

Student name: _____ Date: _____

MODULE 11

List ways to show initiative and assertiveness on the job.

Objectives:

- A. Define initiative.**
- B. List examples of good work habits you can exhibit.**
- C. List examples of how you can exhibit initiative on the job.**
- D. Define assertiveness.**
- E. List steps that will help you learn to be assertive.**

MODULE 11: INFORMATION SHEET

***TO THE STUDENT:** Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of this module.*

What is initiative and assertiveness on the job?

Initiative is seeing or knowing what needs to be done and doing it. Being assertive means standing up for your rights, ideas, or beliefs. While these two topics both deal with employees on the job, they are separate and will be covered one after the other.

Good work habits start with taking pride in your work. If you take pride in your job, you will want to do anything that will help you work better. This includes getting to work on time, having tools and materials ready to go, and not misusing company time while trying to do your very best. It also implies using your own initiative.

Initiative:

The lack of initiative on the part of young workers is one of the most frequent complaints expressed by employers. This shows up on the student-learner's rating sheet with a statement such as "seldom goes ahead on own" or "has to be told everything to do." This statement does not mean that initiative is not a problem encountered with older or more experienced workers. As a beginning or young employee, you should be striving to have your rating sheet indicate "frequently looks

for additional work" or even better "always finds jobs to be done." By touching on several points concerning initiative, you can learn to show or exhibit this thing called initiative.

Imagine you have just completed your assigned job and no one has told you what you are to do next. What would you do? Do you sit down and wait for someone to show up and get instructions from them? Initiative is doing something without being told to do it. All of us get to the place in our work when we cannot go on. What do we do? No one is around to ask or tell us what to do. We use our own initiative and look for things that need to be done. Most employers expect their employees to take some initiative.

With more experience, we learn to see things ahead of time and make either a mental note or a list of small jobs that can be started and completed during that "extra" time.

What are some of these small jobs you can do? The following is a list of things that can be accomplished when you have additional time. Actions taken must be beyond the usual job performance expectations of the position. This should not be taken as a complete list but as some suggestions.

- Clean out the files in the filing cabinet.
- Wipe up the grease from the floor.
- Put new labels on the shelves in the supply room or warehouse.
- Clean your desk drawers.
- Sweep the floor in the area where you are responsible.
- Replace those outdated pages in those manuals with that new set.
- Clean the delivery truck--inside and/or out.
- Clean the computer keyboard that has needed it for some time.
- Keep the copy machine filled with paper.
- Keep the supply room inventory up to date.
- Offer to help someone else.
- Replenish parts needed at your work site.
- Clean tools and gauges needed for quality control.
- Work on preventive maintenance needed on the engine.
- Cut the grass and trim the shrubs around the front of the main building.
- Fill the soda machine and remove the extra change.
- Wipe down your lathe or milling machine and oil it.
- Back up your computer disks where needed.

Assertiveness:

A social skill that seems to be needed often in our society is assertiveness. It might be quite nice if everyone we came in contact with catered to our every wish. The situation is that most people can't read our minds. If you want your needs considered, you will have to act with assertiveness. Assertiveness is not aggression. ASSERTIVENESS is having your needs considered while considering the needs of others.

When you are overly careful and choose not to express your feelings, you pay a price -- anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of distress or uneasiness that may also take the form of worry. Anxiety frequently comes from being non-assertive and not allowing yourself to communicate your feelings.

This is referred to as being passive. You must believe in your right to be assertive and be willing to acknowledge the corresponding responsibilities and consequences before you can change your behavior.

All too often, a person becomes aggressive and his/her philosophy of life is selfish. This attitude violates the rights of others. This aggressive person finds he or she is alienated from others. Aggression takes many different forms and is generally unacceptable socially.

The following steps will help you learn to be assertive:

1. Learn the difference between assertive, passive, and aggressive responses.
2. Assess your assertive, passive, and aggressive behavior.
3. Develop new assertive responses for specific situations.
4. Think through and/or discuss the risks of being assertive in these situations.
5. Rehearse your assertive behavior.
6. Try out assertive responses in a real situation.
7. Maintain your assertive behavior by constant reevaluation and reinforcement.¹

¹ James Archer, Jr., Managing Anxiety and Stress. (Munch, Indiana: Accelerated Development, Inc., 1982).

MODULE 11: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After reading and studying the information sheet, complete the following questions.

1. Define initiative.

2. Give four examples of good work habits you can exhibit.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

3. Define assertiveness.

4. Give four steps that help you learn to be assertive.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

Fill in the missing word:

5. _____ is doing something without being told to do it.

6. A _____ skill that seems to be needed often in our society is assertiveness.

7. _____ is the feeling of distress or uneasiness which may also take the form of worry.
8. Being nonassertive and not allowing yourself to communicate your feelings is referred to as being _____.
9. An overly assertive person often violates the rights of others and is said to be an _____ person.

MODULE 11: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE**Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Career Education and Work****13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)**

- A. Analyze work habits needed to advance within a career.
- B. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:
 - Constructive criticism
 - Group dynamics
 - Managing
 - Mediation
 - Negotiation
 - Problem solving

Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)**PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Self-Esteem: Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view.

Sociability: Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in new and ongoing group settings.

Self-Management: Assesses own knowledge, skills, and abilities accurately; sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; self-starter.