

Module 7
Section 4

STARTING A NEW JOB

Employee Handbook
& Success Tips

IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL:

Learn the importance of knowing what is expected of you on the job.

Discover the benefits of talking with your supervisor.

Recognize the qualities that make a good employee.

Find ways to improve your work ethic and attitude.

STARTING A NEW JOB

Finding and keeping a job can be tough. It takes time and effort, but you can be successful and do your best at work by following some simple steps. These steps fall under two categories:

- 1) Knowing what is expected of you; and
- 2) Having a good communication with your boss or supervisor.

Let's look at these categories more closely.

KNOW THE EXPECTATIONS

- Review the Employee Handbook.
- Ask questions.
- Know your schedule.



Review the Employee Handbook

Employers have books for employees to read so they can learn about the organization. The books have information about things like when the organization is open, what to wear, how to be safe, how to use the company's computer programs, the rules for how to behave, how much money you will make, and the laws about working. When you start working, you will go to a meeting where they tell you a lot of

information in a short time. It is important for you to take time to read the book on your own so you understand everything. If you have questions, you can ask the people in charge of human resources or your boss.



Ask Questions

Sometimes new employees are scared to ask questions. We are worried that we will sound silly or that we won't know things. When you start a new job, there will be many things you don't know because you are new. It is okay to ask questions. If you don't ask questions, you might miss out on chances to be successful.

Know Your Schedule



One important thing that every employee needs to do, is to know and follow their work schedule. Some jobs have schedules that are the same every week, like working from Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00 to 5:00. Some jobs have schedules that change every other week, like working from Monday to Thursday one week and Tuesday to Saturday the next. And some jobs have schedules that change every week based on how many customers there are.

Another thing that is related to schedules is knowing when to start work, when to finish work, and when to take breaks. The book for employees might have this information, or you might need to ask your boss or the people in charge of human resources. You should learn this information and your schedule on your first day of work.

Here are some examples of employees who needed to know things from the employee book to keep their job and when it was okay to ask questions.

Hector started working at a factory and learned from the book during his first meeting that all employees had to wear special boots that protect their toes. Hector didn't have these boots, but the book said that employees could get money before they were paid to buy the boots. They would pay back the money for the boots from their first paycheck. Hector asked about this and was able to buy the boots and start working the next week.

Alli found out from the employee handbook that if she couldn't come to work on one of her waitress shifts, she had to find someone else to take her place. Her boss told her that a schedule for the next two weeks would be put up every week, and her shifts might be different each week. This meant she had to pay attention to her schedule and make sure she could cover her shifts. She should also make friends

with her co-workers so she could ask one of them to switch shifts if she needed to.

Rob read in the employee handbook that he could take three online safety classes in his first month of work to get a small raise in pay. He had to talk to his boss and schedule 15 minutes at the end of work on three days for these classes. At the end of each class, there would be a test to make sure he learned everything. He needs to ask his boss about scheduling these classes. He really wants to get a pay raise – who wouldn't?

TALK WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- Ask your boss or supervisor for advice or feedback.
- If you make a mistake, admit it.
- Resolve conflicts quickly.

Sometimes employees are scared of their boss, but the boss's job is to make sure the staff is ready and able to do their jobs well. Bosses want employees to succeed so that they can be seen as successful too. A boss's performance is based on how well all their employees do. Many times, bosses end up doing the work of most or all of the employees they supervise.

Tameka works in the produce department of a grocery store. She was in the back room moving some boxes of produce that had just arrived when she

she accidentally bumped into a pallet of eggs. Twelve dozen eggs fell to the floor and most of them broke. There was no one else in the back room with her, but she knew she should tell her boss about what happened. She was worried that this mistake might cost her job.

Tameka used the radio to call her boss, Tom, and she told him what had happened. He laughed and said that he had dropped a box of eggs when he first started working there five years ago. He filled out a report about the lost eggs, including all the details of the incident. He signed it and had Tameka sign it too. He said that it would be included in a monthly report about losses, and he appreciated Tameka being honest about what happened. He asked her to help clean up the mess and reminded her to always check her surroundings and use carts to move boxes so she can see where she's going.

Robin was starting her first day as a volunteer at a community bakery. They bake bread and buns for local food shelves and community meal sites. Robin had never worked in a bakery before, but the manager said they would train her. Her first job was to fill the flour bins. She found big bags of flour in the back room to fill the plastic bins in the kitchen. She put white flour in the white flour bin and whole wheat flour in the whole wheat bin. Then she came to the rye flour bin. She saw a bag labeled white rye and another labeled whole grain rye. Since she wasn't sure what to do, she asked

the manager for help. The manager was happy that she asked because the two types of flour are very different.

Sammy had a big table with 8 people during a busy lunchtime. Everything went wrong with this group. First, they sat at a table that was cleared but not cleaned. Then, three people ordered coffee just when the regular coffee needed to brew, so they had to wait. Now, all the orders came out and one of them was completely wrong, so the customer sent it back and got angry. Sammy checked her order on the computer after asking for a new meal for the customer. She had entered the right thing – the kitchen just sent the wrong meal. Last time this cook made a mistake, he caused a big problem when Sammy told him about it.

