

A Roadmap for Becoming Proactive

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Abstract

Proactivity refers to the tendency of proactively proposing solutions, actively seeking feedback, and actively innovating. Proactivity is very important for the development of individuals, organizations and even governments and countries. Since the scholar Liu Mi and others reviewed the research on employee's proactive personalities in 2007, other scholars have published dozens of proactive researches, based on different theoretical perspectives, in well-known journals. This paper reviews the development of proactivity, analyses its formation and mechanism and further proposes the direction, magnitude and prospect of future research, regarding those countries, governments and individuals who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who ask after things happen, what happened?

Keywords

Proactivity, Proactive Personality, Proactive Worker, Proactive Behavior, Proactive Governance

1. Introduction

1.1. Nature and Definition of Proactivity

Proactivity refers to the tendency of taking active roles in promoting others and/or the environment (Grant & Ashford, 2008). For example, employees spontaneously solve problems, proactively propose ideas to improve the status quo of their organizations, proactively seek information about work, proactively solicit feedback on work and performance, proactively engage in social activities, proactively propose innovative ideas, etc. (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Proactivity is not only conducive to the personal development of employees, such as improving employee performance, promoting career success, obtaining clear role positioning, better job satisfaction, and enhancing employee creativity, and also key factors that determine the success of an organization and its competitive advan-

tage. Therefore, it has been paid more and more attention by researchers and managers.

Since 2000, the proactivity of employees has become a hot topic in the field of organizational behavior. From the domestic point of view, Liu Mi and other domestic scholars combed the key concepts of employee proactivity, i.e., proactive personality and proactive behavior. These reviews are helpful for scholars to further understand the research status of employee initiative, find the shortcomings in the research, and continue to promote the theoretical development in this field. Since then, domestic scholars have published dozens of papers, based on different theoretical perspectives on employee proactivity research in well-known journals. However, it is necessary to discuss the theoretical perspectives of existing researches and the shortcomings of the current theoretical basis, which will help scholars to systematically understand the theoretical research in this field, so as to adjust the research direction and focus in the future.

So, what are the new developments of these researches in recent years? What are the main theoretical perspectives to solve the new problems? What other important issues have not been fully explored? What are the new trends of future research? In order to answer these key questions, to help researchers promote the further development of employee initiative research, we need to systematically comb the current research results of employee initiative from three aspects: construction, measurement and research methods, research perspective and related theories, and point out the future development direction for researchers on this basis.

1.2. Proactivity in Perspective

Proactivity is one of the most frequent words today in the management arena. In fact, most of the countries worldwide are reacting, instead of acting, whereas they need to be more proactive. Proactivity or proactive behavior usually refers to self-initiated behavior that is anticipatory and often change-oriented. That is to anticipate the future needs and start acting on them today, as opposed to waiting and reacting to them when they occur in the future. It is about being in control of the situation, rather than being controlled by it. It is not only about preventing something harmful from happening, but also about delaying something good and useful from happening.

Proactive action means creating or controlling a situation rather than just waiting to respond to it after it happens. An example of a proactive approach is informing the concerned citizens with anticipated events or phenomena, immediately via communication methods, rather than letting them know about them after they happen. There are three types of countries in this world, in terms of proactivity, namely:

- Countries that make things happen.
- Countries that watch things happen.
- And countries that ask after things happen, what happened?

Which country of the above types do you lean to?

What are the ways to deliver proactive customer service? While shifting from reactive to proactive, customers' care might seem intimidating. It's an essential move for companies that want to deliver superior experiences and gain a competitive edge.

Here's how to be proactive in customer service:

- Be open with your customers.
- Conduct surveys regularly.
- Build a knowledge base.
- Pay attention to your customers online.
- Interact with your product and service.
- Leverage technology.
- Assemble the right team and empower them.
- Contact your customers.

How to develop proactivity? Here is the list of the most important skills needed for being proactive:

- Be aware of the words you use.
- Plan, ahead.
- Set goals.
- Prioritize.
- Learn to problem-solve.
- Act.
- Learn to take responsibility for your actions.
- Don't dwell on the mistakes from the past but learn from them.

