

FOUR GREAT WORKPLACE MOVIES



We learn a lot of things from the movies. For instance, Hollywood films are the only reason everyone knows the words to the Miranda Warning, or that the Titanic broke into two pieces before it sank, or that you can save a mob boss' wife from a heroin overdose with a syringe full of adrenaline. We can also learn from the movies when it comes to the workplace. *Disclosure* taught us that women can sexually harass men, too; *9 to 5* taught us that male bosses will steal ideas from their female employees; and *Working Girl* taught us that female bosses will steal ideas from their female employees. Here are four workplace films we can all learn from: ***The Devil Wears Prada* (2006)** Based on the novel by Lauren Weisberger, the film tells the story of Andy Sachs (Anne Hathaway), an immature, self-centered executive assistant based on the real-life Lauren Weisberger. She goes to work for manipulative, malevolent, egomaniacal fashion exec Miranda Priestly (Meryl Streep), based on the real-life Anna Wintour. We're supposed to feel bad for Andy, as she suffers under Miranda's insane manipulations. But Andy just comes across as a flighty ingrate; while the Miranda character, undoubtedly evil, does in fact keep every promise she makes to Andy, including offering her a real career at the end of the movie. When Andy turns it down to find a more meaningful life outside of fashion, she comes across not as a paragon of integrity, but as just stupid. The lesson: pay your dues without complaint. Also, if your boss is a maniac, then just quit -- don't whine about it all the time, and then quit just as it's paying off for you. ***Glengarry Glen Ross* (1992)** The message of this film, based on the 1984 David Mamet play, is very simple. DO NOT EVER WORK IN SALES. EVER. ***Clerks* (1994)** The other workplace films on this list feature office environments. I thought I'd give the blue collar a little love. *Clerks* is the little no-budget indie film that made Kevin Smith famous. If you've never heard of Kevin Smith, it's because you're a Baby Boomer or older, and I can't help you with that. *Clerks* is the tale of a day in the life of two convenience store clerks, the irresponsible Randall and the overly-responsible Dante. Mostly they trade insults, discuss *Star Wars*, mock the customers, play hockey and attend a funeral. And they swear. A lot. The message is, if you have a lousy job and no other prospects, do what you have to do to make it bearable. Also, if your customers are idiots, it's okay to abuse them. I don't suggest following that last piece of advice, but it's in the movie. ***Office Space* (1999)** Mike Judge's *Office Space* is hands-down the funniest workplace comedy ever made, and one of the funniest comedies ever made period. If you're saying to yourself that Mike Judge created *Beavis & Butthead*, so you refuse to watch his movie, then I say to you well, he also created *King of the Hill* and *Idiocracy*. If that doesn't change your mind, then again, I can't help you. *Office Space* is the story of Peter Gibbons (Ron Livingston), a disgruntled computer programmer who despises his job, his company and his life. His cheating girlfriend drags him to an occupational hypnotherapist, who puts Peter into a state of perfect relaxation. Before he can bring Peter out of the trance, the hypnotherapist dies of a heart attack. Now completely free of stress, Peter blows off his job and asks out the gorgeous waitress (Jennifer Aniston) at the chain restaurant next door. Suddenly Peter, with his new-found fearless honesty and calm, pleasant demeanor, finds his career on the rise. But while Peter does no work and gets promoted, his buddies Michael and Samir, who toil like slaves, are going to be laid off. Disturbed by the unfairness of the situation, Peter talks Michael and Samir into joining a scheme to embezzle from the company. The plan goes horribly, horribly wrong, and with his hypnosis wearing off, Peter must find a way to save himself and his friends from their mistake, and keep them all out of PMITA prison (if you've seen the movie, you know what that is). The film is full of lessons. First, if you hate your job, find another one. Second, if you must stay in a bad job, don't let it affect your personal life. Third, don't be afraid to stand up to your abusive boss -- he can't hurt you as much as you think he can. Fourth, yes, you *can* ask out the hot waitress at the chain restaurant, just be pleasant and confident. And fifth, you know that computer embezzlement scheme from *Superman III*? Yeah, don't try that.