

FIRST WEEK ON THE JOB!

A Quick Guide to starting off right

SUMMARY

A campus job can help you build skills that will serve you in whatever career you pursue. This guide will provide you with **tips** to get you started on the right foot and make the most of your student employment opportunity. You will also find do's and don'ts regarding key behaviours that will ensure your effectiveness.

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- The First Day Arrives
- A Winning Attitude
- Do's and Don'ts



- Learn the McGill Culture
- Be a Team Player
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- Keys to Success

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CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW ROLE!

- You were selected for your unique talents, abilities and **potential!**
- Your employer saw something special in you that they believe can **serve their organization.**
- When an organization hires someone they are **making an investment** in them to become a productive and competent employee.
- A **positive attitude** and **self-confidence** will go a long way in helping you adjust to your new role and environment.



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PREPARING FOR THE FIRST DAY

4 tips for success

1. Learn about your employer
 - What do they do?
 - How do they dress?
2. Complete required paperwork - hand it in on time and complete
3. Know where to go
4. Be on time!

Do your Homework

Visit your employers website and read about what happens. This way you'll have some context before you arrive.

- If you don't know **how to dress**, ask your supervisor and pay attention to people you pass by in the hall – your interviewer, etc. Until you're familiar with the culture, dress conservatively and comfortably. Avoid strong perfumes & after shave lotions

Map out your route

During rush hour, make sure you know the problem areas, alternative routes, bus schedules, etc.

Punctuality

Arriving late on your first day is a definite no-no!



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THE FIRST DAY

4 tips for success

1. Treat it as an adventure: be enthusiastic
2. Be prepared for anything
 - They forgot you were starting
 - They're expecting you to join them for lunch
 - They dropped the ball & nothing has been set up for you (desk, computer, etc.)
3. Expect to be reading... a lot!
4. Maintain Positivity

➤ The adventure of it all...

New people, your own office/cubicle, whole new environment – exciting!

➤ Expecting the unexpected

Ideally, they're ready and waiting for you with a smile, there's a planned orientation session & everything that could be thought of has been – but your boss fell ill and everyone else forgot about you with the extra work load: - **what do you do?** – Offer whatever help you can – the attitude is positive – “I can pitch in” – “tell me what needs to be done.”

Bring a bagged lunch (preferably in a cold sack-in case no fridge) BUT ensure you have money – do not say “no” to a lunch invite - if the boss pays that's fine; If it is a peer, return the favour next time.

➤ Positive attitude

Again –positive attitude – ask to be steered in the right direction (internal directory) & make your own arrangements

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A WINNING ATTITUDE

4 tips for success

1. Listen and ask questions...be curious!
2. You are in the learning phase
3. Don't expect to always be included
 - Realize that you are the new kid on the block
4. Get involved and make yourself as useful as you can

? New Kid on the Block

Pay attention to your co-workers and your supervisor. Early on is not the best time for you to show off how much you know.

? Ask Questions

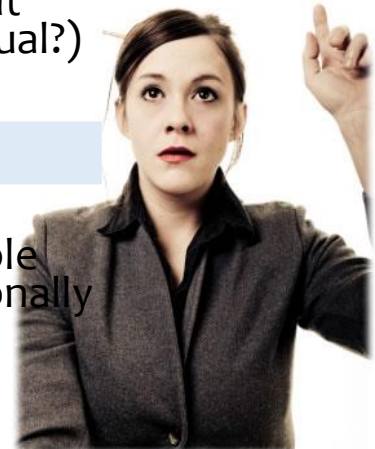
For the first while nobody will be expecting you to know much – ask questions, don't be afraid to ask more than once, if you're uncertain – but do take notes to avoid asking the same question twice.

? Where am I?

Ensure you know where the washrooms, cafeteria and copier are. Pay attention to how people treat one-another and follow suit (formally? quiet? casual?)

? Lots of Change

It takes people time to accept new situations, be friendly, courteous, and give people time, if people don't warm to you right away, don't take it personally



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THE DO'S

- 1 Do try to remember names
- 2 Do make constructive use of your time
- 3 Do follow-through with your commitments
- 4 Do be a self-starter (show initiative)
- 5 Do maintain a positive attitude!

Other Tips

- One of the biggest mistakes that a new hire can make is to lose a sense of urgency...
 - If you have nothing to do – don't surf the net – ask if you can assist a co-worker with anything (even photocopying).
- Following through on your commitments = Don't make promises you can't keep
- Showing initiative = jump in!
 - If you see something needs to be done, do it, or at least ask if you can help in some way.