The methodology of this paper is based on exploring, describing and explaining term proactivity, to help familiarizing readers with the paper's topic, satisfying their curiosity and improving their understanding. The paper is composed of 4 chapters as follows:

Chapter One contains an introduction. Chapter Two presents literature review. Chapter Three deals with discussions and chapter Four provides the conclusion.

1.3. Proactive Governance

What is proactive governance? It is the process, when government proactively seeks feedback directly from citizens about the quality of its services and makes it mandatory for service providers to enable citizens to view real-time information on service delivery to them.

Proactive governance was first introduced in 2011 in Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan. In Pakistan, a country where citizens are frustrated with lack of good governance and poor delivery of services, proactive governance model is helping rebuild trust with citizens and improve services. It's a governance model where "the citizen is not coming to the state to get the service; but rather the state is going to the citizen to provide the service". For a proactive

governance to work well, it should be mandatory for service providers to use smartphones, so citizens don't have the burden of complaining if they didn't receive the service they were entitled to. Instead, the responsibility is on the service providers, who both must prove that they went to the location of service provision and take before-and after pictures as proof that the service was delivered. Proactive governance can't possibly help tackle all the challenges of service delivery. But early results show that it will help create a system of mutual trust and detect problems that will gradually improve the quality of services and the way they are delivered.

Countries launch campaigns to proactively collect citizens feedback and use it for management actions. In most countries around the world, lack of trust in governments is becoming a major challenge. Thus, proactive governance can be a source of hope for many countries that want to incorporate citizens' participation, to address deeply rooted inefficiencies and improve public services. On the other hand, reactive people get negative feedback, and become defensive and bitter, as reactive people when they find themselves on the short end of the stick, they grip about it, instead of finding ways to get more stick. Generally, reactive people let the ball of life play them rather than they play the ball. Conversely, proactive people follow the following "5 Ps", namely: Predict, Prevent, Plan, Participate and Perform and adopt proactive strategies which are tools used to prevent problem behaviour or dysregulation from occurring. They are introduced before any challenging behaviours and help to reduce the chances of them occurring.

2. Review of Literature

Proactivity refers to the tendency of an individual to take an active role in promoting others or the environment (Grant & Ashford, 2008). For example, employees spontaneously solving problems, proactively propose ideas to improve the status quo of the organization, proactively seeking information about work and the organization, proactively solicit feedback on work and performance, proactively engage in social activities, proactively propose innovative ideas, etc. (Grant & Ashford, 2008).

Proactivity is not only conducive to the personal development of employees, such as improving employee performance, promoting career success, obtaining clear role positioning, better job satisfaction, and enhancing employee creativity. Lou, J. and, Zheng, J. (2018) and also, key factors that determine the success of an organization and its competitive advantage. Therefore, it has been paid more and more attention by researchers and managers. Since 2000, the proactivity of employees has become a hot topic in the field of organizational behavior.

From the domestic point of view, Liu Mi and Hu Qing and other domestic scholars combed the two key concepts of employee proactivity in 2007 and 2011 respectively. These reviews are helpful for scholars to further understand the research status of employee initiative, find the shortcomings in the research, and

continue to promote the theoretical development in this field (Lou & Zheng, 2018). Since then, domestic scholars have published dozens of papers based on different theoretical perspectives on employee proactivity research in well-known journals at home and abroad. However, the development of these researches based on different perspectives and the lack of connection between them are not conducive to the comparison and integration of research results in this field. Therefore, it is necessary for us to further sort out, especially to discuss the theoretical perspectives of existing research and the shortcomings of the current theoretical basis, which will help scholars to systematically understand the theoretical research in this field so as to adjust the research direction and focus in the future. So, what are the new developments of these researches in the related construction and measurement in recent years? What are the main theoretical perspectives to solve the new problems? What other important issues have not been fully explored? What are the new trends of future research?

In order to answer these key questions, and help researchers promote the further development of employee initiative research, we try to systematically comb the current re-search results of employee initiative from three aspects: construction, measurement and research methods, research perspective and related theories, and point out the future development direction for researchers on this basis.

