

The road from college to cabin

FORWARD

MARCH Creating the right impression on the first day of the job is vital, says **V Pradeep Kumar**

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Recently, a student asked me, “Sir, what should I be doing in the first few days of my first job?” The eyes and facial expressions couldn’t hide the nervousness and jittery, deep inside. The question reminded me of success stories from campus recruitment as in the case of Sanjay, a few years ago.

The batch of Sanjay joined the company, which was into service industry, in the middle of that year. The branch where they were posted, was running short of manpower and hence behind the budgets. By afternoon on the first day of training itself, Sanjay had stood out in the batch with his preparation, grasping power, intelligent and thoughtful questions. Later, as training was progressing, we suddenly heard a thud outside the room. Sanjay was the first employee rushing out to see what had happened. An employee had slipped and fallen on a computer table, and had crashed on the floor with bleeding injuries. Sanjay, who was familiar with first-aid procedure, helped the employee to recover and accompanied him to the hospital for treatment. With his job related skills, initiative and presence of mind, he impressed everyone. Therefore, it was no surprise that he grew very fast with frequent promotions, becoming a Product Manager in just four years, a record in the company.

As I recollect various batches, I remember a few first day blunders too, with few new recruits, nearly the losing their jobs.

Creating the right impression on the first day at work is therefore vital.

Being anxious is a positive sign

With an offer letter in hand, are you still anxious? Relax; it’s a positive sign to be a little anxious on the first day of your professional life. To succeed on first day, all that you require is an understanding of corporate expectations and feeling your normal self.

While approaching such a crucial day, the concerns about your first boss, colleagues, your workstation, the tasks and the expectations, is normal. Further, not all organizations, may brief on employer

expectations on the first day, as it would depend on the training schedule. Hence, being a little anxious about your first day is a positive sign of graduating into a professional and is the result of your innate desire to make a success of your job. However, there’s no need to get paranoid.

Corporate expectations

Many companies make tentative plans in campus recruitments stage, to allocate new recruits across functions, branches and locations, which is a common practice especially in service industries. Companies prepare comprehensive induction and training program and eagerly look forward to a new batch.

Sadly, in colleges, the focus is only on acquiring knowledge and not on developing a holistic personality. In a profession, soft skills like communication, interpersonal skills, time management, problem solving and decision-making are more crucial. For example, with people management and teamwork gaining prominence in corporate world, your ability to understand others, and be a strong team player, is crucial for your success.

Therefore, companies place highest emphasis on attitude, initiative, behaviour and compatibility of employees as acquiring job related skills is a time-consuming process. For example, if you get into a marketing function, companies may consider 3-6 months as a realistic period to acquire basic selling skills and accordingly performance reviews are scheduled. However, companies have zero tolerance in respect of negative attitude and gossip mongers, right from the first day.

Preparation is the key

Preparation for your first day, leads to



self-confidence, which is important for success.

■ **Sleep well:** don’t skip breakfast: Start the big day with a good sleep on the previous night, which is essential to be alert and normal. Have a wholesome breakfast to prevent hunger pangs coming in the way in a new environment. Lunch plans in organizations vary and at times uncertain too; a sumptuous breakfast helps to go through long orientations of the day.

■ **Grooming and business etiquette:** Arriving late on first day is a serious blunder. Understand the location and estimate the travel time according to the mode of transport. If necessary, do a rehearsal or a test drive on an earlier day. Plan to reach the designated place preferably a little early or on time.

As regards, your grooming, remember a saying, ‘don’t dress for the job you have; dress for the one you need in future’. Understand and adhere to the dress code of the organization.

Let your clothing, shoes, accessories and hairstyle, complement your personality. Avoid flashy, colourful, conspicuous garments, excessive deodorants, perfumes and accessories.

Fidgeting with the mobile, having weird ring tones, texting, listening to music and loud conversations, are avoidable pitfalls. Keep your mobile on silent mode and use it with a lot of discretion. Do remember to carry your records, offer letter and photographs if the documentation process is scheduled for the day.

■ **Create a positive first impression:** Your attire and body language determines the first impressions. Begin on a positive note, and create the right impression as you meet a lot of seniors and

colleagues. Make a special effort to remember the names, designations and key people. Greeting people with a smile, speaking gently with a confident handshake, are small things that go a long way in perfecting your personality and creating a positive first impression. Be restrained on day one and don’t venture into making jokes and casual comments, before understanding the corporate culture.

■ **Know the company and your KRAs:** Research about the history, milestones and achievements by referring to the company’s website and internet. Participate actively in the induction training by listening attentively and asking thoughtful questions. Absorb a wealth of information and take notes on important topics to demonstrate your seriousness as well as for reference. Understand the operations of the company and your key result areas [KRAs] from superiors. Asking questions and getting clarifications, is a fine way to build relationships, at workplace.

Realize the importance of being a professional, by behaving responsibly, demonstrating strong integrity and a commitment to excel. You reach your dream destination after successfully completing long years in education. As you move from a familiar campus to a professional environment, let positive attitude and performance be your buzzword.

A first job throws open doors of opportunity to build a long and successful career. As Walt Disney says, “All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them.”

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