

organizational citizenship

individual, discretionary actions by employees that are outside their formal job

description *e.g ~ employees who are willing and happy to go beyond formal job requirements will help organizations cope with change and unpredictable circumstances.*

What is Organizational Citizenship Behavior?

Organizational citizenship behavior is the technical psychological term for what can be simply defined as the compilation of individual behaviors in a group setting. Organizational citizenship behavior was first defined by Dennis Organ in 1988 as *"an individual behavior which is not rewarded by a formal reward system...but that, when combined with the same behavior in a group, results in effectiveness."* In the business world, organizational citizenship behavior has been linked to work productivity, employee effectiveness, and other factors which can impact a business in the short or long term.

5 Types of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Altruism is defined as the desire to help or otherwise assist another individual, while not expecting a reward in compensation for that assistance. In a business setting, altruistic behavior is generally related to the work or project that the business group is working on. Someone exhibiting altruistic behavior in a group setting might volunteer to work on certain special projects, voluntarily helping or assisting other employees with their work or with other tasks, and volunteering to do additional work in order to help other employees reduce their own work load. *Altruism in the workplace leads to productivity and effectiveness because it encourages good inter-employee relations; it can also reduce the stress load on other employees, which will in turn increase productivity.*

Courtesy is defined as behavior which is polite and considerate towards other people. In a business context, courtesy is usually exhibited through behaviors such as inquiring about personal subjects that a coworker has previously brought up, asking if a coworker is having any trouble with a certain work related project, and informing coworkers about prior commitments or any other problems that might cause them to reduce their workload or be absent from work. *Courtesy not only encourages positive social interactions between employees, which improve the work environment, but they can reduce any potential stress that might occur from employees who do not have the courtesy to inform their coworkers about issues such as upcoming absences from work—and so on.*

Sportsmanship is defined as exhibiting no negative behavior when something does not go as planned—or when something is being perceived as annoying, difficult, frustrating or otherwise negative. In the context of business, good sportsmanship is usually related to potential complaints about work or workloads in addition to negativity surrounding work-related surprises. For example: Imagine an employee who submits their proposal to their superior may be expecting it to be well-received and accepted—it is rejected, instead, and *the employee displays good sportsmanship by not complaining about the situation to other coworkers or individuals who may report their behavior to others working for the business.*

Conscientiousness is defined as behavior that suggests a reasonable level of self-control and discipline, which extends beyond the minimum requirements expected in that situation. In the context of a business setting, conscientiousness is observed when an employee *not only meets their employer's requirements—such as coming into work on time and completing assignments on time—but exceeds them.* Exceeding these requirements, and thereby showing conscientiousness, could be observed—for example—by an employee planning ahead to ensure that they, and their coworkers, do not become overwhelmed in their work.

Civic virtue is defined as behavior which exhibits how well a person represents an organization with which they are associated, and how well that person supports their organization in an unofficial capacity. For example, how well someone represents their business and how they may support that business are examples of someone's civic virtue.

Examples of civic virtue in a business setting include speaking positively about the business to friends, family and acquaintances; signing up for business events, such as charity walking events or fundraiser parties; and generally supporting the business *by always representing the business to the best of their ability even when they are not working.*

I/O at Work cited a study of employees who engaged in citizenship behavior at work that indicated that during their day, they felt their work was more meaningful. Engaging in OCB allows workers to have more control over the situation while also helping others and experiencing more meaningfulness at work.



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