3. Discussion

3.1. Proactivity, and the Fighting of COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020

The following are 5 African developing countries that stood as prominent examples of how leaderships can effectively and swiftly combat pandemics.

3.1.1. Rwanda

Rwanda's leadership has gone above and beyond to successfully respond to COVID-19, by launching an effective contact tracing program and have implementing Smart Anti-Epidemic Robots to check the body temperature of travelers to and from the nation. These quick, strong responses to the commencement of COVID-19 have enabled the country to show other countries what a smart crisis response looks like and serve as a role model for strong leadership.

3.1.2. Senegal

The country leadership quickly responded to the global pandemic, thus emerging as a world leader in the fight against COVID-19, by implementing key innovations, right at the onset of the crisis, such as trials for at-home COVID-19 diagnostic kits and the use of multifunctional robots that has allowed caregivers to treat patients without running the risk of contracting the virus themselves. An app called Alerte Santé Sénégal provided up-to-date information on COVID-19 in the country, and a new digital platform allowed local authorities and citizens to communicate quickly and effectively. These key innovations and quick action by Senegal's leaders have paid off, as Senegal's confirmed deaths were among the lowest worldwide.

3.1.3. South Africa

South Africa's leadership has made bold, quick and controversial moves to respond to COVID-19, by quickly responding to the crisis by imposing contentious yet important restrictions, such as mask wearing while outdoors, imposing an evening curfew, and banning alcohol sales and tobacco products, to slow the spread of the virus, and to combat it throughout the country, which had seen over 600,000 cases of COVID-19 and more than 13,000 deaths, making South Africa the epicenter on the continent.

3.1.4. Ghana

Testing COVID-19 was one of the keys to better understanding and slowing the spread of the virus. Ghana's leaders took charge in their response to the pandemic, by swiftly creating a rapid antibody test kit for COVID-19.

This quick creation of the test alone demonstrated Ghana's understanding of the sense of urgency needed to respond to a global health crisis.

3.1.5. Kenya

Key actions to slow the spread of the virus were masks. Accordingly, Leaders in Kenya took quick action to convert their factories into mask producing ones. In doing so, the country urgently transformed its resources to quickly respond to the virus.

Moreover, Kenya's government stepped up to address both the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The country revealed an economic stimulus plan that included one key factor, a focus on youth. In Kenya, a large portion of the informal sector, which accounted for 35% of its GDP, was made up of the youth population. Launching a stimulus package into the economy that focused on youth ultimately created opportunities for the future post-pandemic, and enabled youth to engage productively and positively with the economy during and after this crisis. This decision to invest in the future while also responding to the issues at hand, was what made Kenya an effective and forward-thinking leader in the fight against COVID-19.

In conclusion, the above 5 countries stood as a model and a good example demonstrating how leaders should step up to tackle crises, by acting swiftly and urgently, and making strong decisions to successfully and effectively respond to pandemics.

3.2. Proactivity under the Microscope

Proactive means an explicit, communicated ambitious plan for leading change, that is acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, and changes. Other words of proactive, comprise: Cautious, careful, foresighted, prescient, farsighted, visionary, foreseeing, and forward-looking.

Why is a proactive approach important? Being proactive allows one to dictate one's position and supplies a sense of control over whatever situations that may be faced. Essentially, proactivity will enable one to be more prepared, think and

act ahead before circumstances change. What are the characteristics of a proactive approach? They include seeking action, loving to solve problems, and doing whatever it takes to prevent them from happening. This means doing things and not just waiting for the unknown to happen, but looking for new challenges, which provide suitable outlets.

Proactivity usually refers to self-initiated behavior that is anticipatory and often change oriented. It means that you can anticipate future needs and start acting on them already today, as opposed to waiting and reacting to them when they occur. It is about being in control of the situation, rather than being controlled by it. If it is possible to prevent something bad from happening, it is of course preferable not to wait till it happens. In other words, being able to defuse potentially heated arguments before they escalate is a very useful skill in working with people.

3.3. Choosing How to Act

Choosing to act takes place by imagining potential future with several different outcomes and anticipating the most likely outcomes and acting pre-emptively to ensure the most favorable results. This means focusing on a particular problem and thinking it deeply through, before diving into a reckless action. However, whether an act is chosen or not, there will be consequences in either case.

