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## Featured Article

### *Not Geeking Out in Geeky Jobs: Balancing Passion and Respect*

Most people would love to have a job that revolves around their most cherished hobbies. Let's say you get that job, a job where you are surrounded all day by the things you love and people who share your passion. It's a dream come true: you spend all day geeking out with your coworkers, or showing off to your boss how much you know about a given subject, and everyone can tell how dedicated you are because of it. Praise and promotions ensue, right? Not exactly.

Geeks have the unfortunate stigma of being seen as brilliant but socially awkward. Popular culture portrays us getting into geek-fights over Lucas and Roddenberry, or as spending more time coding than talking to human beings. Maybe you do occasionally indulge in these extremes, and that's okay; I know I've gone on a Star Trek rant or two. But it's important to know when and where to geek out.

Your boss hired you as a worker, which means you are an asset. In turn, you should treat your geeky knowledge as a bonus to your corporate value, because you have the opportunity to approach projects as an insider and expert. If you're a video game geek working on video games, channel that rant about the pros and cons of Diablo II game mechanics into a memo or calm discussion with your boss. Focus on what you think applies to the game the company is currently working on. This shows initiative and

dedication, and all you had to do was articulate what you were already psyched about respectfully. Use your hobby calculatingly, and it might not even feel like work.

This model only works if you follow that one critical key: remembering to relate your knowledge back to your job. No one will praise your insights if you waste two hours of the company's time talking about Puzzle Quest while you're supposed to be working on a first person shooter. Contribute and collaborate, get excited if appropriate, just stay focused.

As for your coworkers, it's okay to make friends; in fact, companies prefer workers that fit in and work amicably with others. It's even okay to drop a joking reference or two at work, if the environment is relaxed. Just remember that if you befriend your coworkers, even off-the-clock conduct can get back to your boss. So enjoy your shared interests, but it's probably not a good idea to destroy a co-worker's sense of self in a post-Halo smack-talk session. It's easy to get caught up in the moment, but as a professional, it's your duty to monitor how your actions are affecting the company network. Learn to focus on facial expressions and body language. People won't always say what's on their mind to a business associate, so these cues will be crucial in measuring how much enthusiasm is too much.

If you haven't landed that dream job yet, don't worry. These skills can be used to your advantage in pretty much any setting. Used correctly, they can even be a crucial part of advancing your career. "If you're a geek looking for a job, leverage your geeky hobbies by pulling out transferable skills and emphasizing them on your resume and in your interview," says Ebony Tara Scurry, Career Architect at Eidolon Career Solutions. "For example, if you write fan fiction, communicate to your potential employer your strength with the written word by highlighting the fact that you write fan fiction."

Outside of work - wherever that may be - indulge in your passions as much as you want, and take satisfaction in counting that extra round of Street Fighter as research.

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