

building your **PRODUCTIVITY IQ**

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

YOU ARE ASSIGNED A TASK and you complete it. That's productivity, right? Sure, that is the very basic sense of productivity, but like many things, being a productive employee means so much more!

Last year we explored ambiguity IQ (visit Career Guide under Resources on AgCareers.com). In this edition, let's continue to build and get comfortable with another key employability skill that employers sometimes feel young professionals lack. Your Productivity IQ!

WHAT IS PRODUCTIVITY?

In its truest definition, it is the state or quality of producing something measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input. Blah! What a completely boring definition unrelated to people and the workplace. When we look at productivity as it relates to the workforce it is huge for managers and leaders in business.

Yes, you are a bit of an investment to the organization and they are measuring what they get out of you compared to what they put into you. It is important to remember that. But this isn't to say you are just a cog in the wheel. Most employers understand productivity of employees directly results from the environment and culture of the organization.

In this article, we'll focus on ways that you can gain productivity experience, demonstrate your productivity standards to employers, and continue to build your productivity.

PRODUCTIVITY MINDSET

Productivity and accountability go hand in hand. To be highly accountable, you must ask yourself what more can I do or offer. The same can be said about a highly productive employee. It isn't just getting a list of assignments and working down the list in a literal manner.

Employers say that productive employees work through each task exploring ways to complete the task and find efficiencies. Thinking about how their actions could help or hinder others within the business.

Then once they finish, it isn't "I'm done, I'll go home." It is seeking additional opportunities to learn, grow, and assist. Productivity is truly a mindset and you can be a highly productive employee if you choose to be!

PRODUCTIVITY EXPERIENCE

Internships are the best way to gain and show your productivity prowess. This setting provides many opportunities to take on unique projects and work. You will have the opportunity to work through and develop strategies on how best to complete things. Watch others around you and your boss to see how >>>

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A MINDSET"



they approach project work. What are tips and tools they utilize to be productive? How can you adapt those for your own personal use?

Ask questions! Employers don't expect you to know everything or how to do everything as an intern. By asking questions you gain insight into how to most effectively ask for help and input, which is a way to heighten your productivity for the future.

Once you complete a project, give a rundown of how you tackled the project to those you are sharing the outcomes with. Listen for feedback through this process. You'll hear things like, "I hadn't thought about doing it that way," or "Did you consider doing it this way?" You might also hear "You should have done this." Don't let that squash your spirit. Hopefully, you run into the later scenario less than the earlier, more positive scenarios.

Ask for more to do. In our experience at AgCareers.com, interns complete projects much faster than we typically expect. If this is the case for you, and you've done a thorough job and not just rushed through, ask if there is something else you can help with. Your employer may not have something right that minute, but they'll find it impressive and find more to give you in the future.

While internships provide a great opportunity for productivity experience and growth, you can apply this mindset to many other places to help you sharpen those skills, such as school projects, part-time work, academics, and lifelong learning. If you put in the effort and strive to be a highly productive person doors in many aspects of your life will open.

DEMONSTRATING PRODUCTIVITY

As we've mentioned, productivity is big for employers and they'll go to

extraordinary lengths to try to assess your productivity and work ethic in an interview.

Questions that typically are used to gain this insight go something like: "Tell me about a time when you had a big project. What steps did you follow to accomplish the objective? What was the outcome?" Those behavioral-based questions that ask you to reflect on a situation and walk the person through the process ending with the outcome really can shed light.

Remember from above, that part about a cliff notes rundown—that is the practice for answering these types of questions. An important part of nailing these types of questions is to be thorough but concise in your response. Don't be too short that you don't provide enough detail. Don't be too long that you include a bunch of unimportant details. Knowing the question assesses productivity and work ethic, as you practice for this type of question, think like the interviewer. What is it about this experience that I'm sharing with them that will help them understand my level of work ethic, productivity and problem-solving?

In your resume you can also demonstrate productivity. Use measurables to quantify your work. How many projects did you complete? How many marketing campaigns did you run? The more you can put a quantity on things, the more you make it easy for the reader to understand your output.

Your productivity IQ is less about IQ and more about your mindset. You get to control how an employer sees your productivity level. It will be measured in the effort that you put forward! There are lots of exceptional career opportunities and career success for employees that put productivity excellence at the top of their list! **AG**

productivity TIPS

Here are some productivity tips from the pros at AgCareers.com!

- **PRIORITIZE:** What's due first? Urgent? Ask your supervisor for help prioritizing if needed.
- **DON'T WAIT** until the last day before a project is due—it's not like cramming for a test the night before.
- Find ways to **MOTIVATE** yourself through the mundane tasks.
- **TAKE NOTES** during meetings—real pen and paper, handwritten notes!
- **MAKE LISTS.**
- Utilize **ONLINE CALENDAR SYSTEMS**, like Outlook. Setup reminders for project due dates and follow-ups.
- **CLEAN** your workspace—this can jumpstart your productivity. You'll feel less distracted and more focused on getting work done.
- **BLOCK TIMES** for specific projects or tasks and stick to those commitments. Set a timer if needed.
- A good **PLAYLIST** always helps!
- Work on **BIG PROJECTS** that take focus when you are naturally at your best!
- **LEARN** from those around you – talk to people to gain insight and ideas.
- **PAUSE TO MEASURE** progress, re-evaluate, realign to the goal.
- Set your **PHONE ON DND** (put the cell phone down) when you need to hunker down and focus.
- Force yourself to **TAKE BREAKS** throughout the day to clear your head.