**UNIT 1: GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH PROFESSIONAL CULTURE**:

* 1. **FIRST DAY AT WORK**

**1. Professional attire**

Power dressing is a term coined not just for fun. Dressing like a professional on your first day at work will add a spring in your step. The way you carry yourself will create an impression of your personality.

Check if your firm prefers business professional, business casual, or casuals. Either way, you wouldn’t want to be overdressed or a tad too casual. Every company has a certain dress code. Follow it and step ahead with confidence.

**Tip:** When in doubt, stick to formals. You can’t go wrong with that!

**2. Anticipate commuting time**

Always keep a buffer of about 15 minutes for sudden delays. Use mobile applications to track the traffic on your route and find the most suitable one.

You can always check [GoogleMaps](https://www.google.com/maps" \t "_blank" \o "Google Maps) for live updates or opt for mobile applications relevant to your city. [Waze](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.waze&referrer=utm_campaign%3Dhomepage%26utm_source%3Dwaze_website" \t "_blank" \o "Waze), a GPS software by Google, offers community-edited maps, a feature to connect with friends, and updates on best deals on gas stations. With such services at hand, you can plan your commute with ease.

**Tip:** You can look for carpooling options within your firm and also break the ice with existing employees en route.

**3. Prepare an introduction**

On your first day at work, you might get an opportunity to meet some important people in the office. Make sure you plan the perfect pitch to introduce yourself. Include stories and events that display your skills and achievements in brief.

**Tip:** Practice a short introduction of not more than 5-7 minutes.

**Related**: How to answer ['Tell me about yourself?'](https://www.naukri.com/blog/tell-me-about-yourself-hr-interview-question-answers/)

**4. Carry important documents**

It’s essential to carry all your documents if you haven’t submitted them already at the time of signing the contract. Keep a file ready with your original documents, photocopies, passport size photos, and other essentials.

**Tip:** Inquire with the HR about the required documents. Keep the documents ready well before your first day at work.

**5. Make connections**

A controlled and friendly demeanor is one of the best ways to begin your first day at work. Interact with your colleagues. You can ask about their job roles or inquire about your responsibilities. However, remember not to step into the personal zone. Most importantly, keep a smile on your face and exude confidence.

**Tip:** Create opportunities to strike up a conversation. Be prepared for questions about your previous employment and qualification. Always maintain the right [body language](https://www.naukri.com/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-body-language/).

**6. Learn about the company**

Do some [research about the company](https://www.ambitionbox.com/reviews), look at their current achievements, success stories, etc. Learn how your department has scored in the last couple of months. This will prepare you to have intelligent conversations at workplace. It’s important to ask the right questions that display your commitment levels to know more about the company.

**Tip:** Remember to keep your ears open and note things down mentally.

**7. Keep organized**

Your first day at work will bring you in contact with multiple people from your team or groups across the firm. It’s important to stay organized from the first day itself.

Ensure you write down information, make relevant to-do lists, and jot questions. You’ll also need to attend different orientation sessions as well as training. Display your eagerness for the same and be meticulous in your approach.

If a notebook and pen is not your cup of tea, use apps to streamline your tasks.

* [Trello](https://trello.com/): This is a great app to work on projects and share within the team.
* [Any.do](https://www.any.do/): It helps to categorize your tasks as - Today, Tomorrow, and Upcoming.
* [Evernote](https://evernote.com/): Take notes using Evernote to file away all the incoming data.
* [Google Assistant](https://assistant.google.com/intl/en_in/): Ask your assistant to remember some things for you!

**Tip:** Don’t flood your phone with a barrage of apps. Find out what suits you best to stay organized.

**8. Avoid office gossip**

Taking part in office gossips and rumors is a strict no-no. Indulging in such activities can hamper your growth as an employee. Not only is gossip distasteful, it also reflects your level of thinking. If someone in your team discusses something that sounds like gossip, you can focus on your system or choose to take a coffee break. If you are asked for your opinion, you can politely refuse to discuss further.

**Tip:** Gossip only tends to cloud your thinking. Preconceived ideas about others are best avoidable.

**9. Take breaks**

It is fine to take coffee and lunch breaks on your first day at work. Utilize this time to get to know your colleagues.

You can inquire about the break-time and the policies about the same with your HR manager. Avoid taking extended lunch breaks right on your first day. Allow a couple of weeks to pass by. Meanwhile, observe how your team functions.

**Tip:** Use the small breaks to realign your thoughts. You can easily avoid the anxiety by using this 'me-time' to calm your nerves.

