



Your first week at a new job

Make a great impression on your coworkers and boss during your first week at a new job.

CongratulationsYou're hired. Now what's next?

In the excitement of getting a new job, many of us forget to prepare for our new role and jump in feet first to a mountain of work. This can make for a rough transition. To ensure success with your new employer, it's important to make a good impression the first week you arrive and set the tone for your career.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

First and foremost, it's crucial that you don't throw the dress code out the window the minute you're hired. If the dress standards weren't made clear to you during your initial interview, call the human resources department and ask what the requirements are. Chances are they'll appreciate the consideration much more than having to send you home to change if you show up dressed in violation.

If you have a work-issued uniform, wear that. If there is no formal dress code, be sure you dress very professionally the first week and get a feel for what everyone else wears before you try something more casual. Some companies are more laid-back than others, but be sure you're at one of them before you test your jeans out.

LEAVE THE PERFUME OR COLOGNE AT HOME

Follow the same rules that you did for the job interview. Don't wear perfume, cologne or any overpowering lotions, after-shaves or deodorants that may distract others from their work. Many people have strong allergic reactions to scented items and can be made very uncomfortable by someone wearing them. In addition, your first week at work will likely be spent in training, which means that someone will have to sit or stand closely with you for long periods of time. Be respectful and save the scents for after-hours.

COME PREPARED

If your job requires paperwork to be completed, a laptop computer or special supplies that you're expected to provide, don't forget them. There is no better indication of carelessness than someone showing up unprepared, and you'll likely lose valuable work time tracking down someone else's materials to use. No matter how big or small the supply you must appear to have everything you need to succeed the minute you step through the door.

ASK QUESTIONS

Once training is underway, even if you're an expert in your field you're likely to have questions about the process in your new surroundings. Don't be afraid to ask! If your boss or colleague is going too fast in their explanation of a task, request politely that they slow down or repeat

specific information. They'll be much less impressed if you ask them about a basic procedure after you've worked there for a month (and should already know).

TAKE NOTES

In the orientation room, during your training and at any meetings you are privileged to attend, take thorough notes. The best way to retain information is to have a clear, concise record of it. Your coworkers and employer will appreciate your attention to detail and it will prove that you take the work seriously.

STAY OFF OF THE INTERNET

As more and more companies loosen their boundaries regarding Internet surfing, it's still bad manners to log on for purposes other than work at a new job. If you've just filled a position that has been vacant for some time, chances are you'll have a lot of work to do anyway. Over time you may find it is acceptable to surf, but don't start off on the wrong foot just because you want to check your e-mail.

KEEP THE PACE

Don't get ahead of yourself and try to work too fast in your new role. If something seems painfully easy, you may not be doing it right. Always have someone check your work when you're first starting out to make sure you're executing it correctly. Once you've learned the task you will naturally become faster at performing it, but don't try to impress everyone with your speed. You will make less mistakes if you take your time and do a thorough job.

On the flip side, don't go so slow that you're not keeping up with others in your area. If you're having trouble understanding a process, have someone explain it to you and show you an example. If you're still having trouble just take your time and catch up when you can. If you can't catch up, speak with your boss about an alternate assignment or longer time frame if that's an option.

DEFINE YOUR BOUNDARIES

Never refuse to perform a task that is within reason of your job description, but if you are being asked to do things beneath your abilities, speak up and ask why that is necessary. Also, if you're required to perform duties you are not yet qualified for, explain that you didn't understand from the job description that your role entailed those specifics. To be paid fairly, you need to stick to the agreement, as does your employer. If you demonstrate down the road that you are capable of more responsibility and your boss responds, that's wonderful, but be sure you are compensated accordingly if duties are added. It is easy to want to please your employer by agreeing to take on more work, just make sure you aren't taken advantage of.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Check your competitive tendencies at the door you got the job so there's no reason to start clawing your way to the top just yet. Many employees feel threatened by new workers anyway, so make the transition easy on them and just be nice. You may indeed become their equal in time and need their support for future success.



STAY UPBEAT

Starting a new job can be exhausting and stressful. Don't let the chaos get you down, stay positive and upbeat whenever you're around your new coworkers and boss. Even if you're drained, demonstrate an endless amount of energy so that all they see is a productive, confident addition to their team.