One of the great gifts that evolution granted to human beings is their ability to imagine. People can create an entire world in their minds. They can imagine potential futures and prepare for them. They can even imagine several different outcomes, anticipate the most likely outcomes and act pre-emptively to ensure the most favorable results.

However, this only works when we want to, and when we care. It means being able to focus on a particular problem and think it through before plunging carelessly into an action. On the other hand, we also need to be aware that even no action means having consequences. Whether we choose to act or not, we should do it with fully understanding that there will be consequences in either case. Thus, "Proactivity" is not only about anticipating the future and acting to shape it, but it is also about us being able to choose our responses to external stimuli.

3.4. Choosing How to Act Respond

Generally, proactivity is not only about anticipating the future and acting to shape it, but it is also about being able to choose responses to external stimuli. That is, choosing how to respond. In other words, proactivity is not only about how to act, but also about how to choose to react and feel about an external stimulus. That is not to react, but rather to choose how to respond.

Proactivity means also something else. It is not only about how we act, but also how we choose to react and feel about an external stimulus. If you are a proactive person, you will never get angry with, or depressed about something that happened and that was out of your control. Because, you know that there

are some things in this universe that you can't influence, and you must make your peace with this fact.

Thus, instead of brooding about the fact that life is not fair, you must accept it and learn to live with it, without being bothered. For instance, when something bad happens, it could easily be shrugged, and attention be focused on other things. This means focusing on what could be influenced and is under control, that is not reacting, but rather choosing how to respond. In other words, feeling good about the world around, even if it doesn't comply with what is wished. Thus, being proactive doesn't mean being slave to the environment, but rather living by constant values that provide immunity to changing environment.

3.5. The 7 Rules of Proactive Leadership

To practice proactive leadership, the following basic 7 rules should be considered and followed:

- Live by values—understand the core values and live by them, as they will be your life jacket in difficult times, and the compass that will guide you around the emerging troubles. Anyway, a leader cannot be effective without having solid value system.
- See the whole picture—never jump to conclusions or give in to biases before fully understanding the complete picture. Only because something appears fine in a certain way on the first look, doesn't mean that it is the truth. We must see the world as it is, and not as we want it to be.
- Know your people—and people here mean all stakeholders who are involved in each situation or decision at hand. Only by understanding who the various parties are and what are their objectives, you can judge the situation objectively and come up with the best possible decision.
- Anticipate problems—always consider consequences of taking action or no action, saying words, or being silent. You should be like a chess player who is looking for some moves ahead to anticipate fruitful potential outcomes and plan the best strategy forward. But avoid over-analysis. Just think two or maximum three steps ahead, not hundred, otherwise you will never be able to move at all.
- Be transparent—be clear with the people around you on your objectives, your opinions, your values, and your likely actions. It will help others to anticipate your needs and reactions, and it will influence the way they act. By being transparent, you are increasing your sphere of influence and you are shaping the environment to your needs.
- Communicate effectively—be sure to make your message fully heard and correctly understood. It is not about being the loudest, the chattiest, or the fastest. Thus, in communication you can be not efficient, but effective. For instance, talking to people over the phone and be sure that they got your message and understood it the way you intended, is less efficient but more effective than just sending out emails to people, of whom half didn't receive,

and the other half understood it wrongly.

- Follow up—make sure that whatever you planned actually happened. It is easy to set things in motion and hope for the best, but without following up on the events, you will be giving up the opportunity to course correct and dealing with unexpected situations.

The one thing you should be learning by heart is that proactivity is not about being fast and always moving, and it is not either about urgency. But it is about a mindset that keeps you firmly grounded, at the right time. It is about having strong values. It is about having the ability to anticipate the future. Ultimately, it is about choosing how to respond to the world on your own terms (Kucera, 2017).

3.6. The Proactive Strategies

3.6.1. The Uses of Proactive Strategies

What are Proactive Strategies, and what they are all about?

They are tools used to prevent or avoid problem behaviour or dysregulation from occurring. They are introduced before any challenging behaviours, to help in reducing their chances of occurring. Moreover, they are used to:

- Clarify expectations,
- Promote learning and positive behaviours,
- Prevent problem behaviors from occurring, and
- Promote positive relationships.

