

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Building Great Business Relationships

Starting a job is always a bit unnerving because there's so much to absorb—a new place, new people and a new position—especially when you're doing your best to make a good impression. For the first few weeks, you might feel like a fish out of water. But it doesn't have to stay that way for long: from building relationships with your co-workers, to how you connect with your boss, start off on the right foot and build long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships in the workplace by:

Watching and learning. Of course you want to prove yourself as a talented and quick learner, but no one expects you to know the ropes on your first day. This also applies to office culture. For the first few weeks, observe the company culture, your co-workers and supervisor closely before you start sharing opinions or making assumptions.

Staying sincere. Insincerity can turn allies into enemies in an instant, so be genuine about getting to know people in your office. Most people are great talkers but could use a boost in the listening department. Set yourself apart by taking an honest interest in what others have to say.

Taking a "do anything" approach. Unless what's being asked puts you in harm's way, avoid a *that-isn't-in-my-job-description* attitude. Show your boss and co-workers you aren't above taking on less glamourous or exciting tasks. Offer help when you see a need and be the first one to compliment a job well done. Be the kind of person you'd like to work with and people will enjoy working with you.

Finding a mentor. Take advantage of mentoring programs. A mentor can offer you guidance and direction in your career and a wealth of wisdom when you need it most. A strong relationship with a mentor can provide you with new challenges, help you map out a career path and give you a better understanding of the work setting you're in.

We live in a diverse and global world and this is often reflected in our surroundings, including our work environment. With diverse ages and cultures represented in your workplace you may want to review the below tips to help foster a healthy team spirit and:

- **Recognize different views.** It is easy for miscommunications to take place and friction to build when you're coming from very different ways of thinking. Remind yourself these struggles are a natural part of differing world views, keep an open mind and do your best not to take these divergences personally.

- **Put differences in context.** The idea of "paying your dues," for instance might make you cringe but remember: most of the senior level people started exactly where you are now and proved they were up for the challenge. While you may have to swallow some pride, focusing your energy on building credibility will help you earn the respect and, hopefully, the position you aspire to more quickly than if you demand "expert" status the first day on the job.

- **Be eager to learn.** Learn why and how things work the way they do before you make suggestions for a change. As a new set of eyes, you offer a unique perspective and may have ideas that could move the company forward. However, sometimes processes go unchanged because they work. Watch carefully, listen and learn.

Staying Connected to Your Leader

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Your relationship with your leader is one that you should take time to nurture. Remember communication can play a part in the success of your relationship so take the time to let your leader know:

- **What you're working on, how you're doing and if you have any questions.** Staying in touch shows initiative and will help keep you top-of-mind when new opportunities arise.
- **What you've finished and the results.** Demonstrate what you've accomplished so they recognize the value you add to the team and the level of responsibility you're able to handle.
- **What you can help with.** Don't wait around to be told what to do. Instead, notice what's needed and do it before being asked or, if it doesn't fall under your responsibilities, offer to help.

For those new to the workforce, starting a first "real world" job can be intimidating: it might be your first time in this kind of structured setting, or your first chance at getting hands-on experience in the field. But building great business relationships doesn't have to be difficult or unnerving. As with most new and challenging situations, a little time can make all the difference.