

So you've got the job. Now what?

By: Natalie Fraser

You've been offered the job and it's time to get to work. Starting a new job in an unfamiliar environment can be as daunting as it is exciting. By preparing yourself properly you can settle into the company much quicker.

Before you start

You should take some time to research the company. Begin with the resources you used to prepare for the interview. Read any newspaper articles about the company and ask your boss for brochures and other company literature. Find out if you could visit the company before your actual start date to familiarize yourself with the layout, technology and processes used. Take a look at yourself, your past performance reviews etc and find out if there are any areas you can develop. Ask colleagues, friends or your existing boss to assist you.

Your first day

Before you start you should be certain of what is expected of you in terms of "image" – dress, attitude, lifestyle and appearance. Whether you're over- or underdressed, you'll feel even more self-conscious so be sure to dress accordingly.

Soon after starting

You should try to establish the following:

- Organisational structure or management style
- "Who's who" – informally and formally
- Preferred mode of communication – telephone, email, memos or in person
- History of the company and current visions & goals
- The relationship of your job to others within your department and externally
- Preferred procedures, written or oral – communication, staff welfare, customer care
- Whether the organization has a quality system in place, e.g. ISO

Your Job & Responsibilities

If you have not already been given a full job description, ask for one. It is best to know exactly where you stand in terms of duties, responsibilities and authority. Find out:

- Main objectives of your job
- Expectations of your superiors and colleagues
- The kind of feedback and support you will receive from superiors and colleagues
- Limits of your responsibilities – duties, authority, service, products, people
- The resources available to you
- Priorities of your job and the suggested time allocated to each
- Any "problem areas" and the "uniqueness" of your particular position

Some useful "Dos" and "Don'ts"

DO

- Listen carefully and ask questions to ensure you understand, don't be afraid to take notes
- Exercise tact and diplomacy and be modest
- Perform 100% from the first day – always give of your best!

DON'T

- Keep referring to the way "we used to do it in my last job"
- Criticise your boss, colleagues or systems – either new or former
- Join in office gossip or encourage stories about your predecessor