Proactive strategies should be used prior to challenging behaviours occurring. However, once challenging behaviours occur, proactive strategies should be replaced by consequence-based strategies. Anyway, proactive strategies are used as follows:

- Determining which strategy to try.
- Practicing before using them.
- Knowing which situations to apply which strategy.
- And being consistent in applying them.

3.6.2. The General View of Proactive Strategies

Proactive Strategies include:

Visual support—which can support in understanding the expectations and instructions, and allowing to know what is coming next.

Transition warnings—can support understanding how long an activity would be. Thus, sudden end or termination of an activity may be difficult.

Give clear and simple instructions—can support in understanding what the expectations are.

Choices—can give a sense of control and independence when choices are offered.

Descriptive praise—can encourage positive behaviours and clarify exactly what is being done well, thus encouraging or motivating doing it again.

Positive attention—let them know they are doing nicely and giving them at-

tention to promote positive behaviour.

3.7. The Benefits of Being Proactive

Being proactive, comprise the following 7 benefits:

- Preparedness for planning things in advance to avoid any future surprises that could happen.
- Recognizing a need for change, and if something needs to be changed for the better over time.
- Assuaging problems by uncovering potential problems and minimizing the impact by working in advance on them.
- Looking forward to seeing the whole picture, as acting proactively means looking forward to future benefits and making the needed changes accordingly.
- Self-improvement and awareness, as proactive people, take charge of themselves, and get to know who they really are, their values, beliefs and the purposes they wish to pursue.
- A sense of direction, as by raising their self-awareness, they become clearer on the things they wish to achieve from life and decision-making becomes easier, as they start to realize that some of tasks that were consuming most of their time, do not move them towards their goals and objectives and therefore not worthy their time.
- Peace of mind, as proactive people usually plan things for tomorrow, thus having an idea of what is coming next, so they are well prepared for it. So, they feel safe and secure and that feeling gives them real peace of mind.

3.8. The Tips for Becoming Proactive

The following are tips for being a more proactive person.

- **Develop smart goals.**
SMART, stands for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based. Such goals give well-defined aims, timeframes and benchmarks for success, which are important for directing people in the opportunities they seek. They can also help people think more long term and visualize the challenges and implications associated with their goals.
- **Identify strengths and weaknesses.**
As a growth mindset is a common characteristic of proactive people, it's important to assess their abilities to understand how they can improve them. Begin by people asking themselves what tasks they enjoy and can do them well and determine whether there's any room for improvement among their strengths. Also, consider what skills or qualities they may be lacking. However, to achieve an honest assessment, people can solicit feedback from their colleagues, managers or supervisors.
- **Develop organizational skills.**
Organizational skills refer to competencies that allow people to arrange and use their time and resources effectively, such as time management and task

prioritization, for completing all their tasks and staying ahead.

- **Analyze needs.**

With strengths and weaknesses in their mind, people analyze what their team or organization needs and how they can leverage their position or abilities to help meet them.

- **Know your limits.**

While developing their proactivity, people should be careful not to take on more responsibility than is healthy or possible. Trying to do too much would result in achieving the opposite effect (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

3.9. The Benefits of Taking Initiative in Life

Taking initiative means doing something, on their own, without being told to do it, based on their own findings. Instead of waiting to be told what to do, you find out what needs to be done and you complete the task yourself. At work, showing initiative often presents itself as someone spotting and taking advantage of opportunities that others might not be aware of. On the other hand, being proactive refers to creating or controlling a situation, rather than just waiting for it to happen (Miles, 2022).

Though being proactive and taking initiative mean different things, they are somewhat linked when it comes to improving both personal and professional life. At work, a proactive employee is someone who can showcase a high level of productivity and efficiency. Instead of waiting for someone else to complete a task, a proactive employee will jump at the chance to do it himself. On a personal level, being proactive allows someone to take advantage of every opportunity they are presented with. Likewise, an employee who takes the initiative will quickly establish himself as a valued member of the team, which is also likely to lead to future career success. These are the people who are thought of for promotions, pay rises and development opportunities. This is because taking the initiative demonstrates confidence, high self-esteem and a willingness to work hard. This also helps you to feel ready for whatever life throws at you. Taking initiative also means setting goals, achieving goals and completing tasks. These are all the things that help you to stay organised, motivated and happy on a personal level.