**10. Study onboarding materials**

You might spend an entire day or a week to complete your onboarding process. Ensure you set aside time during the day to study the policies pertaining to the company rules and your KRAs. Besides, if you have any questions regarding the policies, this is the time to ask.

**Tip:** If you haven’t yet signed your contract, review the same and attend all training sessions outlined in your book.

**11. Identify your goals**

Set aside some time for a discussion with the manager about your role. Your manager can help you identify your KRAs and guide you through the process of achieving these. This will help you understand and plan your work accordingly. It also shows you are eager to begin working and challenge your limits.

**Tip:** You can even discuss if an update of skills is required. Many companies offer assistance for courses to help you bring new things to the table.

**12. Adapt to the company culture**

Your last workplace might have had an open culture. But, you need to listen and observe before settling in comfortably right on your first day.

Loud conversations at your desk, having personal conversations loudly over the phone, making personal remarks on others - all this is a strict no-no. Your colleagues are yet to know you. Give some time to build the rapport.

**Tip:** Keep your head down for the first couple of weeks and treat everyone with respect. Understand the social landscape.

**13. Avoid trying too hard**

Okay, we know you are eager to jump into your dream job and are waiting to make a mark. But, it’s only your first day at work! It is fine to feel the enthusiasm. However, there’s no need to impress your colleagues right away. You might end up creating a wrong impression if you pitch how good you are at this profile or brag about your past laurels.

**Tip:** Observe, make connections, and let it build up naturally with your team.

**14. Befriend at least one person**

While engaging with all your colleagues is necessary, it is good to connect with at least one team member who will quickly help you to learn the ropes. A new role can be stressful. So, befriend one approachable person to set the ball rolling right from day one.

**Tip:** Do mention you are also available to offer help in areas of your expertise.

**15. Put your phone on silent mode**

Need we say more? With meetings lined up and introductions happening all around, a buzzing phone is very annoying indeed. Reply to incoming messages and calls during your break time.

**Tip:** Observe the rules. Avoid jarring ringtones.

**16. Stay calm and composed**

We feel nervous, stressed, excited, and experience different emotions when a big change happens in life. Your first day at work need not be about showing your skills on day one. You need to control those jitters, calm down, and take small steps to enjoy the day. You might find yourself in new situations you cannot handle. You might even have a super successful day. It is not in your control, so why worry?

**Tip:** Sit for 10 minutes in silence before you leave for work. If possible, begin your day with 10-20 minutes of stretching and exercise.

2.**INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

“Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first.”

An employee’s induction process is often what makes or breaks his experience at a company. Employee Induction is the first step of welcoming new employees to the company and preparing them for their respective roles. Induction is the introduction and orientation of the employee in the organizational culture and showing the employees how interconnected he/she is to everyone in the organization.

A good induction program ensures that the employees contribute more effectively and efficiently to their team.

An induction makes the employees feel  
● Welcome into the organization and team  
● Associated with the company’s policies and objectives  
● Confident that they can successfully do their job  
● Positive about their future in the company  
● Energized about his potential opportunities  
An employee on-boarding should be taken seriously. The [employee induction process](https://www.peopleworks.in/why-peopleworks/employee-management-system.html) is to be planned well before the employee joins and the number of days depends on the demands of the role.  
  
● Induction checklist: Introduce the new joinee with a Welcome kit.Show him the office layout and introduce him to everyone; the Induction checklist includes:  
– System set-up and creation of email  
– Provide an overview of the organization and its services/products  
– Introduction to the team and manager  
– Discuss his roles and responsibilities  
– Share performance standard and expectations from him  
– Make him aware of HR related aspects – Work hours, Dress code, work rules, etc.,  
– Assign a buddy he can reach out to for queries during the early weeks  
● Make them feel welcome: In the whole process of getting your employees updated about the organizational structure, you forget to make them feel welcome. Besides walking around and introducing them to everyone or just showing them a slideshow you can do a number of activities to get them more involved, such as:

– Ice breaker activities  
– Decorating the new employee’s desk  
– Get the team to sign a ‘welcome’ card  
– Have a team lunch on the first day  
-Post a welcome message on your company social media accounts  
● A crisp job description: A single page approach listing out the important duties, experience, and skills reflecting the roles is good enough.  
– Role title  
– Statement of position  
– Key tasks  
– What is required of his role  
● Team’s involvement: Encourage the team’s involvement in the induction process, instead of it being on a one-on-one basis.  
● Encourage social interaction: Encourage the team to pitch in and help with all possible questions and queries. Unwind together towards the weekend and interact with new colleagues.  
● Follow up: After a few weeks of the employee’s entry into the organization, catch up with him and find out what is happening, what challenges he is facing, if he needs any help and if he has adjusted just fine.  
● Employee feedback: After the induction process, ask your employee for a feedback on their experiences. If any changes are required in the process, incorporate them accordingly.  
A recent survey was undertaken; this is what most employers had to say about following the employee induction procedure.  
  
