

**First-Week Words of Advice**

By Mary Waldron

Finally the day has come. You rocked your resume and cover letter. You aced the interview. Now you're hired, and it's your first week on the job. The hard part is over, right? Not so fast; don't get too cozy. Your first few weeks at a new job can be exciting, but you also need to learn the flow of the workplace and make some lasting impressions. Here are a few things to remember during that crucial first month.

**1. Be the First to Arrive and the Last to Leave.**

No one will really admit it, but everyone is watching to see if you come in early and stay late. If you come in one minute late during your first week, someone will notice. Though being a minute late once probably won't harm your reputation too much, arriving early will definitely set a standard of excellence.

Star players go the extra mile, and that usually involves either coming in early or staying later. And no, that doesn't mean that you leave at 5:05 p.m. Use your judgment. If the whole office is still working intently at 5:30 p.m., you should probably sit tight. Take the opportunity to get acclimated to the office rhythm, jump on your workload, and get organized.

For some strange reason, many bosses forget about the superb work their employees do, but they always remember who they see working when no one else is. It's a simple investment that can pay off a lot when it comes to your future with the company.

**2. Take Notes.**

Whether it's what printer to use or who to submit your billable hours to, you need to take notes on each and every detail that you are told in those first few weeks. Many employers won't say, "Now, you need to write this down," so you should assume that you'll forget everything you learn. There are just too many details that you won't have memorized for weeks. Don't try to play it cool by attempting to jot information down later when no one is looking. If anything, you will come off as prepared and concerned about doing things right the first time.

There is nothing worse than having to go crawling back to your boss to ask about a silly little detail that you should have written down. Many people overlook this when they start new jobs, and it's so easy to avoid. If you take thorough notes and never have to ask how to do something twice, your boss will love you; trust me. Otherwise, it's like having a child tugging on your pant leg (or skirt) every five seconds—which is just annoying.

### 3. Listen and Pay Attention to Details.

It's always good to be in touch with the lingo and the common knowledge of the office. Pay attention to what's going on around you by listening for names of need-to-know people, companies who are associated with your firm, and other tidbits that may help you in the future. Though this is not a must, it can only keep you more in touch with the office's standards.

Basically, the more you know, the better off you'll be. Many times, if you are alert and listening to what's going on around you, a ton of questions can be answered before you even ask them. Or if you forgot something, sometimes you can pick it back up before anyone knows you forgot it.

Those who work more independently and successfully will be smiled upon, and part of this involves paying attention to your environment. It kind of sounds like eavesdropping, but it's just another way to acclimate yourself to the company. Now, when you start to hear about who slept with who last weekend, you can tune that out if you choose—that's office gossip.

### 4. Introduce Yourself.

Yes, people remember when you make the effort to approach them as the new kid on the block. When I look back on all my first weeks at new jobs, I wish that I had been more aggressive about introducing myself to people. Not only does it exude confidence and friendliness, but it can also benefit you later when new opportunities come up. If no one knows who you are, you might miss out on promotions and cool new projects that come up.

You should also be working to learn everyone's name. This can be a significant task if your firm is large, but believe me, so many people forget this—which can make you shine even more when you do it. Remember what Dale Carnegie said? "A person's favorite word is their own name." Learn the names, and use them to sweet-talk your coworkers.

### 5. Watch and Learn.

It's also a good idea to watch what other people are doing in their specific jobs and learn how to do what they do. It's all about adding value to yourself day by day. This means that if someone is unavailable to complete a certain type of assignment and you have paid attention to how it's done, you'll probably get to do it only because you have the most experience. No matter how large or small this job may be, this is another chance to shine.