

Face time: Stay visible to stay employed

Written by Julie Desmond
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Terry and his future brother-in-law, Paul, were golfing one afternoon when a close family friend waved to them from the next fairway. Terry waved back. Who's that, Paul wanted to know. Terry explained, you're going to nix two friends from your guest list, and he is going to be at your wedding.

Sometimes staying employed seems equally arbitrary. If upper management is cutting head count and asks, "Who's that?" about you, be sure your colleagues know who you are and what your contributions have been. While stellar job performance is the obvious first step to job security, there are other steps you can take to ensure your place at the party.

Remain visible. Work from the office, even if you don't have to. With remote work capabilities, people often prefer to work from home. Without surrendering all flexibility, do show up at the office regularly, once or twice a week or more, for a regular work day. Sign on for team projects and collaborate when possible. The more people see you live, the better they will understand the value you bring to the organization.

Go to lunch with a coworker, rather than eating alone. At noon, the park near my office is lined with cars – business people eating fast food alone. Take advantage of lunchtime to get to know your coworkers away from the office. Consider it networking. If you do have to look for a new position sometime, knowing others in your industry will be a plus.

Go to corporate events, picnics and annual meetings. Few people enjoy the prospect of spending a weekend with people they have been listening to for eight hours a day every day. But companies continue to schedule these events, and people who attend are generally glad they did. Show your dedication and interest by attending; extra points for volunteering to help.

Keep your meetings. Especially important are one-on-ones with managers. These are easy to cancel or change, because everyone dreads them. Your manager has more important issues to deal with than chatting with an employee who isn't having problems; and for the employee, these meetings may be intimidating. However, keeping these appointments can be key to keeping your job. Take the initiative on if you have to. Confirm the meeting and arrive on time, prepared with one or two topics to discuss. Keep a notebook specifically for your one-on-ones, and take notes.

Be flexible if your manager wants to change the meeting time, but reiterate that you're looking forward to getting together, and try to schedule for the same day if possible. Simply letting

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someone know it matters to you can bring it up a line or two on their priority list.

Being visible, people will know you and may be more likely to keep you in the loop if there are major changes in the company. Make sure that when someone asks who you are, the answer will be positive.

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