

Media Article



Vocational Guidance Services

FIRST DAY IN A NEW JOB

If you are starting a new job it means you've successfully 'beaten' other candidates to the door. However, your work is far from over, and for many the first day on a job is more stressful than any interview. It is a bit like starting a new school, mid way through term, when you are the 'new kid' whilst everyone else already has built relationships and knows the ropes! On top of trying to adjust to a new set of responsibilities and corporate culture you are the only one who doesn't know how to find the loo, and who to avoid in the morning due to likely hand-overs or cheesy chat up lines!

Before you start if possible, try to take a break between jobs as you will need to mentally and emotionally separate from your last role and past work colleagues. You don't want to be distracted by things left uncompleted in your last role when starting your new job. During the break, research your new employer and network to meet someone working there before your first day for a social chat. They could provide invaluable insight and introductions when you start. Take some time to plan what you are going to wear on the big day, and make sure you have your wardrobe in order for your first week, as chances are you'll be coming home tired every evening. Dress conservatively as first impressions last and as the 'new kid' you'll be getting a lot of attention. Before the day, practice the route you will take and how much traffic there is on the way. The last thing you want is to arrive late or have to run in arriving breathless.

On the day, remember, the first day is like an extension of your interview, so some of the same rules apply. When you walk in, make sure you show positive body language. Smile, lots of eye contact and firm hand-shakes. You don't want the team thinking the boss has captured a mouse! Be polite and friendly to everyone you meet – from the askari at the gate to the MD. People share views. Introduce yourself to everyone you meet and remember it is positive to ask questions as that will make your colleagues feel useful and accept you faster than if you take a know it all, already attitude. Don't refuse an offer of help even if you know how to do something – this may turn off helpful offers in the future. Of course, you will have been recruited because of your particular skills, qualifications and past experience, but all you are doing on your first day is getting to know this companies way of doing things. There may be things you immediately want to change, but your first day is probably not the best time to experiment, leave that for later on in the week. Try to have lunch with your new colleagues – this can be a useful ice-breaker and also soften your transition as they will provide guidance. Whatever you do, make sure you don't show the 'we did things better at my old company' attitude, as you may just get asked 'so why did you leave?'

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