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THE DONT'S

- 1 Don't appear like a know-it-all
- 2 Don't criticize procedures
- 3 Don't contribute to gossip
- 4 Don't blame others for your errors
- 5 Don't burn bridges
- 6 Don't skip breaks or lunch

Other Tips

- You may think you know all the answers, but unless your opinion is sought, let things be (you don't know the whole picture): **credibility takes time to earn**
- Only offer improvements to procedures you are asked about. Early on isn't typically the right time to offer **unsolicited advice** about what's wrong
- If something goes wrong, be it your fault or someone else's be **humble** and **cooperative** and let it be known that you've learned from the experience you will do in the future, should the same scenario happen again
- You never know who you will need to work with in the future – even if they test you, be professional and **safeguard your reputation**
- Taking breaks and lunches helps you gain perspective and allows you to return to work with a more **positive and productive mindset**

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Learn about yours...

1. How is success defined?
2. How does your work affect other individuals or departments in the organization?
3. Respect differences
4. Seek feedback
5. Address ambiguities

➤ Research suggests...

75% of performance problems exist because expectations or standards are not clarified upfront – it's up to you to find out how your work fits in with the mission and strategies of the organization.

➤ How do things actually work?

- How does work get done? Many meetings? Trial-and-error?
- Are employees encouraged to be Innovative, by-the-book, decisive, bottom-line driven, etc?

➤ Listen and take note

Listen to the words that keep coming up from your co-workers, manager, etc. – make a list of what counts in this culture.

The quicker you learn how you **fit in**, the smarter your decisions will be when time or resources are limited:

- Who do you need to count on for the success of your own work? Who counts on you?

Build relationships with these people – seek their feedback regularly, monitor what worked/what didn't and always **pay attention to their needs.**

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BE A TEAM PLAYER

1. Pay attention to the needs of others
2. Know what you bring to the team at any given time – what are you best at:
 - Generating and refining ideas?
 - Building group spirit?
 - Organizing and integrating the work



How to Become Known as a Team Player

▪ Pay attention

What do they suggest for you to enhance, change or improve your work in the future – you'll not only be doing your job to the best of your abilities, you will help others accomplish their results

▪ Develop awareness

To be an effective team player:

- Know what you do best
- See what others do best
- Always be on the lookout for what's missing and move into the gap



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MANAGE YOUR TIME

Plan and Prioritize

1. Plan Ahead: allow for delays, interruptions, crises
2. Break it down: divide large projects into smaller, more manageable steps
3. Prioritize: get the most important things done each day, at the beginning of the day
4. Schedule time outs: for family, friends, exercise

➤ Be realistic

Implement a plan, schedule, **to-do list**

➤ Acknowledge what you did complete

Try to review what you did get done at the end of the shift, instead of dwelling on what you still need to do. It is important to leave with a sense of accomplishment.

- Approaching big tasks with this mindset makes them feel less overwhelming, which is key to experiencing less stress and procrastination.



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DIFFICULTIES WITH COLLEAGUES

1. Don't jump to conclusions
2. Think it through
3. Speak to your co-worker directly
4. Don't accuse

Note: Depending on the situation, you may want to resolve it directly, or escalate to a supervisor.

Assume **positive intent**,
whenever possible



How to handle conflict:

What went wrong? Consider the following:

- Did you devote the time and commitment you should have to the task?
- Did you pay enough attention to your co-workers concerns?
- Were you prepared? Did you make any assumptions?

Context

- Are you applying old mental templates to new people and situations? Miscommunications happen – maybe you took something out of context.
- It is unwise to rush to judgment.

I Statements

- Use I statements to:
 - State the problem, how you felt, and what you want
 - E.g., “I am disappointed that my input wasn't included because I put a lot of thought into it. I'd appreciate if you would give it more consideration next time.”

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KEYS TO SUCCESS

1 Enjoy and learn from the people you work with

Even those who are different from you

2 Give a lot → Get a lot

Contribute substantially every day

3 Develop yourself

Do things that interest you – play up your strengths

4 Be patient

Don't expect quick results - everything takes time

5 Make time for life outside of the workplace

A balanced you, is a more productive you



5 tips for success

1. People skills are equally as important as technical skills – this means your ability to interact with others REALLY matters
2. Your achievements at the end of the day will determine your future. No matter how small your contribution, if it's positive and it gets results- you'll win, even if you change jobs, or get laid off. **Achievements = marketability.**
3. It takes **time to learn**, process (just like in school) you had to learn before you graduated (~3 month learning curve).
4. The best way to predict the future is to plan it.
5. Take care of your relationships; they're just as important as your career. Many people who've made their careers everything in their life, have had incredible difficulties adjusting to the big glitches when there was no one around to count on.