

Tips for Getting Off to a Good Start

Making a good impression, especially during your first few weeks in a new situation, is important to your success. Following the tips below will enhance your confidence, professionalism, and performance in student jobs, research labs, grad school, internships, co-ops, practicum, volunteer opportunities, and career positions.

Communicate:

- Convey passion, interest, and energy
- Express humility and a willingness to learn
- Maintain regular communication with your supervisor
- Try to resolve conflicts directly with the parties involved

Clear:

- Know your responsibilities and those of coworkers
- Ask for clarification or guidance if the expectations are unclear
- Understand hierarchy, politics, and policies
- Clearly identify yourself when interacting with colleagues, clients, and customers

Conscientious:

- Be punctual
- Maintain the agreed upon work schedule
- Notify the site if you need to be absent
- Dress appropriately for the workplace environment

Courteous:

- Say please, thank you, etc
- Respect the rights and privacy of others
- Silence your cell phone
- Maintain good boundaries

Cautious:

- Observe and listen before making suggestions
- Use email, the Internet, and long-distance privileges for professional purposes only
- Be aware of non-verbal cues you may inadvertently send in email
- Think before hitting “reply all”
- Don’t date coworkers – especially during your first few weeks

Compromise:

- Be realistic in your expectations and requests
- Realize you will not always get your way
- Engage in give-and-take
- Understand there are good and bad parts of every experience
- Remember you are the new employee, not the boss

Connect:

- Develop mutually beneficial relationships with coworkers
- Build your professional network inside and outside the company
- Think about how your degree relates to your position
- Remember you are representing the UW and your program

Clean:

- Keep your workspace clean
- Don't make a mess in communal areas such as conference rooms and kitchens
- Use professional, inclusive, culturally-sensitive language
- Stay home if you are sick

Confidential:

- Don't discuss private company issues outside the workplace
- Abide by ethical guidelines
- Avoid office gossip

Contribute:

- Initiate projects
- Be proactive
- Stay busy

Complete:

- Finish all assigned tasks by their deadlines
- Fulfill the expectations of your job description
- Go above and beyond the minimum requirements

Resources:

Gossip, E-mailing 'All' Among Top Office Peeves-http://www.intranetjournal.com/articles/200710/ij_10_30_07a.html
Life after Graduation, LLC (2006). *Backpack to Briefcase*. Bainbridge Island: Author.