

“If you have nothing to do, don't do it here”

By: Jack Muellerleile

“If you have nothing to do, don't do it here” is just a more thoughtful way of saying “No Loitering” or “There’s a time to shirk and a time to work”.

All of the above coined expressions are an outgrowth of a work ethic philosophy prevalent among past generations and, to a lesser degree, still alive today which can be stated as follows: **“If you are going to accept a man’s money, earn it...every hour...of every day.”**

Application of this philosophy varies with the type of work being performed, the employment circumstances and the culture of the employing entity. To get the pictures being painted on this subject, see the varying examples below.

Situation: Hourly worker

Work flat out every hour of every day. If tasks are completed prior day’s end, take the initiative in performing some other needed task or ask the boss for direction. Loafing around is forbidden and thought of as stealing.

Situation: Daily worker

Application is exactly the same as above.

Situation: FLSA Exempt worker, salaried, paid monthly or semi-monthly

(Note: Employing entity stresses that it is results-oriented to the degree that it is far less concerned about how many hours are worked daily or weekly than it is about how well the mutually accepted goals, and objectives are consistently being achieved in a timely manner.)

A. Employee’s personal career objective: Desires to be a well paid top performer and remain in the same position at the same work location.

- It is perfectly acceptable for this employee to spread out his work activity so that it takes a full year to accomplish all of the goals and objectives set forth as reasonable productivity for the year.
- It is also perfectly acceptable for the employee to work half days so long as the productivity equals that of a good worker’s full day’s endeavors.
- As long as the productivity of the worker remains “on track” or “ahead of plan” vs. the agreed upon goals and objectives, the employee can strut around the office doing nothing or call in saying he’ll be “at the beach” all day. No supervisor will care one little bit.

- This worker will achieve his objectives including not being considered for advancement to positions of greater responsibility within the employing organization.

B. Employee's personal career objective: Desires to be a well paid top performer and advance to positions of greater responsibility.

- This worker will achieve a full year's production in less than a year whether he measures it out or goes whole hog finishing it up in 6, 8 or 10 months time.
- If he is smart, he will alert his supervisor to the fact that he is capable of turning in a full year's production in less than a full year by either of the above means and wants direction as to which best serves the supervisor's needs while freeing the worker to accept special assignments outside his current unit (i.e. vacation relief for person in higher position to which the worker aspires and supervisor endorses as a realistic, near term ambition; attendance at a scheduled management training course; temporary duty working for an executive requiring assistance for a short period of time).
- This worker will achieve his objectives and get promoted.

Summary: Both scenario "A" and scenario "B" workers fulfilled the above work ethic philosophy 100%.

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