



Wins for Work

How to survive, thrive and advance at work

Vera Ama Ng'oma

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Text by Vera Ama Ng'oma

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INTRODUCTION

It's not uncommon to hear people complain about not enjoying their job, feeling stuck in roles they have outgrown or being at a loss in terms of how to improve their work experience. Their work feels like a job which they turn up to each day uninspired, unmotivated and uninterested.

The good news is that your work can become a powerful platform and opportunity to use your abilities to make a difference, develop yourself, advance big organisational goals and create impact beyond yourself.

There is much more to your work life than striving daily to be successful in what may feel like a soulless job where all you see are dead ends and ruts. It's time to get out of the shadows and away from the sideshows and focus on the big wins you can have at work and with your work.

The three sections in the book help you navigate the key areas of success in the workplace; your levels of personal accountability, your interactions with co-workers and how you work with your manager.

'Wins for Work' will help you get direction on how to breathe energy and inspiration into your work, become a force to be reckoned with and to do work that makes a contribution in a way that deeply matters to you. You can truly have a remarkable experience through giving your greatest work.

Every day the stakes are in front of you as you define and make choices for the work you do and how well you do it. Embrace your own agency and what you have control over in making your work the best you can be.

If you know you want something different to the status quo, a more winning work life, a clear space for the new you then do something to move the needle daily towards the wins you want.

Your work fills a large part of your life and the only way to make it worthwhile and fulfilling is to do what you know is great work.

Why would you have it any other way?

Win well.

Vera Ama Ng'oma

PART 1

**PERSONAL
ACCOUNTABILITY**

CHAPTER 1

Work SMART everyday

How productive you are each day is mostly down to you especially if you start the day with a good disposition and intention to do your best work. You're unlikely to work smart if you feel listless or apathetic. Know the bits of your job that motivate you and use those to push yourself to do your work to the best standards.

Expect nothing less than you giving a world class performance and always commit to doing something better than the last time you did it. Push the envelope and even take some risks in your attempt to find a better way to do things and to work efficiently.

Maintain your flow

Deliver more value than anyone has a right to expect from you. Plan what you are going to do during the week and each day and do so. Set up systems that help you to limit interruptions and distractions and to hold your focus.

Be comfortable working with timelines and efficient routines. For example, each day create time slots for checking emails, reading urgent documentation and other

routine tasks. Make adequate time to focus on work that requires 'thinking' instead of always just "doing".

Planning your work this way improves your effectiveness because it makes it easier for you to schedule work and to transition well from one type of task to another. Doing 'thinking' daily as part of the way you work will also enable you bring some high quality inputs to what you do and do your best.

Accelerate self-challenge

Don't ever work beneath your potential; always nurture it by stretching yourself. Playing safe with your potential does not serve your growth, your team, your organisation or your career longer term. Meet the standards you've set for yourself and those that have been set for you even on the rough days. Find opportunities to unlock your capabilities and to be part of solution-finders in your team or organisation.

Don't work on the basis of how you feel. Commit to a work ethic that ensures that you consistently give good output. Get into the discipline of promptly doing important things that you might not necessarily find interesting but which must be done. It's part of working with integrity.

Root out the weeds

'Weeds' on the job are the little things that trip you up, waste your time and suck up your energy such as obsessing over insignificant details, spending time

worrying about things you can't control or focussing on weaknesses that don't matter. The danger is that you may not notice that these things are undermining your performance until you identify them and do something about them.

There are some things that are important that must be done and others that are nice-to-do. Don't confuse the two. Don't do something just because it comes your way or develop pet projects which only you think are important. These activities waste scarce resources and could even create the impression you are wasteful and self-absorbed. Use your time properly and be disciplined in acting sensibly and doing what is expected of you.

Target your talents

It's a fact that whatever you are good at you tend to do in less time than the things you are average at. And you can only do what you are good at when you know in the first place what you are good at and deploy it. So recognise your own talents, those skills and natural abilities that you have or which others tell you are excellent at and use them more.

Remember you are in charge of what you do so play your best hand. Be engrossed in your work. Organise your tasks and have clear goals to pursue that play to your strengths. Talent without action is worthless. Reject any form of mediocrity.

Find effective shortcuts

Whatever work you have before you, don't assume that you have to learn everything from scratch or to figure out everything yourself. What you need to be clear about is what is required to do it well and then find help if you need it to get it done.

Improve the speed at which you learn by becoming an avid reader of material that challenges your mind and gives you ideas that you can apply. Associate with smarter people, people whose successes motivate you, whose conversations inspire you to do better because they are often a mine of ideas that you can tap.

There is so much information out there that can help you so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel. You simply need to make the time to learn and adapt what you need to learn in order to do your work extraordinarily well.