



Succeeding on the Job

How to Succeed at a New Job

Starting a new job can be both exciting and scary. It's important to start with a positive attitude to make your job easier, and to make a better impression on everyone in the organization.

Your First Few Days and Weeks

- ✓ Take the time to understand what is expected of you. What is the dress code, hours of work, sick days, vacation schedule, hierarchy?
- ✓ Take the time to get to know your colleagues while being mindful not to socialize too much
- ✓ Find a mentor, preferably someone who knows the organization and can give you advice
- ✓ Arrange check-in with your supervisor to make sure you are on track
- ✓ Talk minimally about your experiences with your previous employer

Ongoing

- ✓ Always meet deadlines or communicate in advance with your supervisor when you realize you cannot meet one
- ✓ Listen more than you talk. Listen to what more experienced people have to say before you add your opinion. The best impression is created by those who don't say much until it is significant
- ✓ When you complete an assignment, ask for another, or suggest one for which you feel you are qualified
- ✓ If you don't know an answer, either ask someone or research the answer. There is nothing wrong with admitting that you don't know about something as long as you are willing to find out
- ✓ Always arrive on time, and don't be the first person out the door at the end of the day
- ✓ Don't be afraid to make a mistake. We all make them. The key is to learn from them and avoid repeating them
- ✓ Make sure that you completely understand assignments. Ask questions to ensure you understand
- ✓ Present solutions to problems and learn to be tactful about it
- ✓ Have a vision. Know where you want to be in 18 months-2 years

Mentors

A mentor is someone who has more professional and personal life experience than you, and can act as a guide, coach or advisor in helping you meet your career goals. Your mentor can assist you to assess your skills and interests, set goals, offer advice, and connect you with people who can help you move forward with your career.

Professionalism

Basics

- ✓ Arrive on-time, every day
- ✓ Keep your workspace tidy
- ✓ Treat everyone with respect (see reverse for tips on managing relationships)
- ✓ Ask someone's permission before borrowing something from their desk
- ✓ Check out the eating policy. Avoid messy and foods with strong odours, especially if your are sharing a work area

Personal Image

- ✓ Ask about the dress code before you begin working
- ✓ Keep it clean and modest (e.g. no ripped clothing or exposed underwear)
- ✓ Avoid athletic shoes and any clothing with controversial slogans
- ✓ Hygiene matters
- ✓ Avoid heavy scents or perfumes (the organization might have a no scents policy)

Employer Property

- ✓ Ask for training as needed
- ✓ Don't use computers or copiers for personal use

Smart Phone

- ✓ Turn your phone off (or on silent mode)
- ✓ Never text, surf the net or send emails during meetings

Managing On-the-Job Relationships

The basic rule of thumb is to treat others as you would like to be treated. The following are some basic tips:

In General

- ✓ Smile! Friendliness goes a long way
- ✓ Keep conversations about your work, your colleagues and clients positive. It's important to bring up challenges in a constructive manner
- ✓ Wait until someone is finished speaking before making your point. Never interrupt!
- ✓ Focus on your work. Any texting, surfing the web, phone calls, and Facebook updates can wait until you are on break
- ✓ Avoid controversial topics (politics, religion); instead chat about 'safe' topics like sports and news facts (not opinions)
- ✓ Be tactful and diplomatic when you are exposed to confidential and/or personal conversations
- ✓ Avoid making assumptions about someone's intent. If you are concerned with something, give the individual the opportunity to clarify in a non-confrontational manner.
- ✓ Avoid profanity/swear words

Your Supervisor

- ✓ Make sure that you understand your supervisor's expectations. If you aren't sure, ask
- ✓ Embrace new projects. If you have concerns about your workload, bring them up as soon as possible
- ✓ Bring ideas to your supervisor
- ✓ Arrange for regular check-ins with your supervisor, especially when starting new projects
- ✓ Accept constructive feedback as a gift. Don't take it personally
- ✓ Give your supervisor as much notice as possible if you won't be able to make a shift/will be late
- ✓ Bring up any of your workplace concerns in a respectful manner

Clients

- ✓ Always be positive and honest
- ✓ Never say anything negative about the organization
- ✓ If there is a disagreement, treat the client with respect and seek advice from your supervisor

Social Media

Did you know that you can be accountable for what you post on social media? Never post anything negative about an employer or a colleague. If you're not sure whether you should post a particular comment, you probably shouldn't.

Email and Texting Etiquette

Email and texting are excellent methods to send quick information. It is easy for messages to be misinterpreted. Here are a few tips:

- ✓ Ask how colleagues feel about texting before engaging in it
- ✓ Keep messages positive and professional
- ✓ Don't send a message if you are angry or upset
- ✓ Always re-read your message before sending
- ✓ When sending or responding to email, don't CC anyone unless they absolutely need to be part of the conversation
- ✓ Send messages that are relevant to the workplace, not spam. Ask yourself how this message adds value to the work
- ✓ Don't text during meetings

Remember, all messages can be copied and forwarded to others.

The AA&CC Can Help!

A staff member can help you to navigate these issues. Ask to speak with a career counsellor or employment coach.