

# career ZONE

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This is the time when it's expected that you'll ask many questions and make some mistakes. Listen and record all job-related and organizational details. Give yourself permission to ask for clarification when instructions are not clear or are complicated and sensitive. Reserve any judgements about the job, your performance and your co-workers until you've gained an insider's perspective – something that will come with time spent and experience.

Keep an open mind about forming alliances, be friendly and courteous with everyone – companies have an underlying “secret power” structure which is not readily evident from organizational charts.

Throughout this time period you'll be gaining critical knowledge of the corporate culture – that environmental element that dictates the way people behave, evaluate and conduct themselves at the workplace. This is the information that will help you to ultimately assess what to make of the company you're working for and the people you're working with and whether or not you have indeed found the right fit for you. But don't be too hasty in making any decisions; it takes time to really understand how things work and to figure out how you can make the most of the opportunities presented by your job and the organization.

Make it your habit to arrive each day on time – there are no excuses for arriving late. Monitor your grooming and clothing to ensure you continue to present a professional appearance that aligns with the corporate dress code. If you need to stay late to complete your work do so

without hesitation, you will speed up as time progresses. Develop a reputation as an enthusiastic and motivated team player, if you do complete your tasks ahead of schedule offer to pitch in and help out other colleagues.

Withhold any recommendations you may have on making changes or improvements to current processes until a later date when you understand why or with whose direction things are being done the way they are.

## Be a Winner at Work

When starting your new job, it's completely normal to feel challenged and frustrated and to sometimes feel like giving up. You'll likely have thoughts such as “I'll never get this” or “I'm not good at this”. Nonetheless, it's important to commit to begin every single day with a fresh, positive approach, whether it is authentic or not. If necessary, “fake it till you make it”. Keep your emotions in check. You worked hard to get this job and this is not the time to quit.

With every additional day you'll become increasingly familiar with how to do things, you'll feel more and more comfortable with your co-workers and a part of the team, and the organization will start to feel more like home.

If you follow these suggestions for the first two to three months you'll get to the point where you'll have developed a reputation as a “winner”, a highly motivated team-player with good interpersonal skills who is contributing positively to the success of the organization. At this stage you'll be more self-confident and in a position to sit back and examine your options, and to start thinking about carving your career path. 

## ESSENTIAL TIPS

- Before you start, research the organization
- Prepare yourself – travel logistics, clothes, etc.
- Arrive on time every single day
- Watch, listen and learn
- Show that you're eager to do well
- Be courteous and friendly with everyone
- Get adequate rest and keep your outside obligations to a minimum
- Ask questions and keep a notebook of all new information
- Become a team player
- Offer to pitch in when your tasks are completed
- Be patient with yourself and others
- Reserve judgement about the company and your co-workers
- Set the right tone – polish your brand
- Commit and re-commit to do well every single day

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