

Life at Work

Version 1

Published 7/16/2021 by **Gerald Encabo** Last updated 7/16/2021 6:06 PM by **Gerald Encabo**

Your first job does not just start on your first day, but the days before. The following is a suggested timeline:

The week before

Get READY today – The week before your first day, research on the company – its history, structure, customers, products and services, and the challenges it's facing. Bring a notepad to record any new information that you'll learn from orientation and integration period.

- **Work hours** – Confirm when you are to arrive at work and your work hours.
- **Plan your route** – Map out your route to your workplace and how long it takes you to get there.

The night before

- **Prepare your clothes** – Find out ahead the appropriate dress code. If not possible, it's always better to be overdressed.
- **Good night's sleep** – Have a good night's sleep so that you're well rested to present your best on the first day.

The first day

Arrive on time – In fact, aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early.

Ready to learn – There's a lot to learn in the beginning of your new job, bring a notepad to be ready to record new information throughout orientation and integration period.

Do your job and do it the best – It's very important that you demonstrate the best of your abilities at work and show that you are hired for the right position.

Bring any information the employer asked you to bring.

Greet everyone with a proper handshake.

Stay present – There will be a lot of information coming at you but it's important to stay present.

Be **courteous** – Remember to thank everyone who helps you on your first day.

If you receive a handout about company policies or procedures be sure to take time that first day or night to review it and familiarize yourself with the content.

In conversations, **use people's names** as often as possible. This will help you remember them more quickly. If you are unsure, ask; this is more appreciated than addressing someone by the wrong name. The same advice holds for the titles of the many people you will likely meet on the first day.

Do not gossip, complain and act like you know everything or that you have nothing to learn.

Lunch Etiquette:

- Always eat in designated food areas such as the cafeteria, empty rooms or parks
- Clean up your mess
- Plan team lunch as a way to build stronger work relationships
- Do not eat in front of clients
- Do not take longer lunch breaks than expected
- Do not rely on others to buy you lunch or share theirs

Break Etiquette:

- Always follow workplace break policies
- Smokers should minimize their breaks during regular work hours
- Outside of break time, let others be aware you are leaving your workspace (i.e. washroom break)
- Stay away from work during break time (If possible, go outside and take a walk or a breath of fresh air)

Finally, you are home. You can sit back and relax. Not quite. On paper, list out by name all of the workers you can remember meeting. List their job titles and responsibilities to the extent you can. This will help you remember more clearly who's who, and remind you the next day to fill up the list those you have not quite fixed in your mind.

Beyond the first day...

- Go with the flow. **Listen**, *listen*, then *listen* some more. Save your suggestions for later.
- If you listen well, you may learn that what you have to say about the place has been suggested, assessed, and discarded before your time.
- **Ask intelligent questions** about the work, even when you may already know the answers. People like to be helpful; it empowers them.
- **Take initiative** – Understand your responsibility and the operations of your department so that you can identify how you can contribute. That way, you not only contribute to your success but the success of your team.
- **Be cooperative** – This means helping your supervisor and team members whenever possible. But, always be aware of your duties as well.
- **Be positive** about all projects – In the beginning of your new job, especially for new graduates, you may be assigned for some unglamorous projects. Stay positive and complete all projects with the best of your abilities. If you perform a lousy job, opportunities for challenging tasks would be dim.