

## 18 Ways to Impress a New Employer

It can take 4 to 14 months to find the right job... and fewer than 90 days to lose it. Most professional and managerial dismissals are due to failure to understand and fit into a company's culture. It is during these first weeks on the job that your boss and colleagues form the most lasting impressions about you. But remember, they don't expect you to be perfect. As long as you show intelligence, versatility and a willingness to work and learn, people will be happy to have you aboard and rooting for you to succeed.

Here are 18 ways to make sure you get off on the right foot:

1. Take a break. Take a week's break between jobs to clear your head. At the very least, get a good night's sleep before your first day so you'll be at your best.
2. Check your interview notes. Recall the names and titles of everyone you met and interviewed with so you will be able to greet them and pronounce their names correctly.
3. Study up. Collect back issues of the company's newsletters, annual reports and press clippings. Check out your competitors' literature, too, to get a better handle on the "big picture."
4. Work full days. Know where and when to report on day one. Get there 30 minutes early and leave when or after most of your co-workers do. Notice people's schedules and work habits, so that you'll know the optimal times and means to connect with others.
5. Project positive energy. Look and act as if you're happy to be joining the team.
6. Look good. All eyes are on you, so pay attention to your grooming. Dress tastefully and slightly above dress code.
7. Keep a journal. Write down procedures, names of key people and contact numbers, so that you'll look like a quick study.
8. Be flexible. Expect and embrace the inevitable challenges of your position. A flexible attitude will decrease stress for you and others.

9. Show appreciation. Be kind and appreciative to everyone who helps you learn the ropes.
10. Listen 80 percent; Talk 20 percent. Resist offering opinions or assessments — that road is full of land mines. You'll get more respect by listening and absorbing what your co-workers have to teach rather than by showing off how much you know.
11. Get to know your boss. Observe your boss' personality and work style, and tailor your interactions to his or her preferences.
12. Clarify expectations. Make sure you and your boss are on the same page. Find out:
  - What priorities and issues need to be immediately addressed.
  - How often and in what format you should provide project updates.
  - How your performance will be evaluated.
13. Connect with colleagues. Get to know as many people as you can especially your teammates and those with whom you will work regularly. Establish the foundation for a relationship, and trust and information will follow.
14. Identify key players. Find out who the decision-makers, influencers, stars and up-and-comers are. Notice the traits they have in common and try to emulate them.
15. Uncover hidden agendas. Identify any political forces at work. While you want to avoid getting involved in politically charged situations, it's helpful to be aware of undercurrents.
16. Take initiative. As you finish assignments and are ready to handle a bigger workload, ask for more. Pick projects that have support from upper management and buy-in from your staff.
17. Don't make major changes. Even if your interviewer told you the company was looking for fresh ideas, proceed carefully. Show respect for those who have invested energy in a project or system before trying to change it. There may be obstacles you aren't aware of. Ask why things are done the way they are and seek feedback from people whose support you need. Applaud what is being done right and frame changes as enhancements.
18. Be a team player. Don't engage in gossip. Always make your boss look good. Share credit with your workmates.