The Characteristics of Being Proactive and Taking Initiative comprise: Long Term Perspective, being organised, being resilient, reaching Goals and Intentions, Growth Mindset, Punctuality, having High Confidence and Self-Esteem (Word, 2022).

3.10. Being Both Proactive and Taking Initiative in Life

You can be both Proactive and Taking Initiative, by fulfilling the following:

- Going above and beyond what people expect of you and do more than what you have been asked.
- Taking the lead on projects and taking charge of a situation when you need to. Don't wait for someone else to step in.

- Learn to problem solve effectively and efficiently, instead of waiting for someone to find a solution for you.
- Look to the future and avoid dwelling on the past. Don't think about your past mistakes but learn from them.
- Not all goals and tasks are equally important, so learning to prioritise, those matter most.

Thus, taking initiative and being proactive is hugely important. Whether you are an employee at work or an individual at home, both things can help you to get ahead and succeed in life.

Initiative means action. It also means taking just one step at a time. These steps don't have to be big steps. However, there are 9 benefits of taking the initiative. These comprise the following:

1) **Control.** That is, while you can't control everything happening around you or to you, you can control how you respond and how to make choices that align with your values and goals, rather than having decisions imposed on you.

2) **Achievement.** You can sit back and let life go by, or you can get on it. Getting on it is the first step towards getting things done and reaching your goals.

3) **Confidence.** Small successes set the ground for larger ones. Take note of your accomplishments, as success creates momentum and builds on itself.

4) **Proactivity.** That is recognizing potential dangers and then taking action to avert them. This will nip problems in the bud.

5) **Inspiration.** Try to serve as a role model to others. It just takes one person having the courage to take that step towards his goal, and others will do the same. Thus, potential for positive change will be enormous.

6) **Self-Awareness.** Taking initiative is taking a risk and it is the only way you are going to learn about yourself and your personal power.

7) **Creativity.** Initiative creates opportunities and allows you to fuel your passion, and no one else walks your steps.

8) **Mistakes:** they are one of the greatest teaching tools. If you're not making mistakes, you're not stretching and growing.

9) **Fear Busting.** You feel vulnerable when you take a step into the unknown. The greatest trap is that you allow fear to prevent you from moving forward. So, take note of any real danger, acknowledge the irrational fear that is trying to protect you, thank it, park it and move on.

Always keep your eyes focused on where you want to go. Then use your power to engage your initiative and take the next step. You'll be amazed at the success you experience and the positive energy you create (AB Motivational, 2020).

3.11. Characteristics of a Proactive Worker

Proactive behavior is when people identify and solve problems before occurring. 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 the 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. Proactive workers consider what they can do to improve project efficiency and avoid challenges in the workplace. Some key characteristics of a proactive worker include, being:

Organized: Proactive workers use planning and organization to manage their responsibilities and time wisely, by assessing current workload, predicting challenges, managing deadlines and scheduling time for future assignments.

Calm: Conducting 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. Considering and planning various scenarios and solutions can help remain calm in any situation.

Solution-oriented: Since proactive workers think strategically about how to complete upcoming tasks, they have a solution-oriented mindset and strong critical thinking skills.

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.

3.12. How to Be a Proactive Worker?

If you want to become a proactive worker, there are a few steps you can take to get started. Before an upcoming project, practice being proactive by implementing the following steps:

- **Analyze:** Learn about the best way to be proactive in your role by researching trends in the workplace. Looking for trends in past data may help to be more proactive with future tasks.
- **Organize:** Use your data analysis to organize future assignments. This can help you focus on the task and complete it more efficiently.
- **Plan:** Set goals and outline the steps you might take to complete them. Consider what tasks can be done to simplify upcoming responsibilities. This may include purchasing materials, emailing colleagues requesting information or completing ongoing tasks to increase your capacity for new assignments.
- **Communicate:** Communicate your plans to supervisors and colleagues to set expectations about your capabilities and responsibilities.
- **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. Regularly check your progress and identify outstanding needs to prevent becoming overwhelmed or stressed. Give yourself rewards and incentives each time you exceed a goal to maintain a strong pace throughout the day.

