

# Tips to becoming successful in the workplace

In his book “Dumbing Down Our Kids,” author Charles Sykes wrote, “If you think your teacher is tough, wait until you get a boss. He doesn’t have tenure.”

When entering a new workplace, whether just out of college or not, it is important to know proper office etiquette, dining etiquette and dress attire. Natalie Kauffman, director for the Center of Career and Service Learning at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Baltimore, said an individual should spend some time observing how the office is run and try to adapt accordingly.

“Figure out the corporate culture, observe and analyze those around you,” said Ms. Kauffman. “Find out how things are done, why are they done that way and if there is a well-defined chain of command.”

She recommended seeking out the top performers in the organization and learning what is expected of a person working in that company. Ms. Kauffman said it is crucial to be on time for work. This shows the company that they have a dependable and reliable employee. Arriving 15 minutes early to get situated and be ready to work is a good idea, said Ms. Kauffman.

Cell phones should be turned off when entering an office building and they should not be sitting out on desks waiting for a call. Most companies have a 90-day probation period during which new employees need to prove they can do what they promised the boss they can do, said Ms. Kauffman.

“Customer service and your work attitude are so important to whatever job you hold,” said Ms. Kauffman.

When it comes to dressing for success the rules truly depend on the office. Ms. Kauffman recommends checking the dress code with a supervisor. Some companies require men to wear ties and women to wear closed-toed shoes while others do not. Every organization is different, and a person’s wardrobe should reflect the corporate culture.

“Check things out with your boss to make sure you are doing it right instead of wasting time doing it wrong,” said Ms. Kauffman.

Dining etiquette during business lunches can come in handy. Ms. Kauffman recommends selecting foods with neatness in mind, something that can be eaten with a fork and a knife and will allow a person to talk about business between bites. Don’t talk with your mouth full, don’t order the most expensive thing on the menu and it might be helpful to ask the other person what they will be having, said Ms. Kauffman.

“The easiest thing to remember is that they are hiring you because of your trainability rather than your brilliance. So when in doubt ask,” said Ms. Kauffman.