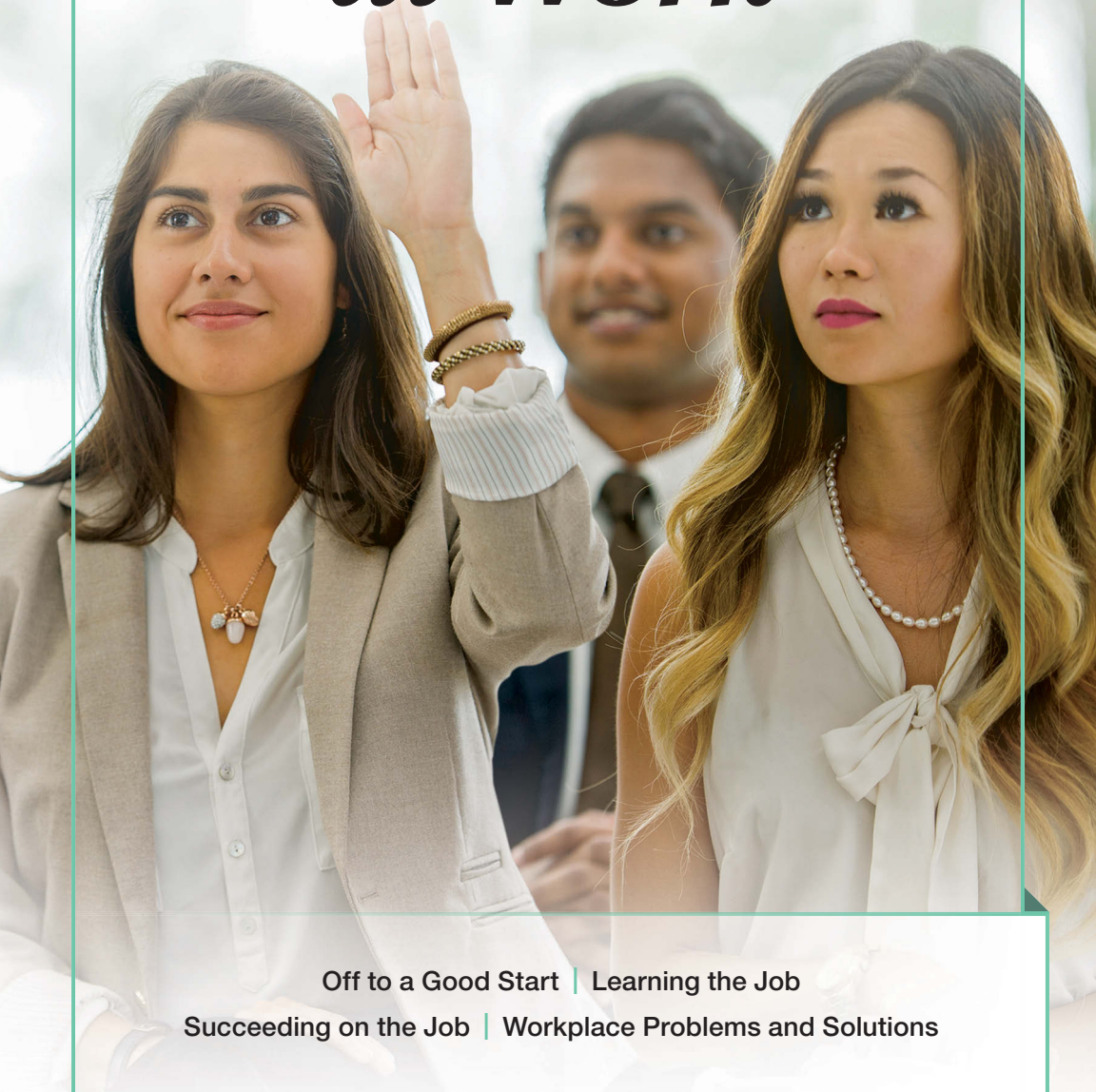


LIFE  
SKILLS  
HANDBOOKS

# Getting Ahead *at Work*



Off to a Good Start | Learning the Job  
Succeeding on the Job | Workplace Problems and Solutions

## Off to a Good Start

Starting a new job is exciting. But it may also be scary. Doing good work is important. Getting along with coworkers matters too. You'll likely have many questions. Answers can often be found in the employee handbook. There are also things you'll figure out on your own in time. Learn faster by following some basic guidelines for starting a new job.

## The First Two Weeks

Yasmin couldn't believe it. The past two weeks had gone by so fast. That's how long she'd been at her new job. She was working as an **administrative assistant** at a doctor's office. Overall, things were going pretty well.

Looking back, Yasmin thought about her first day. She'd filled out a lot of forms. These signed her up for health insurance and other **benefits**. Her manager also gave her a copy of the employee handbook. He told her to read through it. The handbook contained valuable information. Everything from paid time off to what employees were expected to wear was covered.





