

Starting Your Job: What to Expect on the First Day, Week, and Month

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Tips Sheet

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Preparing for your new job:

- Adjust to your new work schedule a week before starting your job
 - This includes getting enough sleep and waking up at the time you will need to when you start work
- Tweak your communication style for your audience
 - Through the interview process, you should have a feel for the communication style within your new work environment
- Use appropriate email etiquette
- Learn about your company's culture
 - Is the company environment more informal, casual, or business professional?
- Know the "power structure" of your company – Who reports to who?
- Learn the popular acronyms and key terms used within your company and within your own team
 - Ask your manager for a list of acronyms most commonly used or create one yourself
- Be pleasant at all times
- Ask your Human Resource department or hiring manager prior to starting your job where to go on your first day
 - Be prompt!

Learning and sharing on the job:

- ASK QUESTIONS
 - You don't know everything, and no one expects you to be perfect
 - Attend a new hire orientation, or if your company does not have one, ask for help in scheduling meetings with key departments/individuals within the company to learn what each functional area does
 - Try and direct your questions to the right person as much as possible
 - Document everything you learn to avoid asking the same question multiple times
 - Keep a journal or notebook and take diligent notes (if you use a cell phone in meetings, stipulate you're using your phone just for note taking so your coworkers know you're paying attention.)
 - Repeat what you've been told before walking away so you know you've captured the information and your colleagues see your initiative – Demonstrate your critical thinking skills!
 - Use technology when possible to find answers to questions you are looking for
 - Don't ask the same question 100 times
- SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW
 - Believe it or not, you have a lot to share with your colleagues
 - Your basic food science knowledge is fresh
 - Be confident, yet humble
 - Remember, your company hired you because they have confidence in you
 - Patience is key while you're learning!

Get to know your coworkers

- Set up informal meetings with either individuals or a few people (coffee, lunch, etc.)
- Get to know your coworkers professionally and personally
- Ask them to introduce you to other co-workers outside of your team/department

- Be open with your boss
- Ask about his/her communication style
- Suggest regular meetings with your boss if he/she doesn't suggest them first
- Let him/her know if you need assistance
 - Openly accept constructive criticism
- Ask your boss for regular (3 or 6 month) reviews if not mandated by your Human Resource department

Network

- Networking is important inside and outside of your company
- Understand the main job functions of other departments within your company
- Find a mentor at work
 - Someone you admire for their business acumen, personal and professional strengths, and a skill set you can learn from.
 - Set a timeframe to work with this person
- Ask a team member to be your "buddy" to help with basic information while you're getting up to speed
- Build rapport with your fellow team members to be able to work well together and collaborate

Continue your Education

- Work with your boss or Human Resource department to map out continuing education opportunities (soft skill development and job training) to help you grow within the company
- Utilize any internal company training programs
- Take advantage of tuition reimbursement if offered to enroll in external education programs

Resources

- Food Science/industry magazines, journals and newsletters (i.e. *Food Technology*)
- U.S. regulatory updates (i.e. www.fda.gov; www.usda.gov) – sign up for notifications
- Current News - both US and World news
- IFT eMentoring Program (<http://www.ift.org/careercenter/ementoring.aspx>)
- IFT Career Center (<http://www.ift.org/careercenter.aspx>)
- Intranet at your company (if available)
- Current trends and research – ask your boss, team members and suppliers what resources are beneficial to them
- Human Resource Handbook (if available)