- **Reflect:** Reflecting on your work and finding ways to improve is an important part of being proactive. Reflection can help you identify any areas where you might improve for future projects, making it easier to invest in your professional development. Use reflection to identify patterns in the workplace and adapt to be a better team member. If you notice that a colleague regularly takes several days to respond to requests, consider submitting requests early to accommodate their working style.

3.13. Tips for Becoming a Proactive Worker

Some tips to be used, to develop proactive habits in workplaces:

- **Focus:** Focusing can help increase awareness at work and make it easier to prepare and be proactive. Gauge your progress daily, as staying focused can encourage consistent work practices and reliability. If you maintain focus on your deadlines, you may contact lazy people earlier to notify them of the upcoming deadline.
- **Be positive:** Having a positive attitude can make it easier to be proactive in the workplace. Positivity makes it easier to begin challenging tasks and persevere through complex projects. Approaching projects with a positive attitude can help you set ambitious goals, motivate others and be passionate about advancing in the workplace.
- **Develop a Routine:** Using a routine to complete your tasks can improve your time management skills in the workplace, providing you with more free time to pursue extra projects and prepare for the next day. Scheduling your time in advance each day is a good way to develop a consistent routine that prioritizes proactive behavior. Structuring your time, even for your basic activities like reviewing documents and sending emails, can help you stay organized. This can help maintain your focus and allow you to work proactively towards your goals.
- **Respond Quickly:** Show your proactive mindset to your colleagues by responding to all communications promptly. Responding quickly protects your own time and schedule, allowing you to return to your tasks and stay proactive. Consider sending regular updates to stakeholders and coworkers before they ask for updates to share relevant information proactively.
- **Offer help:** To be proactive, pay attention to when your colleagues may need additional support. Offering help can show that you're aware of your surroundings and have a skill for identifying problems. When offering help, be sure to check with your supervisor and listen to your colleague before offering solutions that typically work for you.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Forward

What Does Taking Initiative and Being Proactive Really Mean? It means to do something without being told, to take it upon oneself, to act based on one's own

findings. Instead of waiting to be told what to do, just find out what needs to be done and then complete the task. At work, showing initiative often presents itself as someone spotting and taking advantage of opportunities that others might not be aware of. Thus, being proactive refers to creating or controlling a situation, rather than simply waiting to see what happens. If people are being proactive, they create or control the situation themselves, instead of simply responding to it after it happens.

4.2. The Essence of being Proactive and Taking Initiative, Comprise

- Being Proactive at work: that is, to show a high level of productivity and efficiency, and instead of waiting for someone else to complete a task, he does it himself.
- Taking Initiative: that is quickly establishing himself as a valued member of the team, which is also likely to lead to future career successes in promotions, pay rises and development opportunities. It also demonstrates confidence, high self-esteem and a willingness to work hard. It also helps to feel ready for whatever life throws, together with setting and achieving goals and completing tasks, staying organised, motivated and happy on a personal level.

4.3. The Proactive and the Taking Initiative Persons Are Characterized By

- Having Long Term Perspective.
- Being organized.
- Being Resilient.
- Having Reaching Goals and Intentions.
- Having Growth Mindset.
- Having Punctuality.
- And having High Confidence and Self-Esteem.

4.4. How to Be Proactive and Take Initiative?

- Go above and beyond what people expect of you and do more than what you have been asked.
- Take the lead on projects and take charge of a situation when you need to. Don't wait for someone else to step in.
- Learn to problem solve effectively and efficiently, instead of waiting for someone to find a solution for you.
- Look to the future and avoid dwelling on the past. Don't think about your past mistakes but learn from them.
- Not all goals and tasks are equally important, so learn to prioritise those matters most.
- As you can see, taking initiative and being proactive is hugely important. Whether you are an employee at work or an individual at home, both things can help you to get ahead and succeed in life.