New employees need to feel comfortable in their new work environment and become as productive as possible over a short period. A little effort from the management and a well-planned induction is essential to reap all the benefits, quickly. Induction is not an option, it is an investment, and every company no matter how small or big should make this investment.

The[PeopleWorks](http://www.peopleworks.in/)on-boarding module automates the candidate’s joining process, which enables the candidate’s to feel valued so that they can become fully productive members of the team as quickly as possible.

**3. KNOWING COMPANY HIERARCHY**

## 3.1 Employee Development and Guidance

Employee development happens at all levels of an organization. Employees look to the managerial staff to help develop work skills, the managers work with company executives to improve managerial performance, and the executives draw on the experience of company owners for business guidance. The hierarchy of authority helps an employee to understand who he is to receive guidance from, and it helps that employee to see where his manager is getting her career development from. This is why competence at all levels of the corporate hierarchy is important.

## 3.2 Providing a Clear Career Path

The hierarchy of authority provides a clear career path for each employee in the organization. The outline of executive, managerial and supervisory positions within the company can help employees to determine their career goals and what kind of move up the corporate ladder they would like to take. Executives and managers can use the hierarchy as motivation for employees that show supervisory or managerial potential to perform at a high level of productivity.

## 3.3 Efficient Company Communication

A hierarchy helps to establish efficient communication paths between employees, departments and divisions of the company. The manager of each department becomes the departmental administrator, and any information that is relevant to the department is given to the manager. The manager can either act on the information or delegate it to someone within her staff. Information can be effectively distributed through company managers rather than trying to contact each individual employee. The manager's understanding of her staff and the structure of her department makes her the ideal person to improve communication to her department.

**4.10 THINGS A MANAGER MUST DO ON THE FIRST DAY**

**1. Say Hello to Everyone**  
By making sure you acknowledge each person as a real individual and worthy of your personal greeting and introduction, you will go a long way to being welcomed. Often this is way underrated. Recognising all in your team, at whatever level of contribution they make, is critical in the first moments of your management.  
  
**2. Ask Gentle Probing Questions**  
By finding out what's important, especially on their real lives (we'll come to the business shortly), you will build instant rapport. These people need to know you are interested in them and have the ability to see past pure productivity in the business.  
  
**3. Listen Hard and Show That You Are A Good Listener**  
A great way is to hear what you are being told and making eye contact and giving lots of supportive body language/noises really helps. To show you 'hear', ask another question whenever you have been told something - there is no stronger way to show that you recognise the individual importance of someone.  
  
**4. Be Positive All Day**  
It's easy to be critical of whoever was previously in the role. After all, it's a real easy target. Yet wait. This gives the impression that you are the type to 'pass the buck'; blame others and above all be insincere. So, stick with positive comments, whilst acknowledging possible shortfalls in the past.  
  
**5. Really Hear Complaints and Issues**  
There will be those who try to get in early and want change for themselves. There will also be those who want to share their frustration with you. It is vital to appreciate what they are saying in a supportive, constructive and yet rather guarded way.  
  
On day one, you won't realise what truth is. Their words will be clouded by assumptions and polarised towards what they have experienced. So, don't be tempted to 'fix' everything from day one. Understand, appreciate and park (though get back to them as you've eased yourself in - it is vital to follow through later).  
  
**6. Seek Out What's Good About the Place**Listen and build on what is going right. You may be on the sharp end of complaints and there will be positives they want to share - even if not, look out for them. Seek good performance out wherever it is, however small. Such appreciation will be welcomed as long as it is real and honest.  
  
**7. Find Out What People Want to Work Best**  
A great piece is to ask them what one thing they would like to change about the place they work. Then through the actions you take to resolve, in public, you will start to be really appreciated. This is not a blank check to fix things. Sometimes things can't be fixed soon, even quickly or even ever. It might just not be possible for one person. What will be valued, will be your explaining to them why not. In fact this is probably a stronger course of action than the quick fix, as it builds trust and the relationship.  
  
