

JUICY WORK NEWS

Updates from The Learning Advantage

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Show Your Work

When employees get feedback from their managers on something they need to improve, most go to work right away and start making changes. But since change may come about incrementally or take a while to appear, all too often busy managers may not notice improvements to the status quo. It may take something dramatic for them to realize that change has happened.

Managers appreciate knowing you heard their feedback and you're making progress addressing the issue. It helps if you update the manager on what you are doing and ask for feedback. Not only will this show the manager that you've taken their feedback to heart, it will also prompt the manager to notice improvements. And if you still have a way to go on implementing changes, it allows the manager to give feedback on what more could be done.

Laura redesigned a payment processing system that significantly improved customer service, but performance feedback from her managers said that while she was good at executing a plan, she needed to be more strategic. I asked her if the redesigned payment system had been someone else's strategy, and she said she had developed the strategy on her own. Clearly, her strategic chops were not being recognized.



Overcoming Procrastination

I was talking with a friend who I'd thought of as driven, motivated, and always on top of things. But he admitted that he often struggles with procrastination. What was his secret to overcoming it, I asked. He told me he eats the frog first.

The phrase "eat the frog first" was popularized by Brian Tracy in his 2001 book *Eat That Frog!* In the book, Tracy uses the metaphor of "eating a frog" to describe the act of tackling your most important, challenging, or unpleasant task first thing in the day. The idea is that once you've "eaten the frog," the rest of your tasks will feel easier by comparison.

The phrase is often attributed to the famous author and humorist Mark Twain, who supposedly said, "*If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning.*" He added that "*if it's your job to eat*

When I reviewed some of the presentations Laura created to introduce the new system, I noticed that the word “strategy” never appeared. Indeed, the word used most often was “plan.” Wasn’t the redesigned payment processing system part of her strategy intended to improve customer service and increase customer retention? I suggested she edit the presentations to include references to the strategy behind the plan, not just the nuts and bolts of the plan.

After Laura revised her presentations, I suggested she ask her managers to listen to her presentations and give her feedback on how strategic they seemed. They gave a few tips on how she might word things but didn’t change any of the content. She thanked them for helping her become more strategic. By engaging the leaders in helping her address a performance weakness, she demonstrated her strategic abilities. The managers were pleased with her growth and were happy to have helped her achieve it.

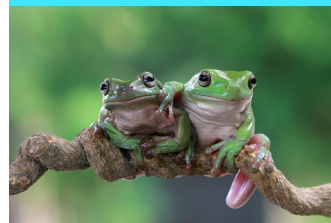
When managers are busy, distracted, or otherwise occupied they may miss significant change. It is up to you to bring to their attention your efforts at improving so they can appreciate your hard work toward change.



two frogs, eat the biggest one first.” In fact, Twain, may have “borrowed” the notion from Nicolas Chamfort, a French writer born a century before Twain.

Regardless of the term’s exact origin, eating the frog is solid, modern-day advice on how to stop procrastinating and become more productive. By tackling your toughest or most daunting task first, you set yourself up for a more productive day. When you put off a demanding task, it isn’t forgotten. Rather, it sits in the back of your mind, nagging you and diverting your energy.

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