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Employees often struggle with the challenge of completing more work at the same time. Whether you work at home or in an office or factory, productivity is important for business success and your success at work. You can kick-start your efforts to improve your productivity by implementing some fixes for the elements that affect productivity. A little planning and attention to detail will help you focus on these elements and use them to your advantage. Set up a working space that supports productivity. An L-format desktop works well if you need space for a computer and a surface where you can work with paper. Stick with a single desk if the mess seems to grow on any surface. Your cubby can support productivity better with just a desk and chair. Remove extra chairs if visits from co-workers are a problem. Use music or white noise CDs to create a mood to help you focus. Remove distractions from your workspace and leave only the items you need to do your job. Organize your work material into a file system and use drawers or cabinets to store out of sight of items you don't use often. Use desktop organizers or trays to keep your work materials out of the way so you can focus on the task. Start your day with an eye toward productivity by arriving on time. Practice punctuality throughout the day by sticking to breaking schedules and setting and following deadlines. Complete the most difficult task first to build trust and combat the effect of procrastination on productivity. Study your tasks to see what it takes to perform well. Eliminate wasted effort that slows you down and zero in on critical tasks. Establish a rhythm. Use a document stand to display eye-level materials, have forms and reference materials at hand, and improve accuracy to limit repetitive work. Use your co-workers to help and return the service when you are asked to increase your productivity. Ask for help with large projects, leave some information so you can concentrate on others. Tell co-workers your goals so you're committed to achieving them. Talk to a co-worker who shows high productivity and ask how she does it. Take control by planning each day and scheduling the tasks you repeat each day. Pay attention to slow and busy times and the tasks that fit well within these periods. Set incremental goals, such as a number to reach in an hour or before the lunch break. Avoid multitasking. Break large tasks into smaller units and focus on completing one task before moving on to the next one. Take regularly scheduled breaks and lunch periods. Break up the day by going to water the foundation or standing to stretch the muscles. Thanks a quick walk around the outside perimeter of the building at the end of your lunch period. Production suffers if you continue to work through hunger, or exhaustion. A quick break and healthy snack can give you new energy and fuel your production. Employees will work for an employer that offers desirable working conditions, some of which are New employees can review employee benefits by talking to an HR representative or browsing the company's website. They can get a sense of the working environment, especially the employee culture, by talking to current employees. Only by working in the actual environment can employees be sure that it is a fit for them. Call it a multicultural workplace or the employer's commitment to diversifying the people who work there. If it is important for you to work with people from different backgrounds, then direct your job search to employers with a strong record in this area. In its 2011 100 best companies to work for – Most diverse, CNNMoney's top eight companies had a workforce of at least 51 percent minorities. Distinguish between employers with only a diverse workforce and employers with a work culture that values diversity and draws strengths from different ideas. Benefits are intangibles that attract many to employment opportunities, including jobs with lower wages than in the private sector, as is the case for some government and non-profit workers. Leave is an example of a benefit that is available to many employees. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, paid leave was available to 91 percent of full-time employees and 37 percent of part-time employees in the private sector. The second most common benefit reported by the Agency was sick leave; it was available to 75% of full-time and 27% of part-time employees. Rankings of the best U.S. workplaces have also been conducted from the point of view of what employees prefer in an employer. U.S. News & World Report asked questions about work-life balance for employees in its survey to determine the top 50 employers. Employees may like their jobs and benefits, but they also need a work-life balance. Without it, the job bleeds into private life, which can negatively affect a person's health or family relationships. Employees want to come to work feeling like they will be treated fairly. An employee can ask a manager questions in a job interview to see if the work relationship is a fit. She can also seek a management culture that treats people fairly and offers equal opportunities for advancement and other perquisites to minorities and people with disabilities. It is also important to search for a safety culture, which includes an organizational commitment to security practices. Managers and employers must receive regular training and apply it at work. They should create preventive measures to avoid work-related accidents, illnesses or deaths and investigate them when they occur. Potential employees can review an employer's record with the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Being a mother is one of the most demanding jobs in the world. And while women who take it upon themselves to work in addition to have their hands full, they represent the majority of mothers. Women at home with their children make up only a small percentage of families in the Us, says says Beth Anne Shelton, professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Arlington. Still, mothers-just like their stay-at-home counterparts—often face harsh judgments from those who question their parenting situation. Here are nine comments working mothers hate to hear and what to do if someone says one to you. 1. Do you really have to work? Most women (and men) work because they need income and/or health benefits, said Dr. Shelton. But a family's financial situation is nobody else's business. And even if someone is sure that a family can survive on a parent's paychecks alone, they can use the other income for luxury like saving for their children's future college education. Dr. Shelton explains. Still, Terri Bly, a small business owner and mother from St. Paul, MN, doesn't think mothers should feel bad about working when money isn't a driving force. I love my kids more than my job, but I need the combination of intellectual stimulation, pursuing my own goals and raising two amazing little girls, she said. My brain lights up when I have a balance between career and home. Feel free to share that logic with someone who asks if you have to work—or simply say you're not comfortable discussing your family's finances. 