**8. Be Out and About at the Sharp End**  
It's always tempting to sift through the office work you've inherited ('gives me a great sense of what's going on'). In fact you'll get much more from mucking in and getting your hands dirty with the people at the sharp end. Not only will you truly find out much more about the issues in the business, you will also gain the appreciation of your people, in your capacity to get stuck in with them.  
  
**9. Say Goodnight to Everyone**  
This doesn't apply to your first night only, but every night. You cannot overestimate the value of being at the door to the office or the store thanking everyone and saying good night. It's a small and very relationship-building activity.  
 **10. Have Fun!**This needs a little care, especially at the beginning of your management or you can appear frivolous - or just plain daft. By laughing along with your new people you will warm to them and them to you. It just requires care and a level of awareness to make this work best.

**5 .BEHAVIOR PRUNING.**

Let’s look at four areas where organizational pruning is needed:

**5.1 Staff**

I’m starting with the toughest area first. I’m a believer that an employer has some obligation to an employee. When hiring someone, it’s my responsibility to make sure I screened the person well, fit them in a job where they can succeed and have given them the support they need. However, there are times when some employees need to be pruned.

Despite the cynicism in the media and movies, most employers actually tend to hang on to problem staff for too long. Aside from hurting the organization, “hanging on” can actually be abusive to other employees.

I believe employees should be pruned when they show a pattern of:

* Preventing others from doing or succeeding at their jobs.
* Contributing to turnover, driving others away from working collaboratively.
* Unwillingness or inability to be teachable or correctable.
* Unwillingness or inability to contribute to the overall mission of the team or organization.
* Undermining the work environment through gossip, bullying or other negative behavior.

With the exception of acute instances that relate to safety or criminal behavior, I generally support first ensuring that the employer has provided the necessary resources and guidance for the employee to succeed. Next, I support offering structured coaching providing expectations and a timeline for change. If these interventions do not help, the employee should be let go.

**5.2 Lines of Service**

Over time, most organizations develop products, services or programs that have either never proven their value, have outlived their value or haven’t demonstrated sufficient value.

Leaders should regularly review what they’re offering to customers and determine if they are receiving enough value. Back to the tree analogy: is this particular limb actually growing and producing fruit? Can changes be made to help it become more effective? Without growth or fruit, the “limb” should probably be cut.

Sometimes making these cuts involve “no-brainer” conversations. Other times, we risk touching “pet projects” or someone’s “sacred cow”. It helps to create an objective set of criteria, in advance, that define value. For example:

* Measurable indicators: an increase in profits, number of new members, etc.
* Measurable costs: leadership and management time, number of employees, overhead, etc.

This is usually easier for businesses. Non-profits, faith-based organizations, and government agencies can really struggle with this because the “payer” for the service is often not the “customer.” So, there’s a “disconnect” regarding value.

All programs or services should expect to accomplish certain results. If they’re not accomplishing those results, it’s worth taking time and effort to determine if changes will help. If change doesn’t help, it’s more likely these efforts are just using up resources the rest of the organization could divert to better use.

Remember, by saying, “Yes” to one line of service, you are saying, “No” to another. We need to stop saying, “Yes” to things that do not work.

**5.3 Unhelpful Systems, Policies, and Procedures**

Sometimes we continue attending a meeting because we’ve “always had that Tuesday meeting”. Sometimes we make customers complete forms in triplicate because we’ve “always done triplicate”.

It’s worth setting up a process for continual growth and improvement. This could be a regular review process. Or, it could be as simple as a suggestion box or forum for employees to make observations about systems, policies or procedures that no longer seem to serve a purpose; or, make it more difficult to accomplish a purpose.

Some policies or procedures were very appropriate, at one time. But they no longer serve well as the organization or environment has changed. Verify that your systems, policies, and procedures serve the purpose of the organization; rather than the organization serving them.

**5.4 Unhealthy Culture**

I’ve worked in warehouses where employees covered warehouse walls with centerfolds. When I was a teacher, I avoided the teachers’ lounge because it felt negative and gossipy. I worked at a non-profit where it was acceptable for employees to be bullied and harassed by customers.

Culture has a dominating effect on workplace effectiveness and productivity. It’s a leader’s obligation to be aware of the culture (and subcultures) within the organization. While leaders made excuses in all the above examples, each scenario detracted from workplace performance and morale. Human Resource laws aside, they created “in groups” and “out groups”. Some people would feel comfortable, or safe, and others would not. Creativity and problem solving were inhibited. Taking the law into account, two of these organizations were at significant risk of litigation.

None of the cultures described above contributed towards greater returns on the work performed. Make sure that your culture does. And work to prune what does not.