During the first week, Yasmin had met everyone in the office. She had been nervous. But her coworkers probably didn't notice. Yasmin had shaken their hands with **confidence**. Since then, she'd worked with several of them. Everyone was friendly and patient as they helped train her. They were happy to answer questions too. She really appreciated this.

Morgan and Lucy were two of Yasmin's new coworkers. At the end of her first week, they'd invited her to lunch. That really made Yasmin feel welcome. But the lunch had been awkward. Lucy shared many details about her personal life. Ever since, she'd been stopping by Yasmin's desk to chat. All this made Yasmin uncomfortable. She wasn't sure what to do.

Still, at the end of her second week, Yasmin had no worries. She was happy to receive her first paycheck. Yasmin looked forward to many more weeks at her new job.

# Chapter 1

## The Importance of First Impressions

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Think about meeting someone for the first time. You get a quick idea of what the person is like. The opinion you develop is called a first impression. Usually, a first impression is formed within minutes of meeting someone.

When you start a new job, your coworkers will quickly form an opinion about you. What will they see? It's important to think about the image you present. Do what you can to make sure it's a good one.



## Making a Good First Impression

1. **Wear clothing that's appropriate for the workplace.** It can be difficult to know what clothing is right for your workplace. Casual or informal clothes usually aren't a good idea. These make it seem like you don't care about your work. Wearing revealing clothes is never appropriate.

What should you wear? A neat blouse or shirt and a nice pair of pants work well. Pay attention to what your coworkers wear. This will help you decide what is acceptable for your workplace. Also remember that in most cases, it's better to be dressed too formally than too casually. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor about the dress code.

### Tips for Making a Good First Impression

- **Don't be late.** On your first day, arrive a few minutes early. You don't want to keep anyone waiting.
- **Look presentable.** Your appearance is the first thing people notice. Make sure you're dressed nicely and are well-groomed.
- **Smile and have a positive attitude.** This will help put people you meet in a good mood.
- **Listen carefully and be polite.** Show interest in what others say. When you meet someone, use their name in the conversation. This will help you remember names.
- **Be yourself.** Don't try to impress people by being overly friendly or acting like you know more than you do. Have confidence in who you are.





- 2. When you meet others in the workplace, be confident.** Look them in the eye and smile. Making eye contact suggests that you are **self-assured** and eager. Smiling shows you are friendly and pleased to meet someone.
- 3. Concentrate on learning your job throughout the day.** Put all your effort toward doing things correctly. But don't worry if you don't do everything right at first. It takes a while to learn any job. Show that you are trying hard and willing to learn. Don't be shy about asking questions or seeking help. Your efforts will be noticed.
- 4. Be on time.** Arrive at work a few minutes early. That way, you're ready to start on time. Go to lunch and take your breaks when you're supposed to. Don't take longer than you should or be late getting back. Both managers and coworkers will notice. These bad habits are easy to form. They're also hard to break.

5. **Don't expect or ask for special favors.** Remember that you're one of a group of employees. Your manager needs to be fair to everyone. Also, don't expect your coworkers to do your work or to cover for you. For instance, never ask a coworker to lie about your being late or leaving early.

### Know the Dress Code

Most companies have a dress code. It tells employees what kinds of clothes they're expected to wear.

In many workplaces, the dress code is business casual. Business casual allows you to look professional but be comfortable.

Don't take comfort too far, though. What

you'd wear to a sporting event isn't usually appropriate for the workplace.

Neither is what you'd wear when going out with friends. Also never wear clothing that's wrinkled, torn, or dirty. Remember, your appearance on the job says a lot about your attitude toward your work.





6. **Do work that you're proud of.** When it comes to your work, never settle for “good enough.” Try to do a little bit better every day. Developing your work skills and abilities can be a real challenge. But over time, you'll discover the rewards that can come from doing well in the workplace.



## Working Remotely

Some people today have the option of working remotely. This means they don't go into an office for work each day. Usually, they work from home. But they can often work from anywhere that has an internet connection.



When working remotely, coworkers interact online. They may use email, video calls, or an online chat program. If you are starting a new job and working from home, you might not get to meet your coworkers in person. But don't worry. You can still make a good impression when you meet them virtually. Here are a few tips:

- Test your computer equipment before your first video call. Check that your internet connection is strong and fast so you don't cut out. Become familiar with how to use the video call program. Learn how to turn on your video, share your screen, and mute your microphone. Also make sure you have decent lighting and that your computer camera is in a good position.
- Work when you're supposed to. Stay focused on work throughout the day. Working from home can present many distractions. Do your best to separate your work life from your home life. Treat your remote job like you would any other job. Don't handle personal matters on work time.
- Communicate with your manager and your coworkers. Working remotely means you'll be communicating with people differently than normal. It might not happen as naturally as it would in a regular office setting. Make an effort to speak with your new coworkers. Also speak regularly with your manager. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Set up a designated office space. Just like in a regular office, keep your work area tidy. Remove distractions. Try to find a quiet place where you can focus.