Today, Sammy went to the shift manager and quietly explained the problem. The shift manager went to the customer and said sorry for the mistake and offered to buy dessert for the whole table. The customers were happy, and Sammy was relieved to not have a fight with the cook.

Jamal has been working at the manufacturing plant for a year and he likes his job and everyone except Bob, who gets angry easily. Today, Bob yelled at Jamal for missing a rivet on a metal seam. Jamal yelled back and they ended up shouting at each other on the plant floor. The manager came to listen to the situation. Both Jamal and Bob got

warnings for their behavior. Bob was told that he should tell the manager about any quality problems in the future instead of confronting a co-worker. Jamal was told to control his temper.

We hope these simple key points and stories about other employee situations will help you think about how to do well in your new job.

Expect the best of others and expect them to receive the best from you.

Ability

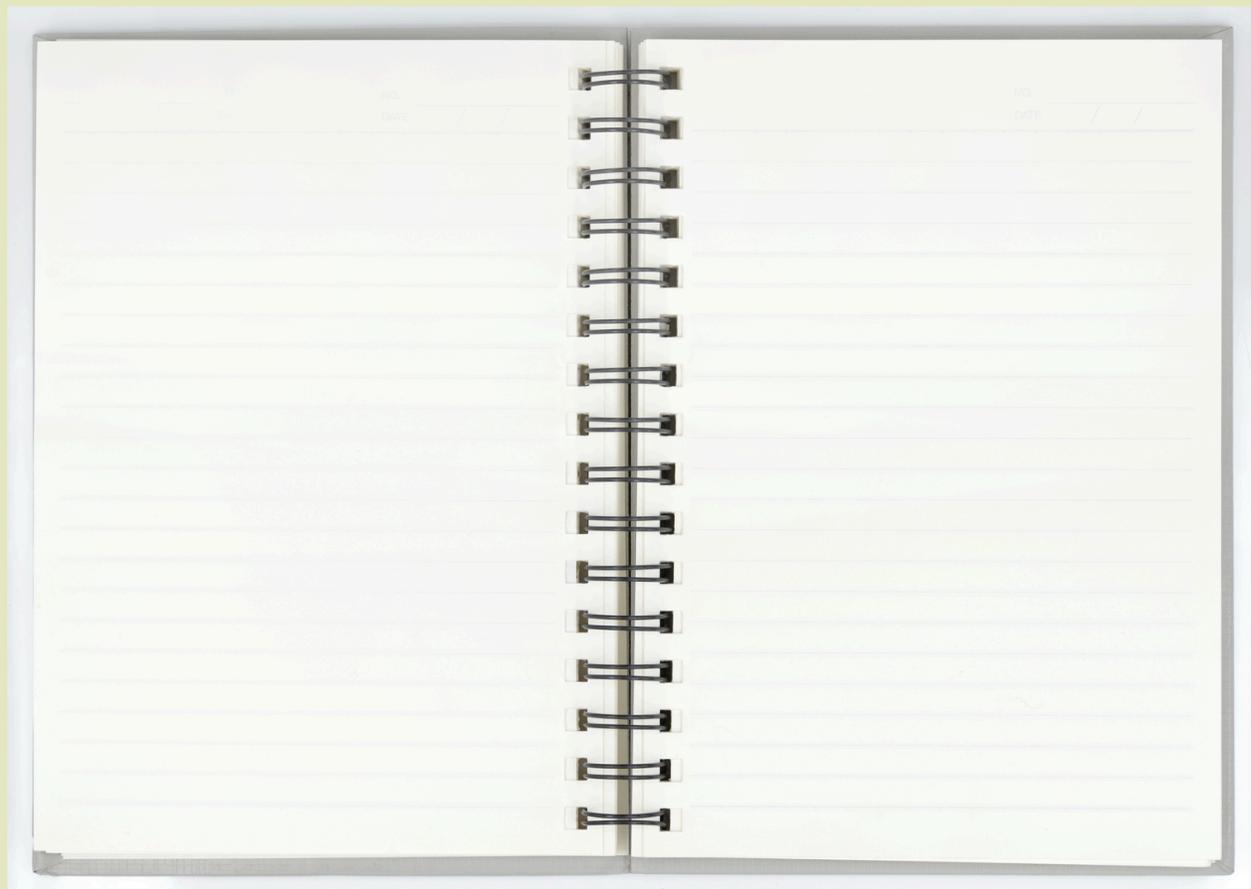
is what you're capable of doing.

Motivation

determines what you do.

Attitude

determines how well you do it.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Imagine you are starting a new job. What questions would you have about the employee handbook? Why are these questions important to ask?

2

Reflect on a time when you made a mistake. How did you handle it? What did you learn from that experience?

3

Think about a time when you had to ask for help at work. How did you approach the situation? What was the outcome?

4

Reflect on a time when you had to follow a strict work schedule. How did you manage your time effectively? What strategies did you use?