotonin levels and vitamin D levels, which can lead to depressive symptoms. If you have the flexibility and the weather allows for it, schedule in an early-morning walk or lunchtime stroll. If you don't, consider this option, which is especially beneficial for people with full-fledged seasonal depression: a full-spectrum light box.

Light therapy can help regulate your body's circadian rhythms and its natural release of the hormones that help you feel energized and the ones that help you sleep. You should work with a doctor or mental health professional who can advise you on when during the day to use it, and for how long.

Don't Hesitate to See Your Healthcare Professional.

Chronic pain, headaches, sleep disorders, and even heart disease are all linked to depression symptoms, so check in with your healthcare provider to make sure your winter blues aren't something more serious.

From, "10 Ways to Beat the Winter Blues", Madeline R. Vann, MPH, Everyday Health January 22, 2022

How to Demonstrate a Positive Attitude at Work.

Cultivating a positive attitude is one thing, but actively demonstrating it is another. It may take a little more effort, but expressing positivity will improve how people see you in the workplace and make practicing it all the time easier.

Below are some of the best ways to demonstrate a positive attitude at work.

Avoid Negativity and Criticism
If you want to maintain a positive attitude and demeanor, one of the best things you can do is avoid any negativity at work. Some people are naturally more negative and tend to bring this pessimism or stress with them to the workplace, which can drag you down if you are exposed to it all the time. It's also a good idea to stay away from gossip or criticism of colleagues in the workplace if you want to demonstrate a positive attitude.

Practice Gratitude This can be done in both your personal and professional life, and can be particularly useful to do when you are at work if you want to maintain a positive outlook on what you are doing and lift other people up as well. Practicing gratitude involves mindfully and regularly taking note of the things that you are grateful for in your life. They don't have to be big or meaningful, but taking time to appreciate the positive aspects of your life and work will make demonstrating a generally positive attitude much easier.

Set and Achieve Goals Positive people are also productive, so one of the best ways to show positivity in the workplace is by regularly setting yourself goals that you can realistically work towards. Not only will frequent success make you happier and add to your positive outlook, but it is also easier to feel positive if you know that you are working towards something that is going to bring a benefit to your life. Setting and achieving goals at work will also likely gain you praise from the people you work with, which again will contribute to overall feelings of positivity and satisfaction.

Give Yourself Breaks Burnout is one of the biggest killers of positivity. Make sure that you are properly switching off at the end of each working day to give your brain a proper break from what you are doing, whether you use this time to pursue hobbies or to relax and unwind. You should also give yourself breaks during the working day to remain productive and ensure that you're able to give your best in the workplace and remain efficient when it matters. By taking breaks, you ensure that you have enough energy to demonstrate a positive attitude when you're at work, along with avoiding feeling stressed and drained.

Consciously Focus on the Positives The key to a positive attitude is focusing on the positive of every situation. It might seem like an obvious tactic, but it takes effort to consistently take note of the good things about a situation and ensure that your reaction is always one of appreciation or enthusiasm. At work, you can use this to demonstrate positivity by pointing out when people have done well, offered help or overcome a challenge. You can also make an effort to find the positives in difficult situations, such as seeing negative feedback as an opportunity for improvement or a setback in a project as a chance to try something new.

Prioritize your Wellbeing Having a positive attitude takes effort and energy. Very few people are naturally wired to feel positive all the time, so if you want to give yourself the best chance of consistently showing a positive working attitude, you need to prioritize your wellbeing to ensure that you don't wear yourself out. It's also a lot easier to feel positive if you are happy and both physically and emotionally healthy. You can improve your general wellbeing by ensuring you get enough sleep, fresh air, social interaction, healthy food and exercise, and in turn, all of this will give you the energy to practice positivity and improve your overall mood.

Show Kindness A big part of demonstrating positive behavior is being happy to help others when they need it. You should want to bring positivity to everyone around you, and showing kindness is one of the best ways to do this. Kindness in the workplace can be as simple as fetching someone a coffee when you can see they are busy or tired, taking on simple tasks to free up someone else's time, and offering help and support where needed. This will make you more liked by the people you work with, which in turn will improve your experience at work.

Stay Organized Positive people tend to be better at their jobs, and a key reason for this is that they are very organized. When you feel happy and accomplished it is much easier to stay on top of things and work productively, and equally, making sure that you plan your time, make note of tasks and consistently meet deadlines will reduce stress and mean you get a lot more satisfaction out of your job.

Pursue Outside Interests Positive people tend to really enjoy their jobs, but they also get a lot of happiness from other areas of their lives. If you have hobbies that you really enjoy you'll be more satisfied and engaged with your life overall, which in turn will make it easier to bring a positive attitude to work. Having outside interests can also make you a more talented and valuable employee, as you may gain additional skills that can be useful at work or learn about things that come in useful in certain projects.

Smile Finally, one of the easiest ways to demonstrate a positive attitude at work is to show that you feel positive! Smiling, having relaxed and open body language, and ensuring that you project an image of positivity will all ensure that the people you work with think of you as someone who is enthusiastic and energized, as well as helping to lift your mood if you're struggling a little.

From "Demonstrate a Positive Attitude at Work", Virtual College, May 2, 2025

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Back Page: Chautauqua/Western NY Data.

Over the past year, private sector jobs in the Western New York region rose by 3,000 or 0.7 percent, to 542,000 ending November 2025. Gains were greatest in private education and health services (+4,300), professional and business services (+900), and trade, transportation and utilities (+400). Losses were centered in manufacturing (-700), mining, logging and construction (-700), financial activities (-200), and other services (-200) . Government sector jobs increased by (+1,600) over-the-year. (New York State Department of Labor).

The unemployment rate for Chautauqua County in November 2025 remains at 4.5%. The current rate is equal to New York State's unemployment figure of 4.5%. (New York State Department of Labor).

Check out our Facebook Page!

Our Facebook page is updated daily to inform job seekers of open positions throughout Chautauqua County. These positions are either full or part time, temporary or permanent and provided by numerous employers as well as the New York State Department of Labor. Job descriptions and information on how to apply are featured. Please visit our Facebook page and like/follow it!



Chautauqua Works On-Line!

Chautauqua Works has its own webpage:
www.chautauquaworks.com

This website features events, linkages to websites for job seekers, business services, information on our youth, disability, and veteran programs, and other valuable employment resources.

