

Proactive behavior is when people identify and solve problems before they occur. In the workplace, proactive behavior involves planning and preparing for upcoming tasks or noticing when others might need help.

By investing in your professional skills and being mindful of your workplace habits, you can become a proactive worker who makes a positive impact on team workflows.

What is a proactive worker?

A proactive worker is a person who takes initiative to identify problems and complete tasks *without requiring instruction or guidance from a supervisor*. They anticipate upcoming work, prepare resources and complete certain tasks early. Some key characteristics of a proactive worker include:

- **Organized:** Proactive workers use planning and organization to manage their responsibilities and time wisely. You can apply organization skills to mean assessing your current workload, predicting challenges, managing deadlines and scheduling time for future assignments.
- **Calm:** Conducting your work in a calm, rational manner is an important part of being proactive at work. When unexpected tasks and changes occur, proactive workers use logic to calmly address these challenges.
- **Solution-oriented:** Since proactive workers think strategically about how to complete upcoming tasks, they have a solution-oriented mindset and strong critical thinking skills. To be a proactive worker, brainstorm creative ways to solve or prevent problems in different scenarios.
- **Engaged:** Engagement means committing to your job with enthusiasm and thinking about the impact of your behaviors. Anticipating work, starting early and setting goals requires an engaged, committed mindset.

How to be more proactive:

Analyze Identify busy and slow periods to identify when you can plan and get ahead on your work. You might also consider how long specific projects took, how difficult they were to complete and what resources you used to complete them.

Organize Manage your calendar to log any upcoming tasks and include any helpful data from previous projects. You might even add reminders before certain start dates and schedule time to prepare. For example, if your annual performance reviews take two weeks to complete, you might set a reminder to review the previous year's objectives and organize your notes. This can help you focus on the task and complete it more efficiently.

Plan Set goals for yourself and outline the steps you might take to complete them.

Communicate Communicate your plans to supervisors and colleagues to set expectations about your capabilities and responsibilities. Tell your manager when you start additional projects and ensure you have approval to work on advanced assignments.

Perform Follow your original plans and hold yourself accountable to achieve your objectives. While completing tasks, consider potential risks, delays and factors that may arise that can affect your goals.