4.5. What Is Initiative and What Does It Mean to Take It?

Taking initiative means thinking proactively about tasks, not just to check them off a list, but to get them done well. It's about going the extra mile on the basic tasks assigned, thinking through complications, and taking on work before someone asks you to. Taking initiative means noticing opportunities and acting. To excel at taking initiative, you must be a proactive team member. What are the characteristics that define a proactive team member or what makes a team member proactive?

- Motivation to reach team goals.
- Action-oriented.
- Collaborative with others.
- Open to thoughtful rise.
- Skilled at making decisions.
- Positive attitude toward work and team.
- Confident communication.
- Responsible and receptive to constructive criticism.

When you think about taking an initiative to get things done, don't think of it as increasing your workload, but as becoming more valuable and relevant and positioning yourself for growth, and as achieving an important outcome. You should know when is the right time for you to take the initiative at work, and when you've mastered your required tasks? It is great to take the initiative in your primary role, as there is always room for improvement and new ideas. Make sure that you will not take on more than you can handle. Taking initiative doesn't necessarily mean having the answers but it does mean taking action.

4.6. Know Your Limits

In understanding the limits of your authority and experience, asking for help or clarification is part of taking initiative and better than assuming you can do it all by yourself. Ideally, your manager or supervisor gives you some guidance so that you know what is most important to the company and what types of decisions or actions are off-limits. Taking extra initiative can stretch you beyond your comfort zone and tap into passion or ambition that can also leave you feeling drained or approaching burnout. Recognizing when you've done enough is important. After a long day of work, you could be tired and ready to rest. Pushing harder to keep going can have the negative effect of leaving you depleted and doing a poor job. Always listen to your body and energy levels before taking on different projects. Even if you have to say no to an opportunity or schedule something on tomorrow's to-do list, it's often better than overworking and under-delivering.

4.7. The 10 Ways to Take the Initiative at Work

Here are 10 ways to become a proactive employee and take the initiative at work:

- 1) Voice your ideas.
- 2) Be curious and learn about the work going on around you.
- 3) Find a new opportunity for improvement within your workplace.
- 4) Address any problems you notice.
- 5) Step in when someone needs help and ask about team progress.
- 6) Offer help when training new employees.
- 7) Make an effort to get to know your coworkers.
- 8) Ask for clarification when you're confused.
- 9) Speak up during team meetings.
- 10) Request constructive criticism and feedback on your work.

4.8. Causes for Lack of Initiative and How to Overcome It

People don't take the initiative due to various internal and external causes. Many of them can be resolved or overcome in some way.

4.8.1. Internal Causes for Lack of Initiative

They include, being new in the workplace, or may fear speaking up or misspeaking, or self-doubt, and a lack of self-confidence. Even experienced employees can feel like they don't know enough to step up. Also, may view taking the initiative as extra work or not be interested and tend to shy away from being a proactive team member.

4.8.2. External Causes for Lack of Initiative

Taking initiative doesn't have to mean always doing it alone. But it does mean being willing to take the first steps. The environment you work in and those around you can impact how proactive you are. People who constantly complain and don't respect and appreciate their team members often stop people from taking the initiative. If nobody has team spirit or long-term visions of their work, it's harder to encourage people to be proactive.

You can overcome them, like any other obstacle or aspect you want to improve, but it takes time and effort. Seek input and moral support for trying new things, from a few trusted co-workers or even friends outside of work.

As for **internal inhibitors**, it's all about building confidence and experience and offering skills and perspectives in the workplace, being willing to be a team player and overcoming the challenges. As for **external inhibitors**, use confidence to speak up and be willing to lead and differentiate between those trying to guide and those putting the brakes on your plans.

In making your way, you have to understand that nobody will hand you immediate success, and it's up to you to learn to be proactive in any way you can, to help yourself, by being kind to her and knowing how much you can handle in a day, becoming more vital, more proactive team member and have the skills to pursue your goals, together with a personalized plan to help you get where you need to go.

In summing up, essence of proactivity could be embodied in the following

questions:

What makes a team member proactive? Why should anyone care about taking the initiative?

When is it the right time to take the initiative at work? What are the 10 ways to take the initiative at work?

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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