2. Aren't you worried about not being there for your kids? Even when a mother is at work, the ultimate responsibility for their children and their care lies with her, said Michelle LaRowe, author of Working Mom's 411: How to Handle Children, Career and Home. In addition, children can benefit from being around other caregivers, said Sara Sutton Fell, founder and CEO of FlexJobs, a service that helps people find flexible and teleworking career opportunities. Fell, a working mother, herself, suggests mothers answer the guilt-inducing question with: My children are with people who add value to their lives and support my ideas on how to raise them. Or, if you're like J DiGeronimo in Cleveland, OH, explain that you make up for hours apart from your kids with lots of quality time together. I give my children the one-on-one time they demand when I'm home. I'm not sure I'd play on the floor as much if I was there all the time, she says. 3. Did you hear about the study about children of working mothers? Everyone seems to have a know-it-all friend or relative who likes to mention research that proves that some parenting choices doom children. But only one mother knows what's best for her family, fell says. Plus, studies flip flop, she adds. In other words, best parenting practices are always changing. So instead of guessing yourself, avoid Debbie Downers as best you can. And when people share the latest findings with you, try to end the conversation with thanks for sharing or Fell's go-to response: I've read that there are lots of benefits for the children of working moms. 4. It must be nice to get a break from the kids. Working is a break in the fact that a mother is getting the chance focus on their professional professional says Fell. But, she points out, not everyone is blessed with a job she enjoys; sometimes it's just a paycheck. This note hits a nerve because working moms rarely have a real respite. After all, a mother is still a caring, anxious mom when she is at work. If someone slings that statement your way, admit that all moms need a break from time to time. It can segue into suggesting a future girls' night out! 5. You are so lucky to work from home. But why do you need a nanny? This means that work-from-home moms get to play with their kids and work at the same time—as if it's actually possible! Dawn Allcot of West Babylon, N.Y., a freelance writer, admits that she can't be productive without help. I have to pay someone to look at my toddlers so I can work, she says. And it's actually the perfect answer for anyone who has made to feel that her home-based gig is a breeze. In fact, Allcot notes, many employers who allow teleworking ask for proof of child care if the children are home. Although moms who work from home do some housework/childcare during office hours, hired help goes a long way. If a parent can concentrate on work by having a nanny, work is less likely to invade non-working hours, says Dr. Shelton. 6. Why have children if someone else is going to take care of them? Aj! This suggests that you entered into parenting without thinking it through. A family friend recently chastised Laura Perez in Newark, N.J., for considering having a second child when she was already a working mother of one. It's horrible to think you're not taking care of your baby properly. But just because you're a working mother doesn't mean you care less about your child. You just have to find the right balance, she says. And that balance is often the result of a lot of planning and prioritization, fell says. Whatever our motives, the decision to be a working mother (or not) is a difficult and personal one that comes with careful consideration. Don't hesitate to point out that if you feel you are being criticized. 7. You have another school event? Didn't you just leave early last week? Rosemarie Poska, a nurse manager and mother of three from Staten Island, N.Y., often feels the tug-of-war between her work schedule and the busy calendar of family activities, so she doesn't enjoy when co-workers question her work ethic. Some people say, you work the banker's hours, after I put in two hours before they came to the office, did not take a lunch break and barely went to the toilet! she says. Dr. Shelton doesn't think anyone should dislike parents attending the occasional school event during the day. We should realise that everyone benefits from children who are well cared for, she says. If a nosy co-worker passes a comment like this, Fell recommends keeping your response polite and professional without apologizing. Try: It's good that the company allows me to adjust my schedule to get my made and make my family a priority. 8. I would miss my children too much if I worked. Fixed the maybe it has nothing to do with the working mother who hears it, it can be perceived that working mothers must be so cold-hearted to leave their children every day, says LaRowe. The truth: Missing your kids when you're away from them is mommyversal, she says. This is a great opportunity to share how adorable it is when your little rush to the door to greet you, make pictures for your office or call you at work to tell you about their days. 9. Women should be at home with their children. Can you say old school? This suggests that mothers are the only ones who can raise their children, says Fell, adding that today's family structures are not like those of the past: Grandparents in the same household, single parents and home dads are quite common. If you hear this, take a deep breath and remember that someone telling you this comes from a different perspective. Dr. Ramani Durvasula, a psychology professor and clinical psychologist from Los Angeles, CA, continued to work after her daughters were born because she needed the money. So when a family member told her, when you had your baby, you gave up your dreams, she was angry. It's sad if mothers are portrayed as women with no dreams, she says. My legacy for my daughters will not be 'things', but rather my pursuit of my dreams. What better way to give them permission to do the same for themselves? 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